

NOVEMBER 2025

KALAVINKA

A NEWSLETTER OF EKOJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE



ANNUAL HYBRID MEETING OF THE EKOJI SANGHA SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2025, AT 1:00 P.M.



The Sangha of the Ekoji Buddhist Temple is invited to participate in the Annual Meeting of the Sangha at 1:00 pm on Sunday, Nov. 16, in the Hondo .

We will receive status reports on the work of the temple; discuss the challenges and opportunities facing the temple; and consider proposals for the direction of the temple. Full Members will be asked to vote on the 2026 - 2027 Budget and members of the Board of Directors and Trustees. While there are four levels of membership at Ekoji, only full members of the Sangha are allowed to vote.

However, everyone can debate and discuss the issues. This is our opportunity to share our views on how things are going; what the temple still might do to provide for the spiritual and information needs of the Sangha; and non-religious support of the Sangha community,

A light lunch is planned prior to the Sangha meeting.



We Marched



Why Meditate?



Obon 2025



Dr. George Tanabe
Lecture Series



New Year's Eve Service



Seminar on Gathering
of the Three Yanas



WEDNESDAYS
7 PM ET
EKOJI.ORG

Every Wed. Virtual
Service and
Discussion with Rev
Rye



Hanamatsuri – Dharma School Take Flowers to the Naijin



Generation to Generation,



TABLE OF CONTENTS

84,000 Thoughts. “The Legacy of Rennyō in Spreading Jodo Shin Buddhism”, Rev. Kurt Rye ... 01 - 02

Dharma Breeze ... 02

President’s Message, “The Annual Meeting and Beyond: Looking Forward” ... 03 - 04

Annual Meeting Agenda ... 05

Ekoji - The Temple of the Gift of Light: Sharing the Dharma ... 06

“It Takes a Village – To Run a Temple that Shares the Dharma and Serves the Sangha” ... 07 - 08

Upon Their Shoulders – Ekoji’s Shotsuki List for November 09

Echo Ekoji: Meet Rev. Mellissa Opel ... 10

NEW VOICES FROM THE NEMBUTSU PATH

Alex Corbin: “It is Namō Amida Butsu of Gratitude” ... 11 - 12

Seth Read: “Where There is Room for Doubt and Questioning, there is also Room for an Entrusting Heart” ... 12- 14

Timothy Liux: “Slow Down, Maybe, Just Maybe, Time Will Slow Down With You” ... 14 - 15

Learn and Practice Tai Chi ... 16

“Why Meditate” By Frank Swithers ... 16

“October Treasurer’s Report,” Maya Horio, Ekoji Treasurer ... 17

In Gassho, Dana from 8/27/25 to 10/25/25 ... 18

Ekoji’s Movie Discussion for November ... 18

ANNUAL PET MEMORIAL SERVICE, Sunday, November 16,

“Losing A Beloved Pet in Our Life” By Rev. Bishop Marvin Harada ... 19 - 20

Washington Post, “Will My Dog Be in Heaven? Why Grieving Pet Owners Turn To Religious Groups” ... 21 - 24

Calendar of Events and Activities, November 2025 ... 25

2025 - 2026 Children’s Dharma School Year Calendar ... 26

THE LEGACY OF RENNYO SHONIN IN SPREADING JODO SHIN BUDDHISM

By Rev. Kurt Rye

“In order to attain the entrusting heart (Anjin), you do not need wisdom or learning; it is not a question of whether you are rich and noble or poor and destitute, whether you are good or evil, male or female. The essential point is to give up various practices and take refuge in the right practice, that is, nembutsu.”

Rennyō Shōnin 1474

The above-cited passage is a portion of a letter written by Rennyō Shōnin (1415-1499), the 8th master of our Jōdo Shinshū school of Buddhism, to a Jōdo Shinshū follower. Rennyō Shōnin has a significant place in the history of our tradition. After the death of our founder, Shinran Shōnin, in 1262-63, the organization that would become our head temple, the Hongwanji, underwent numerous organizational and liturgical changes in the decades following Shinran Shōnin’s passing. Many of the rituals and chants practiced then originated from the Tendai School’s Pure Land traditions. Rennyō made a concerted effort to standardize all aspects of the Shin ceremony throughout its growing membership.

In Rennyō’s time, the number of Shin Temples with monks was a fraction of the size that it would grow into the following centuries. In many rural areas, the Jōdo Shinshū followers would gather at small halls called dojos. The dojos did not have a monk or priest but rather a lay leader who, perhaps, was educated and could read the sutras. Rennyō addressed these dojos directly with letters containing the Shin teachings and practical advice concerning the Nembutsu practice and sutra chanting. He also addressed letters to established Shin Sangha temples with attending monks. His efforts were a unifying factor in the early development of Jōdo Shinshū. After his passing, many of these letters were collected and put into a volume known as the Gobunshō. To this day, the letters are read by thousands of Shin followers in Japan daily.

These letters are still as relevant today as they were when they were written. These letters were meant to touch the hearts of the everyday person for whom they were written. Rennyō used colloquial Japanese and addressed questions that came up in everyday life. As you may recall, Buddhism at this time was the philosophy of the upper class and educated Japanese. He addressed the letters to people who, at the time, were considered by the larger Japanese society to be unrealistic or unworthy of following the Buddhist teachings. Rennyō addressed women, hunters, butchers, sake sellers, and leather workers, all of whom were deemed to be outside of respectable society.

(Legacy of Rennyō. Cont on Pg. 2)

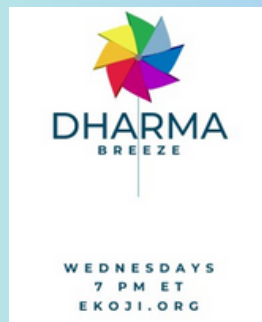
(Legacy of Rennyō, Cont. from Pg. 1)

The letter at the beginning of this article is a perfect example of how Rennyō addressed the equality of all in hearing and following the teachings of Shin Buddhism. This is especially significant in the time Rennyō lived; the social roles of society were much more rigid compared to those of today. And yet his message still resonates today. The message of universal acceptance remains a liberating one in our lives.

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/tZMlcOGsqT0tGdIRtNNt5EydbzXK9f2oVZjQ>



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

THE ANNUAL MEETING AND BEYOND: LOOKING FORWARD

By: Andrea Chapman

Autumn, to me, most vividly embodies the Buddhist teachings—especially impermanence. As time seems to move ever faster, I'm leaning more deeply into these teachings, releasing what no longer serves and making space for what supports our highest potential as a Sangha.

Our Annual Meeting of the Sangha will be Sunday, November 16, 2025, from 1:00–2:15 pm ET at Ekoji Buddhist Temple and on Zoom. Please RSVP/register here: <https://ekojibuddhisttemple.wildapricot.org/event-6412229>. Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83464638721>. A light lunch will be served following service. Full members in good standing for the three months prior are eligible to vote and to seek election per our bylaws (details on the event page).

