

## THE GEPPO



### A publication of the Ogden Buddhist Temple

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801/392-7132

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### Why Was Buddha Here?

~By J.K. Hirano

"Make of yourself a light," said the Buddha, before he died. I think of this every morning as the east begins to tear off its many clouds of darkness, to send up the first signal — a white fan streaked with pink and violet, even green. An old man, he lay down between two sala trees, and he might have said anything, knowing it was his final hour. The light burns upward, it thickens and settles over the fields. Around him, the villagers gathered and stretched forward to listen. Even before the sun itself hangs, disattached, in the blue air, I am touched everywhere by its ocean of yellow waves. No doubt he thought of everything that had happened in his difficult life. And then I feel the sun itself as it blazes over the hills, like a million flowers on fire clearly I'm not needed, yet I feel myself turning into something of inexplicable value. Slowly, beneath the branches, he raised his head. He looked into the faces of that frightened crowd. The Buddha's Last Instruction, ~ Mary Oliver

of yourself a light." What did he mean?

Those who know me well know that I have a rather obsessive personality. I latch on to things and have a hard time letting them go. When I get obsessed with something, I think about it for hours and there are times I wake up early in the morning to try to write my thoughts down or at least put them in some sort of order. Last month I spoke of and wrote about the poet Mary Oliver. I have been reading so many of her poems; I have been obsessed with them. Therefore, this month I am sharing one of her more obviously Buddhist poems about what the Buddha must have thought in his last moments. His last words were said to have been, "Make

In April we are celebrating the birthday of Siddhartha Gautama who become the historical Buddha Shakyamuni. It is still being argued by scholars as to whether he was born in 568 or even 480 BCE. Let's just say he lived a very long time ago. We are still celebrating his birthday in April, after 2600 years. What is it that made this man so important and why do you think we still celebrate his birth, death and enlightenment? Buddha was said to have become the Buddha at the age of 35 and died at 80. He taught for 45 years.

I have been a BCA minister for 33 years. I'll be 63 years old this year, which feels pretty old. I have put most of my adult life trying to ensure that our temples and the Buddhist Churches of America continue for a little while longer. There is no comparison

between my little life and Shakyamuni Buddha's life, but if you add it together with the thousands of ministers before me, the sum total is countless! Take for example the life of Rev. Koyu Uchida. He was the first person to hold the office of the Bishop of the Buddhist Churches of America, the fourth person to be the director of the Buddhist Mission of North America. He said, "Nishi Hongwanji was the first Japanese (Buddhist denomination) to start an American mission, which in itself exemplifies the history of an eastward transmission of the Buddhist teachings (Bukkyo Tozen). This means that American Buddhists have considerable responsibility as pioneers for spreading the teachings around the World." ~Bishop Koyu Uchida, Bishop of the Buddhist Mission of North America (1930) "Issei Buddhism in the Americas"

What I am getting to is this; "Why is it important that the Buddhist Teachings or our temples continue?" Why have these thousands of years, filled with teachers, give of themselves to this simple sentence uttered by this Indian man? A while ago, I filmed an interview about our temple. The interviewer asked some very interesting



questions, but the one question that he asked that really stuck with me and was a catalyst for this article was, "If someone were to walk through those doors right now and they knew nothing about Buddhism, what would you tell them to summarize/explain your faith?" I really had to think about what I would want someone to know. Do I talk about the Doctrine? Do I talk about the history? The Japanese American experience of Buddhism in America? I really wasn't sure. I don't really remember exactly what I said. But now that I have had some time, to further obsess about this question. I would like to tell you why I think this temple is worth my life's work, why people for the past 2600 years have worked, given their

lives and were inspired by this man's words.

