



WHY JODO SHINSHU?

By Victor A. Ogundipe Jr.

As you know, our temple has weekly online Buddhism classes. Monday is for English speakers, and Thursday is for Japanese speakers. I met Victor in the English Buddhism class. In the class, I often think that his comments are the same as my thoughts which I could not express in English. He lives in Ohio, so he doesn't come to our temple in person. But when he visits our temple, I hope and believe that our members will welcome him warmly as your Dharma friend.



My initial exposure to Buddhism started in a Blockbuster Video store with my mother at 11 years old. I don't remember the date, but it was probably on a Friday. Some Fridays after school we would go to Blockbuster. My mom would rent a couple of the newest VHS releases for her and my father to watch over the weekend. And, if I had been keeping my grades up I would be able to add a video game to her stack.

While I wouldn't get to watch all of the movies that mom and dad would rent, I did enjoy looking at the cover art. On the Friday in question, I saw the cover art for the movie Kundun. I saw a cute young face in elaborate yellow threads. I was excited because the kid on the cover looked cool to me, and the fact that there was a kid on the cover meant that I would probably be able to watch this movie with my parents, which always felt like a treat.

That weekend, I would discover that the boy on the cover, Kundun, was the likeness of the Dalai Lama as a young child. I had seen the Dalai Lama before, and had concluded three things about him: 1) that he was Buddhist, 2) that he always seemed to be pretty happy, and 3) that my mom liked him. Though my parents were Christians, my mom always respected the teachings of the Dalai and to that extent, Buddhism. So, it was official, I too liked the Dalai Lama! And, after watching the movie over the weekend, I was proclaiming myself a mini-Dalai Lama at school the next week!

My interaction with Buddhism was surface-level at best for the next two decades. It was my daughter, Sati, that

in many ways made me begin to take Buddhism seriously. Sati was born with Sickle Cell Anemia, a potentially life-long blood disorder that causes red blood cells to sickle, resulting in painful episodes. While Sati's experience with the disease has been mild compared to some, she still experiences significant bouts of pain that sometimes require powerful painkillers like morphine and oxycodone. Experiencing Sati's first sickle cell related hospital visits at around two years old was earthshaking. I don't think that there is anything that can prepare you to see your child in that much pain.

Shortly after we returned home from one of our hospital stays I began reading Thich Nhat Hanh's *The Heart of the Buddha's Teachings*. In Thay's writing I found a beautiful explanation of the Buddha's teachings on suffering and the cessation of suffering. This was a needed balm as our young family was learning how to live a life of joy with promised pain.

As I continued my journey on the Buddhist path, the world was hit with the COVID-19 pandemic. I was also beginning to realize that to truly be a Buddhist one must embrace sangha, and the search for sangha led me to the East

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

November 2023



Date	Day	Time	Event
5	Sunday	8:30 a.m.	WBA meeting (In-person only*)
		10:00 a.m.	Family service/Dharma school /Polishing of altar items
12	Sunday	10:00 a.m.	Hōonkō Service (Day light savings ends)
19	Sunday	10:00 a.m.	Shotsuki service (monthly memorial)
21	Tuesday	7:00 p.m.	Temple board meeting
26	Sunday	10:00 a.m.	Family service/Dharma school

December

3	Sunday	10:00 a.m.	Family service/Dharma school
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Please check out the calendar on our website for the latest schedules and information. <https://www.bombu.org/>

*There is no Zoom access for this month's meeting since Naomi will be out of town.

UPCOMING EVENTS

NOVEMBER TOBAN

(group #1) *Janice Adachi, Wendy Adachi, Nina Costales, Satoko Davidson, Alice Horio, Doreen Imada, Elsie Lum, Denice Nakano, Diane Nishioka, Michi Takata, Miyoko Truong.*

monthly memorial service on November 19 at 10 a.m. The following families will observe memorials for loved ones this month. The following families will observe memorials for loved ones this month: *Chio Tominaga, Isono Hiratsuka, Joe Goto, Grace Goto, Kaz Yanaba, May Yamashita, Minoru Higuchi, Sataro & Kinuyo Hiwano, Shigeru Morita, Yoko Sugiyama, Tamaye Nakano Umemoto.*

In Berkeley, we will hold the service on November 12th at 10 a.m at the temple. Guest speaker is Professor Mark Blum of UC Berkeley.