I'm committed to keeping the meeting concise and meaningful. Historically, attendance has been low—understandable, because meetings aren't everyone's favorite. This year, I hope you'll join us, because I want to share two essential messages:

- Now is the time to strengthen the communities and affiliations you care about.
- Ekoji stands at a pivotal post-pandemic moment that will require our ingenuity and an investment of time.

Time is the common thread.

As we set our clocks back on the first Sunday in November, let's "compound" that extra hour into ongoing service. In the year ahead, I propose four non-religious pillars be supported through committee:

- Finance — Chair: Maya Horio
- Communications — Chair: Andrea Chapman
- Membership — Chair: open
- Fundraising — Chair: open

To keep this manageable, each committee can begin with two co-chairs, meet quarterly, and pursue one to three SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound). Success depends on us showing up—engaged, curious, and willing to innovate—to re-energize our membership and welcome new friends.

(President's Message, Cont. on Pg. 4)

(*President's Message' Cont. from Pg. 3)*

On a personal note: I begin a full-time internship in January and expect to graduate in May, starting a new career in events management. My availability for temple work will shift, which is why I'm starting this conversation now. I love Ekoji and I want to see it thrive—and that requires an engaged Sangha.

Will you answer the call? Please RSVP for the Annual Meeting, consider stepping in as a co-chair for Membership or Fundraising, or commit a steady hour a month to one of these committees. One hour can become many meaningful moments of service. With gassho,

Namo Amida Butsu



2025 EKOJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE SANGHA HYBRID ANNUAL MEETING

The Sangha of the Ekoji Buddhist Temple is invited to participate in the Annual Meeting of the the Sangha at. 1:00 pm on Sunday, November 16 in the Hondo.

We will receive status reports on the work of the temple; discuss the challenges and opportunities facing the temple; and consider proposals for the direction of the temple. Full Members will be asked to vote on the 2026 Budget and members of the Board of Directors and Trustees. There are four levels of membership at Ekoji, but only full members of the Sangha are allowed to vote. Everyone can debate and discuss the issues.

A light lunch is planned prior to the Sangha meeting.

Annual MEETING Agenda

ATTENDEES:

- ✦ Board of Directors
- ✦ Trustees
- ✦ Sangha Members
- ✦ Full & Associate Members

📅 DATE:
16 NOVEMBER 2025

🕒 TIME:
1:00 PM - 2:15 PM

📍 PLACE:
6500 LAKEHAVEN LANE

Agenda	Highlights	Person In Charge
OPENING GASSHO, AGENDA & ATTENDANCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome and Gassho • Zoom protocols and attendance 	Rev. Kurt Rye Andrea Chapman Michael Huff
PRESIDENT'S 2025 REVIEW - BOARD & YBA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of initiatives and outcomes • A look ahead to 2026 and beyond 	Andrea Chapman Lindsay Innis
SUPERVISING MINISTER'S REPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joining us remotely from NYBC 	Rev. Kurt Rye
REVIEW / VOTE 2024 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available to preview in advance here. 	Michael Huff
ELECTION OF NEW OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES	Andrea Chapman, Maya Horio, Jesse Barrick, Kim Nguyen (Trustee) have 1 year remaining. Michael Huff, Mahkameh Doroud, Roger Scott, and Frank Swithers are seeking 2 year terms. One 2 year term for a Trustee is vacant Mikio Yamashita will continue as our BDK Advisor	Andrea Chapman
2025 FINANCIAL REPORT & 2026 PROPOSED BUDGET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BDK Grant • Sangha Donations • Outside Grants • Rental Income • Operating Expenses 	Maya Horio
COMMENTS, QUESTIONS, CLOSING GASSHO		All Rev. Kurt Rye



EKOJI – THE TEMPLE OF THE GIFT OF LIGHT SHARING THE DHARMA

SERVICES

- Regular Sunday Hybrid Services at 11:00 am
- Dharma Breeze – Virtual Services with Rev. Kurt Rye, Wednesdays at 7:00 pm
- Shotsuki Services – First Sunday of each month
- Meditation Session, Weekly, Thurs. at 7:30 pm
- Children’s Dharma School, Sundays 9:30 - 10:30
- Special Life Marker Services
 - 1 Hatsumairi - *first service usually for children*
 - 2 Weddings
 - 3 Kieishiki - *affirmation services*
 - 4 Funerals
 - 5 Memorial Services
- Other Services

LET’S TALK

- Regular Hybrid Discussions after each Sunday Service
- Regular Discussions as part of the Wed. 7:00 pm Dharma Breeze Service with Rev. Kurt Rye
- Virtual Movie Discussions with Buddhist Lessons, 3rd Sunday of each month - 2:00 pm – Led by Ann and Joran Stegner
- Periodic Seminars such as the 4 sessions led by Dr. George Tanabe on the “Many faces of Buddhism” or Rev. Kodo Umezū’s “Shinran’s Message for a Fulfilled Life.”
- A Safe Space for a casual conversation with fellow travelers on the Buddhist Path

SANGHA FELLOWSHIP

- Young Buddhist Association (YBA) - Started in 2024 for Buddhists in their early 20s and 30s.
- Nen Daiko – Ekoji affiliated renowned Taiko Group since 1994
- Dounen Daiko – Nen Daiko’s Youth Taiko Group since 2017
- Monthly Ekoji Podcast, “Echo Ekoji,” – Learn about our fascinating Sangha Members and about other interesting BCA Ministers.
- Join Ekoji weekly Tai Chi sessions every Tuesday evenings
- Meet fellow Buddhists from other Eastern District Temples through District gatherings.

STAYING IN TOUCH

- Weekly End of Service Announcements
- Weekly E-Messages about coming activities at Ekoji
- Ekoji’s Web Site - www.ekoji.org
- In Development a new Ekoji Communications Committee to work on new ways to reach our Sangha and the wider society.
- Meetings with the Sangha like the Annual Sangha Meeting.

DEDICATED RELIGIOUS ADVICE AND COUNSELING WITH REV. KURT RYE

- Rev. Rye has dedicated Wednesday Office Hours from 1-2:00 pm
- or schedule a Zoom or Phone Meeting

WORKING TOGETHER – TAKING CARE OF OUR SPIRITUAL HOME

- Volunteer to Help in Cleaning the Temple the 1st Sunday of each month.
- Join the Garden Maintenance effort and others like the Leaf Blowing Effort when a call for Volunteers Goes Out
- Help the Temple Financially – We get financial assistance from BDK, However, Sangha Donations makes up the Largest Portion of Ekoji’s Monthly Income.
- Check with the Pres. on where Volunteers are most needed for long term and ad hoc efforts



**IT TAKES A VILLAGE –
TO RUN A TEMPLE THAT SHARES THE
DHARMA AND SERVES THE SANGHA**

Like most temples in the BCA network, Ekoji has one paid person, our Supervising Minister Rev. Kurt Rye. The rest of the work in making Ekoji run is done by many dedicated volunteers. Sometimes the work can be a “one shot deal” like Ekoji’s participation at the Burke Centre Festival as we reached out to the community. Other times, the work takes months of planning and preparation and then onto the show like our Obon Festival. Or the work can go on, month after month, like paying the bills and recordkeeping. But the work is ultimately essential.