I know that when I give Dharma talks on Sundays or funerals and memorial services. I don't give a lot of details. When a person comes to the temple, I would first make it clear that there are many types of Buddhism and this temple is a Jodo Shinshu Buddhist temple. However, just the fact that there are a variety of forms of Buddhism and they are all valid and true for the people following them, is one of the reasons I love Buddhism. Then I explain why I chose Jodo Shinshu Buddhism as right for me, over the myriad forms of Buddhism now available. Jodo Shinshu Buddhism was the first organized form of Buddhism to establish itself in the United States in 1899. It's about time we Jodo Shinshu Buddhists shared these teachings with the larger American community and world. So, this is my answer to the question, "Why Jodo Shinshu?"

Within Buddhism I have found one of the most non-judgmental, compassionate teachings in the history of mankind. The historical Buddha Shakyamuni has said, "There are 84,000 paths to enlightenment." What he means by 84,000 paths is that there is an infinite number of ways to awaken to Truth. Each of us human beings are individuals, with our own histories and various causes and conditions which make up our lives. We each have our own stories and truths that make us who we are. Buddhism recognizes that the teachings must be flexible to encompass so many different viewpoints. There cannot be only one true and real teaching, just as there cannot be only one story or history to identify each and every one of us. Yet why is Jodo Shinshu, among all those 84,000 paths, the right truth for MY life?

Jodo Shinshu has enabled me to see myself as "the foolish being" I know I am. When Shinran said we are "foolish beings" this rang true for me. I know without a doubt that I am a foolish being, filled with greed, anger, ignorance; however, I recognize how my life has been blessed and I am alive as a result of the wondrous compassionate embrace of Amida Buddha, the essence of the relationships that surround me and allow me to exist. Jodo Shinshu has shown me my life is not about just me, the foolish being, but in the relationships the world has given me. The words, the terminology, the rituals, the traditions all resonate with who I am. This is why I am Jodo Shinshu Buddhist. Jodo Shinshu has allowed me the foolish being, to truly be myself, and appreciate my relationship with the world. This is why I celebrate the birth of the Buddha. This wise, wondrous man allowed millions of my forefathers to become lamps unto themselves which in turn, allowed me to see my foolish self and show me how the Universe loves me as I am. Now if you are reading this article, you must have some connection to the temples I am a part of. If so, I would like you to ask yourself, "Why should you celebrate the Buddha's birth?"

### Namo Amida Butsu.

### In Memory

The Ogden Buddhist Temple Sangha extends its deepest sympathies to the families of the following members who recently passed away.

May the family members find solace and comfort in the Nembutsu.

Namo Amida Butsu

Fumie Nagao Koga ~ December 30, 2019 Raymond Spry ~ January 31, 2020 Marlane Hirai ~ February 13, 2020

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The death of a loved one is a traumatic moment in life. There is loneliness, sadness, and frustration.

Yet, in that moment, there is the potentiality to personally expand, to reflect, to realize the meaning of great compassion in the event, to feel the deeper meaning of joy, to experience gratitude, and to find meaning and growth.

At that critical time, we are asked to participate in the preparation of the final rites of the loved one. However, if the preparation is thought of as a growth process, then the event will truly be meaningful.

In Gassho, Siegen H. Yamaoka Bishop, Buddhist Churches of America; 1983

In the years when our parents held the leadership positions at the church, and the good old land line was the prime communication source, when we lost a member of the church the word got around very fast. By the time the family had gathered for the Makura-gyo service everyone knew.



Fast forward to today with every single person holding a phone in hand generally all the time, the lines of communication have faltered. The newspaper has dwindled in circulation, and our lives have become so rushed we don't take the time to go online to look up things like an obituary unless you have been told of a death.

At board meeting in February we talked about the need to try to keep our members informed and maybe remind ourselves of the lines of communication. It is not the same as our parent's time, but each of our organizations has a list of the names and email address of our members. If you need to contact any church member, please contact a board member and they will be happy to assist you.

Unfortunately, this conversation was initiated due to the recent death of a few temple members, so I wanted to take this opportunity to review the offerings our temple has should a death in the family occur.