The WBA would appreciate the help of its members on Sat, Nov 11th at 9 a.m. and Sun, Nov 12th at 8:30 a.m. to help prepare the Hoonko Lunch for the temple.

MOCHITSUKI

It's that time of year. We will be holding our Mochitsuki at the temple on December 10. Please see the form on page 4.

SUNDAY SERVICES

Services are now offered in-person! No RSVP needed. We look forward to seeing you at temple, but you can also attend via Zoom if you live far away or have to stay home for health reasons. Meeting ID: 854 0846 8091 Passcode: 539501.

HO-ONKO SERVICE (SHINRAN SHONIN ANNUAL MEMORIAL)

Literally the most important service in our Jodo Shinshu tradition is Ho-on-ko, the annual memorial service for Shinran Shonin. In Japan at the main Higashi Honganji temple, thousands of people will attend Ho-on-ko services.

TEMPLE BOARD ELECTIONS

Ballots will soon be sent out to elect our temple's board of directors for 2023. The board oversees the general management and administration of the temple. If you are interested in serving on the temple board, please contact the temple office.

SHOTSUKI MEMORIAL SERVICE

We will hold the Shotsuki

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HAPPY THANKSGIVING! Although not officially a Buddhist observance, the Thanksgiving holiday reflects the Buddhist teachings, the Buddha Dharma. The words “Namu Amida Butsu” express this interdependence and sense of gratitude. That’s why before eating, it’s nice to put our hands together and say the Nembutsu. And don’t forget to

say “itadakimasu” (I respectfully receive life of this foods. And I gratefully receive this food.).

PLEDGE REMINDER Only two months left to make your 2023 pledge donation. The upkeep, repair, and maintenance of our temple, as well as various programs and activities depend on the support and generosity of our members. Unlike other organizations, we don’t require

membership dues, however we rely on voluntary pledge donations from our members. If you haven’t yet made your pledge for this year and would like to do so, simply send a check in the amount of your choosing, marked “2023 pledge” to the temple, payable to Berkeley Higashi Honganji. To everyone who already pledged, we thank you very much.

LIFE HERE AND NOW

by Rev. Ken Yamada

Looking out my back window at a barren tree, I see hanging a solitary ripe persimmon—a sign of coming winter, cold winds and dark skies.

Another year passed, a new one begins. What have I accomplished, what lies ahead, where am I going? Thoughts swirl in my head.

Time is puzzling, passing so quickly, yet sometimes standing still. I see proof in the mirror each day, feel it in my bones and in the changing seasons. Sometimes I want to seize it, keep it still, to hold a fleeting joy, or the opposite, hope that it flies away quickly, taking with it, sadness and pain.

People usually believe time follows a straight line, with birth at one end and death at the other. Everything in-between is called life, “my life,” and within it lies good times and bad times. So much time spent seeking happiness, wealth, love and pleasure, but somehow come frustration, anger, hardship, illness and death. This world the Buddha called samsara.

A greater, more profound truth lies beyond the world of samsara. The Buddha described this truth in relation to time: Time has no beginning or end. It is infinite and boundless. All is connected, never divided, always One. Thus in Buddhism, time is symbolized, not by a line, but by a circle, without ends, always connected.

Nagarjuna (circa 150-250 C.E.), one of the seven masters of Pure Land

Buddhism, likened this truth to fire and wood. Fire burns with wood. Fire cannot burn by itself. Wood contains fire. Fire cannot be separate from wood, and wood cannot be separate from fire.

Nagarjuna then spoke about time: “The Buddha said a limit to the past cannot be seen. This world is without bounds, indeed, there is no beginning and no ending. How could there be a middle portion of that which has no “before” and “after”? It follows that “past” and “future” do not exist.”

This truth seems to explain the persimmon. I wonder, “When was it born?” Before it ripened, it was a blossom on a branch, before that, a sprout, and before that, a seed of a tree. And before that, it was another tree. It will fall or be picked, nourish someone or decompose and nourish the earth. At what point was it “born” and when does it “die.” The answer really is unclear.