To those who have shared their time and their talents, the Board expresses ITS DEEPEST GRATITUDE AND GASSHO. But like every volunteer organization, there is always space and a need for more volunteers, and we hope you will consider volunteering.

In recognition of those who have volunteered and to whom we sincerely thank:

EKOJI BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- President: Andrea Chapman
- Vice President: Frank Swithers
- Secretary: Michael Huff
- Treasurer: Maya Horio
- At Large: Mahkameh Doroud
- At Large: Roger Scott
- At Large: Jesse Barrick

(Members to the Board are elected at the All-Sangha Meeting in November of each year.)

FACILITIES and MAINTENANCE TEAM

- Contractor: Mr. Muhamett
- Back Up: Bob Shimokaji and Roger Scott

MONTHLY TEMPLE CLEAN-UP

(For the first Sunday of Every Month, a general call to the Sangha to help clean your temple goes out to meet at 9:30 for help.

- Those answering the call for **September 7th** were:
- Bob Shimokaji (Coordinator)
 - Matt Doubrava
 - Alexander Corbin
 - Andrea Chapman
 - Jesse Barrick

- Those answering the call for **October 5th** were:
- Bob Shimokaji (Coordinator)
 - Alex Corbin
 - Roger Scott
 - Matt Doubrava
 - Jesse Barrick

MORE HELP COULD ALWAYS BE USED !!!

(It Takes a Village, Cont. from Pg. 7)

YOUNG BUDDHIST ASSOCIATION

(YBA)

Lindsay Innis (President)

THE AUDIO/VISUAL CREW

(If you would like to help, training will be provided.)

Maya Horio (Coordinator)

Andrea Chapman

Ann Stegner

Joran Stegner

Roger Scott

Tom Cray

Bob Shimokaji

MEDITATION AT EKOJI – WEEKLY

Frank Switzer and Roger Scott
(Hosts)

VIRTUAL BUDDHIST MOVIE

DISCUSSIONS – MONTHLY

Ann and Joran Stegner (Co-Hosts)

HYBRID AFTER SUNDAY SERVICE

DISCUSSION GATHERINGS

Andrea Chapman and Maya Horio
(Co-Hosts)

TAI CHI AT EKOJI - WEEKLY

Rob Fike - Instructor

SERVICE LEADERS

Ed Sams (Coordinator)

Pilar Uelman

Jesse Barrick

Alex Corbin

Marisa Dillmuth

Jenina “Jeni” Almira

Positions are currently filled

CHILDREN’S DHARMA SCHOOL

CO-SUPERINTENDENT: Maya Horio

CO-SUPERINTENDENT: Kim Nguyen

(19 Dharma School Students)

Pre-K & 1st Grade Teachers: Jenina “Jeni” Almira and Marisa Dillmuth

Elementary Teachers: Gail Kondo and Kim Nguyen

Intermediate Teacher: Truc Vo

Advanced Teacher: Brant and Maya Horio

NEW COMMITTEES THE BOARD WOULD LIKE TO START-UP – NEEDS VOLUNTEERS:

(If you would like to help, Please Contact Andrea Chapman,
(AOAndreaChapman@gmail.com)

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE: Meet Quarterly to plan, schedule, and help implement Ekoji’s digital content from Website to Podcast to social media.

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

Work with Maya Horio (Treasurer) to meet Temple’s Financial Requirements.

MEMBERSHIP POC

Restart Ekoji’s Membership Program



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 NOVEMBER , WE WILL BE REMEMBERING WITH GRATITUDE:

OCTOBER 2025

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

NOVEMBER 2025

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

DECEMBER 2025

Takashi “Tak” Horita
12/19/2007

Richard “Dick” Carl
12/13/2002



ECHO EKOJI

TEMPLE PODCAST

We welcome you...just as you are!

SPECIAL GUEST
REV. MELISSA OPEL



CO-HOST
JOE GOTCHY



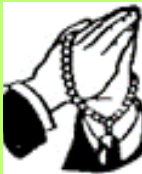
CO-HOST
ANDREA CHAPMAN

MEETING REV. MELISSA OPEL

A Journey of Welcome: Rev. Melissa Opel on Inclusivity, Identity, and the Future of Jodo Shinshu
In this special episode of Echo Ekoji, co-hosts Andrea Chapman and Joe Gotchy sit down with the inspiring Reverend Melissa Opel, a minister at the Buddhist Church of San Francisco and a dynamic new voice within the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA).

Join us for a candid conversation as Rev. Opel shares her compelling personal journey: from her early life in a different religious tradition, to finding her spiritual home at the Spokane Buddhist Temple and eventually committing to the path of ordination.

Whether you are a lifelong practitioner or curious about Buddhism, Rev. Opel's story of faith, resilience, and boundless compassion offers a powerful reminder that the Dharma meets each of us right where we are. *Namu Amida Butsu.*



JOIN OUR TEMPLE

[THE EKOJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE THE TEMPLE OF THE GIFT OF LIGHT](http://EKOJIBUDDHISTTEMPLE.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://EKOJIBUDDHISTTEMPLE.WILDAPRICOT.ORG](http://EKOJIBUDDHISTTEMPLE.WILDAPRICOT.ORG)**

ALL OUR WELCOME -- COME AS YOU ARE

NEW VOICES FROM THE NEMBUTSU PATH



ITS NAMO AMIDA BUTSU OF GRATITUDE

By Alex Corbin

As we head into the latter portion of the year, I find myself looking forward to the return of the constellation Orion to our night sky. Even in our very light polluted DC region Orion can be easily picked out, striding across our southern sky in the colder months, blocky torso and belt gleaming. Teaching high school means early mornings, and the light of the stars that

make up the Hunter are so often my last glance of the outdoors before long days in my windowless classroom. The brightness and appearance of Orion's constituent stars means that make great examples of the different stages of a star's life, particularly the red supergiant Betelgeuse, Orion's right shoulder, whose enormous mass and sanguine color indicate it is nearing the end of its life. As I relayed all of this to my students some weeks ago, one of them asked whether we would be able to see Betelgeuse's final disposition from Earth. We would, I said, its supernova would for some weeks to months be so bright as to be visible even during the day. Truly it would be a spectacular sight, and would happen suddenly, with quite possibly little to no warning. And at the end... after having shone for millions of years, the star would fade from our view forever. Even the stars are finite.