- Our Minister, Reverend Hirano, is always your first contact, but if he is not in town, we have two minister assistants, Geoff R. and James A., that you can reach out to. With Rev. Hirano's approval, they are able to conduct the Makura-gyo Service.
- The president of the Church should be notified so we can use the email chain to let other members know.
- We have a funeral committee to assist in the planning of the funeral and the chairperson is generally the
  acting President of the Church. Each member of the committee has a planning guide they will bring. It
  has an outline of the program, organization of the service, and maybe help with names of members that
  can help with things like Koden, ushers, and flowers. This form is also available on our website:
  www.ogdenbuddhistchurch.org.

We want our members to know we are here to help when needed, to try our best to take some of the frustration off your plate, and to let us in a small way help prepare for the final rites of the loved one.

In Gassho,
Annette & Mike K.





## **Buddhist Women's Association NEWS**



By Brenda K.

"The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched.

They must be felt with the heart."

-Helen Keller

The above quote seemed appropriate for the recent observance of Valentine's Day and the concept of love and caring. Hopefully, we can all take those words and incorporate them into our lives. With the passing of February, it means we will soon be a quarter of the way through the new year already.

The temple commemorated Shinran's memorial service, Ho'onko, on January 19th with a service and a delicious luncheon prepared and served under the direction of **Ellen K.** and her Toban Group. Thank you to those ladies who contributed their time and efforts to produce a fabulous meal for all in attendance. February 23 was the Buddhist Women's Association's annual membership party coordinated by **Shauna R.** and her Toban Group. A luncheon was held at The Greenery restaurant at 11:30, followed by our regular service and some fun games of Bingo. Membership for the BWA is \$20 and anyone who supports the organization is welcome to join. If you are interested in our activities or joining, please contact **Tami H.**, or any BWA member.

Upcoming will be the **BWA Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser** on **March 14, 2020** from 5-7 p.m. held at the temple. The cost will be \$8 for adults and \$5 for children 10 years and younger. Anyone is welcome to attend. If you are interested in purchasing tickets, please see any BWA member.

Also, on the calendar in the future is the annual **Sushi Sale on May 17, 2020**, coinciding with the temple's Gotan-E service. If you would like to order sushi, please look for the order form in this publication. If anyone is interested in helping with the preparation of the sushi, the BWA will be preparing the ingredients on **May 16 at 9:00 a.m.** and completing final preparations on **May 17 at 10:00 a.m.** Your support is appreciated.

The next meeting for the BWA will be **March 8 at 10:00 a.m.** All members are encouraged to attend.



### **BWA DONATIONS**

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### 2020 Membership Dues

Marisa A. Sharon K. Courtney B. Laverne K. Maya C. Kyoko M. Susan C. Tena M. Linda E.-R. Darlene M. Christy F. Naomi N.-M. Julia F. Jeannie P. Chris G. Shauna R. Aiko H. Lorraine S. Fran H. Ruth S. Kim H. Janice S. Stephanie H. Tomoko S. Marie H. Alice S. Mackenzie H. Pam S. Tami H. KayLe Y. Emi H. Kris Y. Marion H. Betty Y. Akiko K. Yai Y. Ellen K. Marilyn Y. Judy K. Suzan Y.

Brenda K.

### DHARMA SCHOOL NEWS

Superintendent Message

Our Dharma School is off to a running start for 2020! During the past month, our Dharma School students have learned the concept of impermanence. They also discussed the concept of compassion—just in time for Valentine's Day.

The annual Perch at the Church event was held on January 26<sup>th</sup> at Pine View Reservoir. The event was well-attended, and, unlike most years, many participants caught a number of fish this year. All the Dharma School students, friends and family had a good time. We appreciate the time and effort of **Steve K.**, our temple fish whisperer, for scouting out the ideal site for our event this year. Our thanks to **Ellen K** for. organizing the main entrée, and our appreciation to all for contributing to the pot luck lunch held after returning from fishing. Our special appreciation to those that either left the lake early or who came in early to help prepare the delicious noodles we all enjoyed. The event was well attended by our temple members, families and good friends.