The Buddha also observed that all is impermanent, constantly changing, and that nothing stays the same, much like the persimmon on the branch. Of course the seasons change, we grow old and our loved ones pass away. We can’t stop time. This is the truth of impermanence. This thought seems so sad and filled with loneliness.

However, the Buddha also observed the wholeness of life, the interconnectedness of all things, about Oneness, and about the folly

of dividing up the world by our misperceptions and ignorance. We do not exist alone in this life, suddenly being “born” and suddenly “dying.” Of course, our loved ones, our family and friends, and we ourselves, change with time, grow old, and pass away. We are impermanent.

We also are One and interconnected with each other, like fire and wood. The past is contained within our lives at this very moment. The future is contained within our lives at this very moment. If we look beyond the physical, beyond the impermanent, beyond the world of samsara, we understand the greater truth about life and death. There is no “past,” there is no “future,” there is no “birth” and there is no “death,” and consequently, no conflict between life and death.

This moment contains all of our loved ones, including those people who have passed away, and those people and children of the future. Being interconnected, they are part of our life in this present moment. This is how our limited “life” lives within the Great Life.

This is Oneness, this is the meaning of “now.” This is the meaning of “eternity.” This is the meaning of *sukhavati*, the Pure Land, the eternal land of peace and bliss. This is the meaning of *Namu Amida Butsu*.





MOCHITSUKI 2023

Eating mochi rice cakes is a Japanese New Year's tradition. Again this year we will be holding our annual Mochitsuki at the temple. On Dec. 10, Berkeley Ohtani basketball, Berkeley Higashi Honganji Adult Buddhist Association and Jr. YBA, will make mochi the old-fashioned way. Sweet rice will be steamed, kneaded, pounded, and then shaped by hand.

To order this freshly made mochi, please use this form and mail it by November 27 to the address below.

You may also order online at <https://bombu.org/>

Mochi Essentials

Komochi - small individual size mochi cakes. **Okasane** - a medium-size mochi stacked atop a large-size mochi. [These are typically placed on Buddhist altars, along with a tangerine, as a traditional offering at New Year's time. They are called Kagami mochi, because they are shaped like old-fashioned Japanese mirrors]. **Noshimochi** - a sheet of mochi [which can be cut into squares for family size servings].

恒例の大谷壮年会、バスケットボール・チームの合同基金募集「もちつき」が、12月10日(日)に行われます。「こもち」は、1ポンドにつき6ドル、「おかさね」も1セットにつき6ドルです。「のしもち」は一枚につき30ドルです。下記の申し込み用紙に注文を記入し、代金を同封して、11月27日までにお寺(1524 Oregon St., Berkeley, CA 94703)まで返送してください。チェックの支払先は、BERKELEY OHTANI ABA としてください。

また、シニア・シチズンで配達を希望される方は、その旨、申し込み用紙に記入してください。その他の方には配達また冷蔵庫に保存しかねますので、「もちつき」の当日午後3時ごろまでに、必ずお寺まで取りに来てください。

..... cut 切り取り線 cut

Name (名前) _____

Address (住所) _____

Telephone # (電話番号) _____

Komochi (こもち): \$6.00/lb _____ lb \$ _____

Kasane (かさね): \$6.00/set _____ set(s) \$ _____

Noshimochi (のしもち) \$30.00/sheet(5lb) _____ sheet(s) \$ _____

Total (合計) \$ _____

Berkeley Higashi Honganji Temple 1524 Oregon St. Berkeley, CA 94703

Please make your checks payable to **Berkeley Ohtani ABA**.

Info: 510 843-6933 **Note:** Everyone is responsible for picking up orders from the temple's social hall on December 10, Sunday, from noon to 3 p.m.

Senior citizens unable to drive may request delivery locally.

Late orders will not be accepted.