I have been thinking about the prospect of having the night sky permanently altered in this way in these intervening days, and my visceral discomfort at the thought. I am, even more than most people I think, a creature of habit. I wake up at the same time each day, my time at work is governed by the rote ringing of bells, I eat much the same meals... day by day, week by week. When in this state it can be so easy to convince myself that my world, and all the elements within it are fixed in place, be they stars or people. I become fixated on my schedules and the daily grind, I can become detached and forget the reality of impermanence.

The warmer months have all but passed us by this year. In years past, I have looked forward to seeing my Uncle Isao in the summertime. Some eight thousand miles separated us, he in Okinawa and I in Maryland, so to be able to spend time together was a rare thing when our finances could bear the hit of international travel, many years apart. Together we visited museums and historical sites in DC and Okinawa, took in scenic vistas and the great blue ocean, prayed for peace at Heiwa Koen, and when I was young wasted a lot of money at game centers. We had planned to meet up again this summer, but it was not to be. My uncle passed away in January, of complications following a severe stroke. Never did I feel so acutely the distance between us than at that moment. I loved my uncle dearly, and the waves of grief since his passing have ebbed and flowed, at times, almost overwhelming. It is so hard to accept, even the lives of people are finite.

(Alex's Dharma Message: Cont on Pg. 12)

(Alex's Dharma Message Cont. from Pg. 11)

I started coming to Ekoji out of a sense of curiosity about institutional Buddhism and to seek others who were on the nembutsu path. I am very glad to have the opportunity to learn alongside you, rather than stew on what I have lost, I am encouraged by Amida's vow, the writings of Honen and Shinran, and the words of the Sangha, to engage in radical gratitude. I cannot claim to have a robust understanding of doctrine, but I can share what the nembutsu means to me,

- The gleam of an aged star, is Namo Amida Butsu
- The brightness of my students' smiles, is Namo Amida Butsu
- The love and warmth my uncle has left me, is Namo Amida Butsu
- The strength to face this life as it is, is Namo Amida Butsu
- The immeasurable light of Amida, and my identification with it, is Namo Amida Butsu

With Gassho, Namo Amida Butsu

**WHEN THERE IS ROOM FOR DOUBT AND
QUESTIONING, THERE IS ALSO ROOM FOR AN
ENTRUSTING HEART**

By Seth G. Read



Good morning Ekoji,

For those of y'all that don't know me, my name is Seth. I converted to Buddhism eight years ago at a Fó Guāng Shān temple in New York's Chinatown, and I've been attending Ekoji for about seven years on-and-off. In Jōdo Shinshū, I found a peace and belonging that I couldn't find in my original tradition, and I will be forever grateful for that. However, my Dharma Talk this morning is not about gratitude, but about doubt. As a tiny religious minority in this country, I'm sure that I am not the only person here who has doubted the Buddha's teachings and wavered in their faith. In The Larger Sūtra, Śākyamuni Buddha states:

((Seth's Dharma Message: Cont. on Pg. 13)

“Because of their doubts of the Buddha’s wisdom, they have been born in palaces. Although they receive no punishment or ill treatment even for a single moment, they must pass five hundred years there without being able to see the Three Treasures, make offerings to the Buddha, or cultivate a store of virtue. This is distressing to them. Though there are other pleasures, they do not enjoy living there.”[1] [

I must admit that this will undoubtedly be my fate in the Pure Land. Shinran Shōnin, in his Essentials on Faith Alone, wrote “shinjin is like a diamond, never breaking, or degenerating, or becoming fragmented.”[1] Now, I don’t know about all y’all, but my shinjin is definitely not the diamond-like shinjin of Hōnen and Shinran.

However, I don’t want this message to come across as pessimistic. There’s a reason I’m still here giving this Dharma Talk and I’m still with y’all every Sunday. Shinran Shōnin, in his Tannishō, is quoted as saying “Even a virtuous person can attain rebirth in the Pure Land, how much more easily a wicked person!”[2] Shinran, despite being a great shōnin, a “saint,” believed that he was the lowest of wicked beings. He called himself gutoku, the “stubble-haired idiot” and bonbu, a “foolish being.” Now, I’m no shōnin, I’m definitely a bonbu, and – if my hairline is any indication – I’m well on my way to being a gutoku, and the Pure Land path is the only one open to me. Like Shinran also is quoted in the Tannishō, “I find myself totally incapable of any kind of meritorious deed.”[3] No matter what doubts we have, no matter what mistakes we make, or what sins we may commit, Amida Buddha is always there waiting for us. I think the late great Alfred Bloom put this best in his book Strategies for Modern Living, where he said “If it were possible for anyone ultimately to go to hell, Amida’s Vow would be meaningless, since he vowed that he would not accept enlightenment unless all other beings were enlightened with him. Ultimately, with Amida’s Vow fulfilled, there could not remain an unenlightened person.”[4]

So, if you also feel the doubts and pressures of life, no worries. I’ll be chilling in the palace in the Pure Land, I’ll save you a spot, and we can pass the five hundred years’ exile together. Even if it takes hundreds of kalpas, every sentient being will eventually encounter the Buddha’s teachings, realize they are already embraced by Amida’s Vow, and join us. After all, as Shinran is quoted in the Tannishō, finally, “the Nembutsu alone is true.” This universalist outlook is what brought me to Buddhism, and what keeps me coming back here every Sunday to be grateful with y’all.

Please join me in gasshō.

NAMO AMIDA BUTSU

SETH READ'S END NOTES

- [1] "The Sutra on the Buddha of Infinite Life Delivered by Śākyamuni Buddha." The Three Pure Land Sutras, translated by Hisao Inagaki, Rev. 2nd ed., Taishō Vol. 12, No. 360, BDK America, Inc., 2003, p. 59, www.bdkamerica.org/product/the-three-pure-land-sutras/.
- [2] Shinran, Gutoku. "Notes on 'Essentials of Faith Alone'." The Collected Works of Shinran, translated by Dennis Hirota et al., Vol. I: The Writings, Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha, 1997, p. 455.
- [3] Yuienbō. "Tannishō: Passages Deploring Deviations of Faith." Translated by Bandō Shōjun. Tannishō: Passages Deploring Deviations of Faith / Rennyo Shōnin Ofumi: The Letters of Rennyo, Taishō Vol. 83, No. 2661, Bukkyō Dendō Kyōkai America, Inc., 1996, p. 11, www.bdkamerica.org/product/tannisho-passages-deploring-deviations-of-faith-and-rennyo-shonin-ofumi-the-letters-of-rennyo/.
- [4] Yuienbō. "Tannishō: Passages Deploring Deviations of Faith." Translated by Bandō Shōjun. Tannishō: Passages Deploring Deviations of Faith / Rennyo Shōnin Ofumi: The Letters of Rennyo, Taishō Vol. 83, No. 2661, Bukkyō Dendō Kyōkai America, Inc., 1996, p. 10, www.bdkamerica.org/product/tannisho-passages-deploring-deviations-of-faith-and-rennyo-shonin-ofumi-the-letters-of-rennyo/.
- [5] Bloom, Alfred. "The Issue of Hell." Strategies for Modern Living: A Commentary with the Text of the Tannishō, Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1992, p. 137, www.bdkamerica.org/product/a-commentary-with-the-text-of-the-tannisho-strategies-for-modern-living/.
-