On Super Bowl Sunday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Dharma School performed our annual Omigaki, cleaning the Onaijin (altar) pieces. Our Dharma School students and parents did a great job polishing the altar pieces, and the older Dharma School students did a great job helping reassemble the intricate pieces. A special thanks to all for helping with this event and for performing the additional cleaning afterward. And, a big thank you to all who brought food for our Super Bowl party after service. If anyone was hungry by the time they left the event, they have much self-control!

The Salt Lake Dharma School has invited us to join in their ice skating event at 11 am on Sunday, March 8<sup>th</sup> at the South Davis Recreation Center in Bountiful. For lunch, the Salt Lake Dharma School will be providing hotdogs, chili and side dishes. The Ogden Dharma School members have been asked to provide desserts. This is always a fun event to get together with the Salt Lake Temple members, so we hope to see you all there!

On Sunday, March 29<sup>th</sup>, the Dharma School will be preparing the annual Keirokai/Ohigan luncheon. Lunch will be served at noon followed by the Ohigan service. Please join us for the luncheon and service in honor of our senior temple members.

In preparation for our temple's Hanamatsuri service on Sunday, April 5<sup>th</sup>, we are reaching out to young Dharma School students who are interested in participating in our traditional Ochigo parade. This year, we will be doing the fitting session on Sunday, March 22nd at 12:30 pm. Directly following the fitting session, we will be doing a rehearsal with the children participating in the parade. A second rehearsal will be held on Sunday, March 29<sup>th</sup> at 12:45 p.m., as part of our regular Dharma School class. Children participating in the Ochigo ceremony are required to attend both rehearsal sessions (March 22<sup>nd</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>.) If any parents or grandparents are interested in having their children participate in this special parade, please contact me at <a href="lkyed@yahoo.com">lkyed@yahoo.com</a> or talk with me or Ruth S. before or after any Dharma School class or service.

The Dharma School students will be practicing for their Hanamatsuri performance during the next month in preparation of celebrating Buddha's birthday on April 5<sup>th</sup>. And, as a reminder, the Dharma School will be selling desserts during and after our Hanamatsuri lunch. We welcome any dessert donations from our great bakers in the temple. The dessert fundraiser is used to pay for the main dish at our annual Lagoon event scheduled in June.



In Gassho, LaVerne K.

### **Dharma School Donations**

Removed for Online Version

### **Ogden YBA Donations**

Removed for Online Version

All removed for Online Version









YS414 Buddhist Church of Ogden and choose "Save"



## Ogden BWA Spaghetti Dinner



Saturday, March 14, 2020 5:00 - 7:00 PM

Ogden Buddhist Church – 155 North Street \$8 Adults, \$5 Children

All proceeds to benefit the Ogden Buddhist Church

Tickets available from any BWA member



# OHIGAN SERVICE March Shotsuki Hoyo KEIRO-KAI Sunday, March 29, 2020, 1:30 PM Lunch at 12:00 noon

The word Higan comes from the Sanskrit word Paramita - "Other Shore." The words "other shore" refer to the "world of Nirvana." As the name Higan denotes, this is the time to remind within each and every one of us the Bodhisattva practice of the Six Paramitas of charity, morality, patience, effort, meditation, and wisdom. It is the means by which one crosses over the illusory ocean of birth and death to the other shore of Nirvana.

Shotsuki Hoyo - Monthly Memorial Service



# HANAMATSURI SERVICE April Shotsuki Hoyo Sunday, April 5, 2020, 10:00 AM Lunch & Program to Follow Service

Hanamatsuri or "Flower Festival" is held to commemorate the birth of Siddartha Gautama in Lumbini Garden. According to the ancient legend, the universe was filled with joyful music, flowers bloomed in full glory and sweet rain fell from the heavens to make this a joyful event. During the service a flower shine known as the Hanamido is set up in front of the main altar as a symbol of Lumbini Garden. In this shrine is placed a statuette of the infant Buddha and the Congregation offers flowers and pours sweet tea over the image.