(Continued from page 1)

Bay Meditation Center (EBMC), a highly diverse Bay Area sangha that had moved their robust offerings online during the pandemic. Though EBMC's roots are in the convert Insight Meditation tradition, it has developed into a gathering place for teachers from many Buddhist backgrounds (Theravada, Zen, Tibetan, Nichiren, etc.). It was through EBMC that I first became aware of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism by way of a Rev. Duncan Ryūken Williams dharma talk. His talk was about his book, American Sutra, and the US government's incarceration of Japanese-Americans during World War II. I not only learned about Jodo Shinshu, I also learned about the role that Jodo Shinshu organizations, ministers, and sangha members played in assisting the spread

of the Buddhadharma in America. Through Japanese-American members of the EBMC sangha that had Jodo Shinshu practitioners and ministers in their lineage, I would also come to learn of Shinran and his expressions of the wisdom and compassion of Amida Buddha.

So, why Jodo Shinshu? As I began to learn more about the role that the nembutsu teaching played in the resilience of the Japanese-American community through internment and incarceration, I was deeply moved. Not only by the resilience, but by how the community members kept showing up for each other: sangha. The strength and humility of nembutsu practitioners is rare. As I began to study the nembutsu teaching I was struck by the reality that Amida Buddha's salvation is not only available to me, but to all,

without discrimination. I don't know what could be a more beautiful assurance. So, when I am without answers, deeply suffering, or feeling helpless when Sati has a particularly challenging hospital visit, I can both fully feel and fully entrust myself in Amida's working. It is beyond my understanding, yet whether the situation is seemingly "good", seemingly "bad", or anything beyond or between, I know that this wisdom and compassion pervades, in all situations. As I see it, the question is not why did I take up the Jodo Shinshu path, but rather what other path could I have taken after receiving the nembutsu teachings? For me, the answer is none, and this Hōonkō I am eternally grateful for the dharma friends that introduced me to a life of the nembutsu.

DONATIONS

2023 Pledges

Dave & Debbie Yatabe	1200
Steven & Kim Chew	100
Jane Fujii	1000
Wayne Kurahara	50
Lynn Wade	200

Donation

Victoria & Roger Jennings (In Memory of Sachi Yamada)	50
Darlene & Joel Hamady (In Memory of Sachi Yamada)	50
May Makiye Kaneko	300
Sentimental Strummers	320
Emi (In Memory of Sachi Yamada)	20

Stephen & Janice Adachi (In Memory of Sachi Yamada)	25
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Shotsuki

Darlene Wong (In Memory of Ito Yatabe)	41.29
Nina Costales & Robert Garvey (In Memory of Akiko Costales)	50
Kimberlie Moriwaki & Bruce Louie (In Memory of Tad Moriwaki)	50
Satoko Davidson (In Memory of Ernie Nagatoshi)	50
Barbara Inouye (In Memory of Robert Yamada)	25
Naomi & Ken Yamada (In Memory of Robert Yamada)	100
Sachiye Toyofuku (In Memory of Moto Yanaba & Fumiko Yanaba)	100

Michael & Pamela Yanaba (In Memory of Moto Yanaba)	25
Michael & Pamela Yanaba (In Memory of Fumiko Yanaba)	25
Michael Yatabe (In Memory of Ito Yatabe)	100
Grace/Harry Kubota Yee/Yee (In Memory of Shoji Kubota)	50

2020 Fundraising Drive

Shannon & Satoko Davidson	100
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Higan

Gregory Takahashi	50
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Donations received by the 15th of each month are listed. Donations received after that date, are published the following month.



Thank you everyone for your donations, time, energy and support. Because of you, our temple exists for us and for future generations. Help us by calling or emailing the temple if names are inadvertently omitted from acknowledgements or donations. Domo arigato gozaimashita!