**SLOW DOWN, MAYBE, JUST MAYBE,
TIME WILL SLOW DOWN WITH YOU.**

BY TIMOTHY LIUX

- A. Talk about the fall. Equinox last week. Mid Autumn Festival the next
1. Descriptors
 - a. Sitting in traffic noticing it's darker day by day, pumpkin spice sneaking back onto menus, four days of football every week.
 - b. Before you know it crackling leaves, Halloween candy, the Christmas blitz.
 2. Growing up here, took these kinda for granted. At most a brief respite between the summer and winter.

(Timothy Liux Dharma Message: Cont. from Pg. 14)

3. Going to School in LA Desert
 - a. Perpetual purgatory wake up shivering and three hours later, you've sweated your first Nalgene of the day.

- B. Moving back has been learning (or relearning) to appreciate the changing of seasons
 1. All the little quirks and all the gripes of each season
 2. Just as soon as I felt like you know, groove, the next one sneaks up.
 - a. Like honestly wasn't Obon just a few weeks ago?
 3. Looking back, shocking how quickly each one flies by ... Barely leaving you any time with it.
 4. Feeling that brevity in my body only adds a growing pressure to make the most of each season, to set goals, to make lists, to book my calendar block, by block, by block.

- C. That is the story I want to talk about today: How desperately we hope to accomplish the things we said we would in the short amount of time we have.
 1. New Year's Resolutions – in case forgotten old, gonna need a new one in about 3 months.
 - a. School calendar, weekly work meetings, or maybe your poor sour quarterly goals.
 2. All the things: want to do, need to do, promised you would get to, have also been putting off,
 3. You know what they are ...
 - a. Terrible truth is: you also know that getting them done doesn't make things better, because before you know it, you're onto the next.

- D. Desire. Finding comfort in discomfort not doing things
 1. Lose present moment, letting life slip you by
 2. Begs the question – Which life is the life you want to live? The one you'll actually remember enough to enjoy (and enjoy enough to remember)

- E. Guided activity
 1. It'll be October – what are the things you need to do?
 2. Breathe
 3. One at a time. Take it in fully, set it aside
 4. Breathe ^^ Breathe ^^ Breathe
 5. Let it all go.

- F. Summary
 1. Slow down, maybe just maybe, time will slow down with you.

NAMO AMIDA BUTSU



LEARN and PRACTICE TAI CHI AT EKOJI

- **What:** Lessons in Tai Chi (Chen Pan Ling Synthetic Form)
- **When:** Every Tuesday at 7:30 pm
- **Where:** Hondo at Ekoji Buddhist Temple, 6500 Lake Haven Lane, Fairfax Station, VA

Instructor: Ekoji Minister's Assistant Rob Fike. Rob has studied Martial Arts for almost 20 years, and he has studied and practiced Tai Chi (Chen Pan Ling Synthetic Form) for almost 10 years. Rob taught Tai Chi for a little more than two years at the University of Maryland, College Park, in their Continuing Adult Education Program.

Details: Classes will generally be held on Tuesday evenings at 7:30 pm and last about an hour or less. All levels of learners from beginners on are welcome. There is no charge for the class but donations for the Temple upkeep and utilities are welcome. Wear loose, comfortable clothing and good supportive shoes (tennis shoes are usually good). We will be exercising, but not too heavily, so bringing full water bottle is recommended.

About Tai Chi: Tai Chi is an old Chinese art that is often described as "mediation in motion." At the physical level Tai Chi is a form of low-impact exercise appropriate for all ages. Tai Chi's health benefits, both physical and mental, have been cited by many prominent organizations like Harvard Medical School (which has published a book on Tai Chi) and AARP. And there are numerous scientific studies that support these health claims.

WHY MEDITATE

BY FRANK SWITHERS

Every Thursday at 7:30 pm, a group of 5-25 folks gather at the temple to meditate. If you attended any Sunday service you've probably heard the meditation announcement and may have wondered what is this meditation stuff all about? I'll try to "enlighten" you on that!



What meditation is not. It's not a practice to turn your mind off, cease thinking, or create spontaneous idyllic bliss. We can't turn our minds off any more than we can stop our heart from beating. And although idyllic bliss can happen during a meditation, it's not viewed as an intended "goal" as such.

So, what is it? It's sitting. Or lying down. Or standing. Or walking. Getting still, doing nothing, or moving slowly while not trying to get anywhere. And as the body relaxes, one can observe mind activities occurring at the time.

Our minds are like untrained puppies. Running and jumping a lot, excited about the next new thing, resistant to being trained...similar to our egos. If one can "train their puppy", stimuli will still occur, but don't have to be reacted to. We too can train ourselves slightly.

Although meditation may sound simple, it is by no means easy. It takes gentle, compassionate, practice.

So, what does any of this have to do with Shin Buddhism? Meditation helps to observe one's "foolish nature", ego driven thoughts and reactive responses which are part of the human condition. The Nembutsu is a mantra which redirects attention to the Amida Buddha inside each of us, accepting ourselves and others as they are, acting with gentleness, humor, love, and respect.



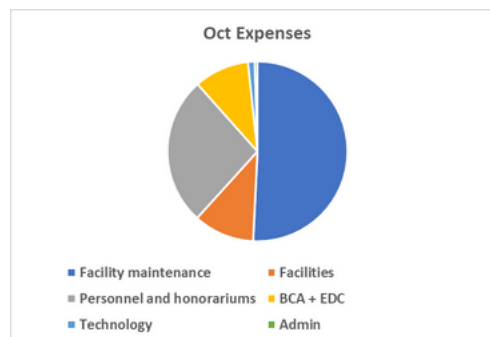
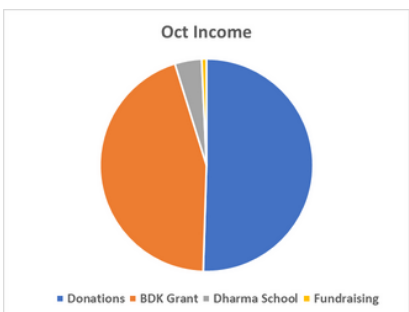
MONTHLY TREASURER'S REPORT

By Maya Horio, 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.