Shotsuki Hoyo - Monthly Memorial Service

### March & April Shotsuki Hoyo

### March Shotsuki Hoyo March 29, 2020, 1:30 p.m. April 5, 2020, 10:00 a.m.

The temple holds the Shotsuki Hoyo, monthly in memory of those Sangha members that have died during that month in previous years. During these services, the temple will list the names of those members who have died during the month in the preceding years. These services are <u>not</u> meant to replace the major memorial services as listed below. The numbers for the years of service are using the "kaiki" which beings the first year as 1 and second year as third year. To schedule a private memorial service please contact Rev. Hirano. Contact information - Office: 363-4742, Home: 299-8727, Emergency: 819-2648

#### 2020 Memorial Service Schedule for those who passed away in:

2020 Michigan Sch vice Schedule for those who pussed away in				
2019 – 1 year	2008 - 13  year	1986 – 33 year		
2018 – 3 year	2004 - 17 year	1971 - 50 year		
2014 – 7 vear	1996 – 25 year	1921 – 100 year		



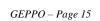
## March 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesda	y Thursday	r Friday	Saturday
11:00 am – Dharma School Meeting 12:00 pm – Meditation 12:30 pm – Discussion Group 12:45 pm – Dharma School 1:30 pm – Family Service	1 2	3	10:00 am Buddha's Round Table	5	6	7 2:00 pm Reverend Hirano's 20-year anniversary CELEBRATION
10:00 am – BWA Meeting 11:00 am – MAP Budget Meeting 11:00 am – SL DS Ice Skating Party 12:00 pm – Meditation 12:30 pm – Discussion Group	8 9	7:30 pm OBC Board Meeting	11 10:00 am Buddha's Round Table	12	13	5:00 pm BWA Spaghetti Dinner
12:00 pm – Meditation 12:30 pm – Discussion Group 12:45 pm – Dharma School 1:30 pm – Family Service	15 16	17	18 10:00 am Buddha's Round Table	19	20	21
9:00 am – Church Clean-up 12:00 pm – Meditation 12:30 pm – Discussion Group 12:45 pm – Dharma School 1:30 pm – Family Service	22 23	24	25	26	27	28
12:00 pm – Otoki Lunch 12:00 pm – Meditation 12:30 pm – Discussion Group 1:30 pm – Ohigan & Keiro Kai Shotsuki Hoyo	29 30	31	ii ii			~

### **Toban Cleaning Group:**

Roland & Janice S. (Toban Cleaning Leader) Todd & Stacie H.

Fran H.





## **April 2020**



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			10:00 am Buddha's Round Table	2	3	4
5 10:00 am – OGDEN HANAMATSURI Ochigo Parade Shotsuki Hoyo 11:30 pm – Lunch & Program to follow	6	7	8 10:00 am Buddha's Round Table	9	10	11
10:00 am – SALT LAKE HANAMATSURI *No services in Ogden.	13	14 7:30 pm OBC Board Meeting	15 10:00 am Buddha's Round Table	16	17	18
19 12:00 pm – Meditation 12:30 pm – Discussion Group 12:45 pm – Dharma School 1:30 pm – Family Service	20	21	22	23	24 6:00 pm Nihon Matsuri Prep	*All Day* NIHON MATSURI FESTIVAL
12:00 pm – Meditation 12:30 pm – Discussion Group 12:45 pm – Dharma School 1:30 pm – Family Service	27	28	10:00 am Buddha's Round Table	30		

### **Toban Cleaning Group:**

Kirk & Betty Y. (Toban Cleaning Leader) Madison Y. Steve & Kris Y.



### BWA SUSHI FUND RAISER





\$10.00 per plate

Available for pick-up following
Gotan-E Service on May 17<sup>th</sup>.
All proceeds will go to the Ogden Buddhist Church.



### **BWA SUSHI FUND RAISER**

Thank you for your support! Sushi plates will be ready for pick-up on the Sunday of Gotan-E Service ~ May 17, 2020.

Your name:		
# of plates ordered	x \$10.00 each = \$	total due

Please make checks payable to: The Ogden Buddhist Church

Order forms need to be complete and can be given to any BWA member.