パークレー東本願寺会報

2023年11月号

11月 お寺の行事予定

5日(日) 午前10時 日曜礼拝、ダルマ・スクール

12日(日) 午前10時 報恩講法要

19日(火) 午前10時 日曜礼拝、ダルマ・スクール

21日(日) 午後7時 仏教会定例理事会

26日(日) 午前10時 日曜礼拝、ダルマ・スクール

12月

12月3日 午前10時 成道会法要

お寺の日曜礼拝にはマスクをご着用の上、ご参詣ください。

お寺でのお参りがご心配な方はzoomにて午前10時のお参りいただけます。

Meeting ID: 854 0846 8091 Passcode: 539501

11月当番(当番1): あだちジャニス、あだち ウェンディ、Costales ニーナ、Davidson さとこ、堀尾アリス、今田ドーリン、Lum エルシー、中野デニース、西岡 ダイアン、高田みち、みよこTruong (敬称略)

報恩講: 来る11月12日(日)午前10時より「報恩講」が厳修されます。浄土真宗の年中のお勤めとして、今日まで最も大切に受け継がれてきている法要が「報恩講」です。宗祖親鸞聖人のご命日を偲び、お念仏のみ教えが私たちの生活の力となっていることに感謝し、聖人の恩徳に報いる法要です。皆様でお参りしましょう。ご講師はカリフォルニア大学のマーク・ブラム先生です。

日本語法話会(ズーム): 毎週木曜日午後4時からオンライン日本語法話会を開催しています。ご興味のある方は長開教使までご連絡ください。



一息の念仏

長 良子

先日、北米開教区の慶讃法要日本ツアーの同窓会を開催しました。

実は日本ツアーの初日、飛行機が成田空港に向かっている途中にあるご門徒が脳卒中を起こされ空港に到着するなり救急車で病院に搬送されました。監督部の長谷川囑託が救急車に同乗し病院に付き添い通訳をしました。

その方は日本で4ヶ月入院され家族以外とは面会謝絶。ご家族は日本語ができないながら病院の近くにアパートを借りられ献身的にその方を支えておられました。今は帰国しご自宅でリハビリに励んでおられます

徐々に回復され、先日の旅行の同窓会にご家族と一緒にご参加下さいました。別院での日曜礼拝の間、私は隣に座りました。まだ言葉が不自由で、何をお話されているか私には聞き取ることが出来ず、ご家族の方が言い直してくれましたがそのことによってその方とご家族とが共に過ごす時間の長さを感じられました。

正信偈のお勤めの時にその方の声が横から聞こえてきました。その声は流暢ではありませんが、しかしだからこそ叫びというか、何のてらいもない、生々しい声として響いてきました。

その方の「南無阿弥陀仏」の音は、苦しみ、悲しみ、喜び、その方の一生が詰まっているようなそれは文字でなくまさに「息」でした。

私が、このように感じたことは、私の側の感動であり、その方に対して私は何もできないのですが、この私はあるいは私たちは、ただただ受けるばかり、いただくばかりなのだ、ということも教えていただいたような気持ちです。

その方は、その日の同窓会でどのような言葉を発していたのでしょうか。私の知る限り、ひっそりと座っておられ、私が耳にしたのは、周りの人へのお礼の言葉、正信偈の言葉、それからご家族との談笑の声でした。以前から周りを気遣い、救急車の中ですら、自分の身体の心配でなく家族のことを心配していたと長谷川さんが言っていました。

多くの言葉がこの世界を飛び交っています。言葉によって傷つき傷つけられ、言葉によって物事も動いていきます。言葉は大事ですが、しかし、本当に大事なことは、言葉では語り尽くすことなど出来ない、それがわかっていて、それでも私たちは理解できないものを口にし、未知のものを知ろうとする。そうでなければ人間の智慧は止まることでしょう。

しかし、人類としてよりも、私たち一人ひとりの生死を考えますと、究極的には言葉ではなく「息」へと帰っていくのではないのでしょうか。おぎゃあ、と生まれた私たちが「南無阿弥陀仏」という一息へ、お浄土へ、帰っていく。そのように帰っていきたい、お浄土に生まれたい、とその方のお姿を見て感じさせていただきました。

Words of the Month | 今月の言葉

Embraced Amida's great compassion,
I respond with gratitude dedicating my life.

(Shinran's Hymns)

如来大悲の恩徳は 身を粉にしても報ずべし

(親鸞聖人)



If you have an email address, please consider switching to a paperless subscription. Please contact the temple if you are interested. Thank you.



Berkeley Higashi Honganji Buddhist Temple
1524 Oregon Street
Berkeley, CA 94703
U.S.A.

Address Correction Requested