Oct 2025 Finance Flows: You'll find a large imbalance between our income and expenses for this month, which is partly artificial in that we are awaiting a significant chunk of our income (our parsonage rental) and paid a large chunk of our annual facility maintenance contract for inspection services rendered from May to September. These numbers, however, do accurately reflect the cyclical financial fluctuations throughout the year, whether due to seasonal use of heating and cooling, Obon income, Dharma School registrations, facility insurance payments, etc. We hope these monthly snapshots are helping sangha members better understand these cycles and how your Board strives to be responsible stewards of your donations and our other income streams. We also look forward to discussing these trends with you at our 16 November annual meeting, where we will seek sangha approval for our 2026 budget!

- **Income (\$8,107):** Sangha donations and our BDK minister support grant comprised 95% of our income for this month. We continued to register Dharma School students for the 2025-2026 school year, and we look forward to receiving our parsonage rental check later this month.
- **Expenses (\$13,099):** The largest chunk of our expenses this month went to our annual facilities maintenance contract with Tarim Cooling and Heating LLC. Mr. Muhammet, our service specialist, inspects our temple facilities on a weekly basis, and we have enjoyed a year of his quiet fixes and recommendations and far fewer facility emergencies. Personnel and honorariums, regular facility expenses, and our BCA dues comprised the other main aspects of our expenses for this month.



John Barnes
 Jane Blechman
 Jessica Brooks
 Eugenia Burkes
 Evan Cantwell
 Alexander Corbin
 Joseph Crilley
 Mahkameh Doroud
 Matthew Doubrava
 Stanley Fujii
 Connie Hoffman
 Marisa and Tamon Honda
 Maya and Brant Horio
 Emily Ihara
 Lindsay Innis
 Medium Dequan Jones

Yuko Keicho
 Sandra Lukic-Dapoingy
 Christopher Macey
 Thea Maggard
 Arlene and Wayne Minami
 John Mruk
 Ken and Nori Nakamura
(in memory of Nora Nagatani)
 Ken and Nori Nakamura
 Lisa and Greg Nakamura
 Kim Nguyen and Hung Vo
 Jordan Norkewicz
 Alexandra O'Brien
 Lauren Rabil
 Jerry Rankin
 Seth Read

Edward Sams
 Roger Scott
 Ajit and Samanthie Silva
 Edgar Sullivan
 Frank Swithers
 Gary Tanigawa
 Tsuji Living Trust
*(in memory of Rev. Kenryu
 and Mrs. Sakaye Tsuji)*
 Pilar Uelmen
 Charles Uyeda
(in memory of Mrs. Sakaye Tsuji)
 Gabrielle and Bien Vu
(in memory of Mrs. Sakaye Tsuji)



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.

The movie for **November is "Coraline"**. The Movie Discussion Group will **meet next on Sunday, November 16, at 2:30 pm.**

The movie can be streamed free through Tubi: <https://tubitv.com/movies/667315/coraline> .

Join the Zoom Movie Discussion
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84021310685>

Meeting ID: 840 2131 0685

THE ANNUAL EKOJI PET MEMORIAL SERVICE WILL BE HELD ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 16, AT 11:00 AM



LOSING A BELOVED PET IN OUR LIFE

By Rev. Bishop Marvin Harada

i just received word from my sister-in-law and brother-in-law in Oregon that they lost their beloved pet dog. They have had several dogs over the years, but as many of you know and have experienced, to lose a pet is like losing a member of your family.



Many years ago, our first family pet was a cat named Fluffy. Fluffy came into our lives when my daughter was in preschool, about 4 or 5. Someone had abandoned a kitten at the preschool and Keiko brought her home. She walked in the door carrying the kitten and said, "Can we keep her?" How could anyone say no to that? We adopted her and my daughter named her Fluffy.

Fluffy grew up with our kids over the course of the next 16 years or so. When my daughter was in college, Fluffy approached the end of her life. Keiko stayed by Fluffy's side for about three days, just lying next to her and trying to comfort her. It was like losing a best friend for my daughter, and for the rest of us, it was like losing a member of our family.

After she passed, we held a little service for her in front of our Obutsudan. We chanted the Juseige and then I offered a little message. I shared that although we took Fluffy in as a kitten and provided a home for her for all of those years, she was the one who gave more to us in her companionship and loving warmth.

After she passed, we held a little service for her in front of our Obutsudan. We chanted the Juseige and then I offered a little message. I shared that although we took Fluffy in as a kitten and provided a home for her for all of those years, she was the one who gave more to us in her companionship and loving warmth.

In Buddhism, animals are regarded as sentient beings on the same level as humans. We are not above animals, but we too stand on the same ground as sentient beings.

(Bishop Harada on Losing a Beloved Pet, Cont. on Pg. 20)

It made me reflect on our life as humans. Can we say that we gave more of ourselves as a human being than what we took from the world during the course of our life? To be able to be like Fluffy, and to give warmth, unwavering companionship and devotion for your entire life, can I say the same thing about my own life when it comes to an end? I really doubt it.

Our pets give us so much more than what we give them.

Recently, I met a woman who raises puppies to become guide dogs for the visually impaired. She takes the puppy in, nurtures and raises them for one to two years in preparation for their “acceptance” into a guide dog program, where they eventually become full-time guide dogs.

I asked her, “Isn’t it hard to give them up after you have raised them?”

She replied that it was hard, but just knowing how much they would be able to help a visually impaired person comforts her to know she has raised the guide dogs that is able to help their owner and master in so many ways.

She shared how skilled and intuitive a guide dog can be. A guide dog not only shows the way for their owner, but is aware of things like a low ceiling or something that their owner might bump their head against, so they go around such obstructions. It is amazing what a guide dog can do for their owner.

Animals are now being used as therapy and can bring warmth and light to those who are physically or mentally suffering. Some years ago, I met a therapist who did that exact thing, and she had a farm with many animals, but she was a therapist. Her therapy “method” was to bring her patients to her farm and let them just be around and interact with the animals. The animals brought light and warmth to them.

We receive light and warmth from the Dharma, from the teachings, from Namo Amida Butsu. We receive light and warmth from our pets as well. When they pass, we deeply miss them, but we can reflect on the light and warmth we received from them in life, and we can reflect on what we can do as a human being to give something to the world while we have this brief life of our own.

Namo Amida Butsu

**THE ANNUAL EKOJI PET MEMORIAL SERVICE WILL BE
HELD ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 16, AT 11:00 AM**

WASHINGTON POST – Religion Section

**WILL MY DOG BE IN HEAVEN? WHY GRIEVING PET OWNERS TURN
TO RELIGIOUS GROUPS.**

**([HTTPS://WWW.WASHINGTONPOST.COM/NATION/2025/09/14/PET-GRIEF-RELIGIOUS-
CHAPLAINS-SUPPORT/](https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2025/09/14/pet-grief-religious-chaplains-support/))**

Americans are reexamining the relationship between humans and the natural world. It's changing their religious and spiritual beliefs and practices.

By Michelle Boorstein
September 14, 2025



Gravestones at Hartsdale Pet Cemetery & Crematory in Hartsdale, New York. (Paola Chapdelaine/For The Washington Post)

When her Old English bulldog Lucy contracted lymphoma and died unexpectedly last year, Ingrid Nelson was rocked by grief. The dog was a deep source of support for Nelson, a sometimes overwhelmed single mom. “She was just my soul dog.”

Nelson’s grief was compounded by responses she got to her sadness: Animals don’t even have souls, a neighbor said. A colleague told her animals don’t go to heaven and she’d never see Lucy again.

Nelson wanted answers to these theological and spiritual questions from her Christian faith, but she was wary of mentioning them at the Congregational church she attends in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Even though the denomination is liberal, she worried someone at the church would repeat the same unsympathetic doctrine. Instead, she said, “I internalized and prayed on it.”

And she went to see an animal chaplain



((The Rev. Ginny Mikita, a pet chaplain, with her dog Kadie, who died in 2018. (Courtesy of Ginny Mikita))

The existence of animal chaplains, who offer spiritual care for people with pets, for people who work with animals and for animals themselves, is just one example of how Americans are increasingly reexamining the

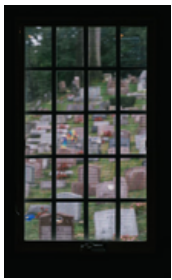
(Will My Dog be in Heaven, Cont. on Pg. 22)

(Will My Dog be in Heaven, Cont. from Pg. 21)

relationship between humans and the natural world, and in the process changing their religious and spiritual beliefs and practices.

Nelson met twice at a coffee shop with the Rev. Ginny Mikita, an ordained interfaith minister who runs a pet grief support group. Nelson wanted to know: How does God see nonhuman animals? She told Mikita about her feeling that her connection with Lucy contained mutual consciousness — even holiness.

What do you believe, Mikita recalls asking Nelson. How do you imagine heaven? “This is really about, for the first time, for a lot of people, deeply thinking about these issues,” Mikita told *The Washington Post*. “What do I believe and why?”



Graves as seen from an office window at Hartsdale Pet Cemetery & Crematory. It opened in 1896. (Paola Chapdelaine /For The Washington Post))

The spiritual counsel from Mikita helped lift the “horrible gray cloud” of Lucy’s death. It led Nelson to delve into scriptural references to animals: In Genesis, God calls the creation of animals “good.” In the story of Noah, God makes a covenant with “every living creature.” God personally feeds animals in the Book of Psalms.

“Ultimately, what was my relationship with Lucy? It was love. There was a love, there was a bond. And what is God? God is love,” Nelson said. “What I choose to believe is we’re all part of God’s creation. And in some way, shape or form we will all be reunited again.”

THE RISE OF ‘ANIMAL THEOLOGY’

Nelson’s experience is a small window into the growing sphere of faith-based support for people grieving animals.

Congregations and other spiritual and religious groups are increasingly offering grief programs for people who lost animals. Major theological groups such as the American Academy of Religion and the Society for Biblical Studies now have units devoted to “animal theology” research. That realm includes religious textual references and rituals about bonds between humans and animals, and the presence of religious-like behavior in animals, such as mourning rituals.

The percentage of Americans who say their pets are “part of their family” has jumped in the past two decades from about 80 to 97 percent, Pew Research found. In a 2023 poll, Pew found that 51 percent of pet owners said their animal was as much a family member as a human was.

(Will My Dog be in Heaven, Cont. on Pg. 23)

(*Will My Dog be in Heaven, Cont. from Pg. 22*)



((Rabbi Andrea Frank leads Nancy and Ken Skor, along with their friends, to their dog's funeral at Hartsdale on Sept. 5. (Paola Chapdelaine/For The Washington Post))

Pet ownership surged during the pandemic, and homebound people grew deeply close to their companion animals. New research has expanded what's known about animals' capacity for empathy and wonder — attributes of spiritual experience. The rise in faith-based pet grief support also reflects that many Americans are increasingly exploring religion and spirituality focused more on nature as a whole and less on the idea of humans at the center.

"I see a lot of movement" in the organized religious world about nonhuman life, said the Rev. Sarah Bowen, an author who co-founded the Compassion Consortium, which offers resources about animals and spirituality and houses a chaplaincy training program. "We see many traditional faith groups making statements that are earth-based, and we can slip animals into there if we raise that question."

A major development was "Laudato Si," Pope Francis's historic 2015 teaching document urging care for the environment. In it he wrote that "every act of cruelty towards any creature is 'contrary to human dignity,'" and, about the afterlife: "Eternal life will be a shared experience of awe, in which each creature, resplendently transfigured, will take its rightful place."

In 2015, several leaders with the conservative Southern Baptist Convention and with the Humane Society of the United States (now called Humane World for Animals) helped launch a petition called "Every Living Thing" meant to "reclaim that evangelical tradition of understanding animals as an important part of God's creation," said Karen Swallow Prior, a Christian author who was part of the petition campaign and was at the time a member of the Humane Society's now-defunct Faith Advisory Council.

The petition, which got more than 1,300 signatures, said that although humans "have greater worth" than other animals, humans cannot treat them as objects or be cruel to them. The effort fizzled out. In 2017 the SBC posted a video defending the dignity of animals, but it soon took down the video and apologized because it mentioned animal life as sacred in the same sentence as fetal life.

"As modern Americans we are deeply influenced by utilitarianism," Prior said. "We measure worth according to usefulness. That is a philosophy more than theology."

(*Will My Dog be in Heaven, Cont. on Pg. 24*)

'ANIMALS ARE PURE LOVE'

Even secular groups are responding to the evolving needs of religious people and their pets.

Raised Catholic, Ed Pessalano, a 42-year-old Brooklyn hotel security guard, has dabbled in recent years with Baptist churches and watches televangelists like Joel Osteen and Charles Stanley. He still reads his archdiocesan newspaper. But when his 14-year-old gray and white cat, Nugget, died in July, he didn't seek help from traditional religious sources. He'd had multiple experiences in churches of people mocking his empathy for animals and his decision not to eat meat. He typed into Google: "Do pets go to heaven?" The results led to a Christian grief curriculum prepared by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals.



((Frank officiates the service for Chance, Nancy and Ken Skor's dog. (Paola Chapdelaine/For The Washington Post))

"Catholics, Baptists — they're focused on people. But when you look at the Bible, the entire thing is scattered with animals, animals have the same soul," he said. Losing Nugget was "like losing a human being, because animals are pure love."

He was blown away by PETA's grief program, which has daily devotionals, reflections and journaling prompts for five weeks. "When I found this program ... it was so beautiful," he said.

The prompt on the third day asked: "How does reflecting on the reality of Heaven help you with the pain?" Pessalano's response: "I imagine your new life to be free of old age and pain, and my Lord will hold you until we're reunited again."

Ed Martin, vice president of Hartsdale Pet Cemetery & Crematory, a historic graveyard north of New York City that buries 250 to 300 pets each year, said he's seen more clergy come to funerals in recent years. At the same time, he encounters fewer people who sneer at the idea of a pet cemetery.

"It was like: 'Your pet died, what are you crying for? Just go get another one,'" he said. "Fortunately, we've progressed."

One day this month, Martin led a rabbi to a grave site where a couple and about 10 of their friends had assembled to bury a black terrier mix named Chance. The rabbi cited Genesis, which describes God creating animals before humans. The couple held each other and watched the small casket be lowered into the earth.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES, NOVEMBER 2025

WEEKLY

SUNDAY

- CHILDREN'S DHARMA SCHOOL, 9:30am – 10:30am, EVERY SUNDAY EXCEPT THE LAST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH WHEN NO CLASS IS SCHEDULED
- HYBRID SERVICE, 11:00am WITH AN AFTER-SERVICE HYBRID DHARMA DISCUSSION IN THE HONDO.

TUESDAY

- TAI CHI CLASS 7:30 PM IN THE HONDO

WEDNESDAY

- DHARMA BREEZE ONLINE SERVICE AND FOLLOWING DISCUSSION, 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, **ALL ARE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE**
- SHOTSUKI – 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 NAJIN 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)

- **ANNUAL PET MEMORIAL SERVICE**, SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 16 AT 11:00 AM IN THE HONDO
- **ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SANGHA**, SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 16 AT 1:00 pm, ALL ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND. A LIGHT LUNCH WILL BE SERVED IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE 11:00 am SERVICE FOR THOSE WHO PLAN TO ATTEND THE MEETING.
- BUDDHIST MOVIE GROUP DISCUSSION, "CORALINE" at 2:30 PM 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



2025-2026 CHILDREN'S DHARMA SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

By Maya Horio and Kim Nguyen, Co-Superintendents



SEPT. 2025	OCT. 2025	NOV. 2025 PET MEMORIAL & T-DAY	DEC. 2026 BODHI DAY
<p>07 No DS</p> <p>14 No DS – Seminar “What we Teach”</p> <p>21 No DS – Seminar “What we Teach”</p> <p>28 No DS – Seminar, “What We Teach”</p>	<p>10.5 0930-1030 am DS Class</p> <p>12 NO DS (3-day weekend)</p> <p>19 0930-1030 am DS Service & Tsuji Center Cleaning</p> <p>26 0930- 103- am DS Class</p>	<p>02 0930-1030 am DS Class (Daylight Savings Ends)</p> <p>09 0930-1030 am DS Service & Tsuji Center Cleaning</p> <p>16 NO DS</p> <p>23 0930-1030 am DS Class</p> <p>30 NO DS Thanksgiving Weekend</p>	<p>07 0930-1030 am DS Class</p> <p>14 0930-1030 am JOINT DS Class</p> <p>21 0930-1030 am DS Service & Tsuji Center Cleaning</p> <p>28 NO DS</p>
JAN. 2026 HO ONKO	FEB. 2026 NEHAN E /NIRVANA DAY	MARCH 2026 OHIGAN	APRIL 2026 HANAMATSURI
<p>04 0930-1030 am DS Class</p> <p>11 0930-1030 am DS Service & Tsuji Center Cleaning</p> <p>18 NO DS (3- day weekend)</p> <p>25 0930- 1030 - am DS Class</p>	<p>01 0930-1030 am DS Class</p> <p>08 0930-1030 am DS Service & Tsuji Center Cleaning</p> <p>15 NO DS (3- day weekend)</p> <p>22 0930-1030 am DS Class</p>	<p>01 0930-1030 am DS Class</p> <p>08 NO DS (Daylight Savings begins)</p> <p>15 0930-1030 am DS Service & Tsuji Center Cleaning</p> <p>22 0930-1030 am DS Class</p> <p>29 NO DS</p>	<p>05 NO DS</p> <p>12 1045-1200 Special Joint Hanamatsuri Service</p> <p>19 0930-1030 am DS Class</p> <p>26 0930-1030 am JOINT DS Class</p>
MAY 2026 GOTAN E	JUNE 2026	QUESTIONS ?	
<p>03 0930-1030 am DS Class</p> <p>10 0930-1030 am DS Service & Tsuji Center Cleaning</p> <p>17 0930-1030 am DS Class</p> <p>24 NO DS (3-Day Weekend)</p> <p>31 0930 am Joint End of Year Party</p>	<p>NO DHARMA SCHOOL – HAVE A GOOD SUMMER</p>	<p>PLEASE CONTACT: ekojidharmaschool@ gmail.com</p>	<p></p>

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

YOUR TEMPLE LEADERS

**SUPERVISING MINISTER
REV. KURT RYE**

YOUR TEMPLE BOARD

**PRESIDENT: Andrea Chapman
VICE PRESIDENT: Frank Swithers
SECRETARY: Michael Huff
TREASURER: Maya Horio
AT LARGE: Mahkameh Doroud
AT LARGE: Roger Scott
AT LARGE: Jesse Barrick**

YOUR TEMPLE TRUSTEES

Kim Nguyen Ed Sams

KALAVINKA STAFF

**MANAGING EDITOR: Ken Nakamura
DISTRIBUTION: Andrea Chapman
84,000 Thoughts: Rev. Kurt Rye
SECRETARY'S REPORT: Michael Paul Huff
TREASURER'S REPORT: Maya Horio
DHARMA SCHOOL: Maya Horio and Kim Nguyen
CALENDAR & EVENTS: Pilar Uelman
FROM THE BOARD: Andrea Chapman
NEN DAIKO: Emily Ihara**

SERVICES

REV. KURT RYE, SUPERVISING MINISTER TO EKOJI

**REV. ERICK ISHII, MINISTER'S ASSISTANT WITH ORDINATION (TOKUDO)
BOB SHIMOKAJI, CERTIFIED MINISTER'S ASSISTANT
ROB FIKE, CERTIFIED MINISTER'S ASSISTANT
TRUC VO, CERTIFIED MINISTER'S ASSISTANT
KEN NAKAMURA, CERTIFIED MINISTER'S ASSISTANT (RET.)
PILAR UELMAN, LAY DHARMA LEADER
MOLLY KURAMOTO, LAY DHARMA LEADER
ED SAMS: LAY DHARMA LEADER AND SERVICE CHAIR COORDINATOR**

**EKOJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE
6500 LAKEHAVEN LANE
FAIRFAX STATION, VIRGINIA 22039**