

SPECIAL 40TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE  
JANUARY 2022

# KALAVINKA

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF EKOJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE



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# KALAVINKA

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF EKOJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE

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Articles, letters, and especially photographs are welcome and will be published subject to space and/or content with regard to Ekoji and its newsletter.  
Please send them to:

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

Ekoji Buddhist Temple,  
6500 Lakehaven Lane,  
Fairfax Station, VA 22039

You are also invited to visit our website at [ekoji.org](http://ekoji.org) for more information about  
Shin Buddhism and Ekoji Buddhist Temple.

# A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF EKOJI

**BY ANDREA CHAPMAN,  
PRESIDENT**

On September 13, 2021 we paused briefly to recognize the founding of Ekoji 40 years ago and the many people who have contributed to the temple's longevity.

This special edition of the Kalavinka is dedicated to that milestone. Inside you will find contributions from our minister, founding members, newcomers and other leaders within the temple and greater Shin community who continue to selflessly and selfishly serve the Sangha so we may all benefit from the Buddha-Dharma. As well as a look back at the history of the Buddhist Churches of America and a special message from George Tanabe, President of BDK America (Bukkyō Dendō Kyōkai), our loyal and generous benefactor.

I wish to extend my deepest gratitude to the members of our current Board of Directors, Rev. Hayashi, the service leaders and dedicated volunteers who gave careful consideration to the reopening, helped prepare the building for occupancy and continue to staff our services and co-host our virtual programming.



Our current safety protocols include a mandatory mask requirement, social distancing reminders and in-person RSVP's. Our hybrid service model facilitates in-person and online attendance as well as live-streaming to the Ekoji YouTube Channel. On average 30 people attend the in-person services and 20 log on via Zoom. An easy and free way you can help is by liking, subscribing and sharing that recorded content so that we can rank higher in the algorithm and reach more people.

You may recall, last year we transitioned to an online membership platform, Wild Apricot, which allows registered members to pledge and track their donations with ease. In 2022, all of our emails and other important temple news will be sent exclusively through this platform. If you have not already done so please take a few moments to set up your account and verify your contact information is correct.

Also inside this edition you will read about the many volunteer opportunities available at Ekoji. Moving forward, I urge you to consider how you can support Ekoji both financially and through the gifts of time and service. It will not be possible for us to continue to bring the Dharma to the greater DMV without your steadfast commitment.

It has been my absolute pleasure to serve as your co-president and president for the past two years and I will remain evermore grateful for the trust you have placed in me and for those of you who have stepped up to assist in a myriad of ways during this challenging and unusual time in history. May the New Year bring us closer to the light, compassion and wisdom of Amida.

Namo Amida Butsu

# 84,000 THOUGHTS

## 40TH ANNIVERSARY MESSAGE BY REV. NARIAKI HAYASHI

This year we celebrate the 40th anniversary of Ekoji Buddhist Temple.

I would like to take a moment to express my deepest appreciation to all the people who have supported Ekoji in the past and the present and I hope will continue to do so in the future.

Without all your effort and dedication, we could not have reached this 40th anniversary, and more importantly, we would not have had the opportunity to listen to the Dharma together.

Truly marvelous is the incomprehensibly large number of people in India, China, and Japan who have passed the Dharma down for over 2,500 years.

The Dharma and the Buddhist rituals that have come down to us through the many individuals are what we mean by tradition. The contributions of thousands of people are encompassed in our tradition, which, alive as it is, continues to grow. Therefore the Dharma is infinite, and as it adapts from country to country, people to people, it becomes ever more universal.

Even though the Dharma is infinite, without a place to listen to the Dharma, we could not encounter it. So too, without the people practicing the Buddhist rituals, we could not have encountered them as well. Ekoji and the many individuals of the Sangha make our encounter with the Dharma and the Buddhist rituals possible.

Therefore, the Dharma we listen to every week was taught by countless others of the Sangha for 40 years.

The chanting we do during service was chanted by countless others of the Sangha for 40 years. The ritual of burning incense or Oshoko was performed by countless others of the Sangha for 40 years.

And the ritual of reciting the Nembutsu, was recited by countless others of the Sangha for 40 years. And now we are part of this tradition.

Thus, when we listen, chant, burn incense and recite the Nembutsu, we follow what all those earlier people had done before us. So we recognize how the many individuals of the Sangha, starting from Rev. Dr. Yehan Numata, Rev. Kenryu Tsuji, Rev. Shojo Honda, and the founding members of Ekoji created the tradition we follow today and acknowledge the debt we owe them. When we recognize this truth, we gain a much greater appreciation for the tradition that the countless people of Ekoji laid down.

Let us continue to listen, chant, perform and recite the Nembutsu as we pass down the tradition to the next generation, which is the way to repay the debt we owe to those many individuals of Ekoji who came before us.

As Tao-ch'o, the great Chinese PureLand master revered in Shin Buddhism said,

**"Those who have been born first guide those who come later, and those who are born later join those who were born before."**







# GOMONSHU'S 2022 NEW YEAR GREETINGS

**JANUARY 1, 2022**

Happy New Year, everyone! At the beginning of this New Year, I would like to extend my best regards to you all.

Over these past couple of years, we have had to adjust our lives in accordance with the scale of the spread of COVID-19. I would like to offer my deepest condolences to those who fell victim to the disease and express my sympathies to those who are undergoing treatment. I would also like to express my respect and sincere gratitude to the doctors, nurses, and frontline medical professionals who have been engaging in the treatment of infected people, as well as all essential workers who have made it possible for us to continue with our lives.

This infectious disease has not only greatly affected the life of each one of us, but also revealed many issues that had been contained in our society. Sakyamuni Buddha, who passed on the Dharma to us, made clear of the fact that we cannot see the truth because we are too attached to our own thought. Therefore, it is only natural that conflicts and divisions come about in a society in which those who, like us, fundamentally self-centered beings, act in accordance based on one's own thought.

In the following wasan poem, Shinran Shonin deeply reflected on himself and described what we humans are like,

Although I take refuge in the true Pure Land way,  
It is hard to have a true and sincere mind.  
This self is false and insincere;  
I completely lack a pure mind.  
(*Hymns of the Dharma-ages*)

As the wasan shows, we are basically incapable of accepting the reality of this world, such as, dependent origination, impermanence, and no-self. And because of this we constantly suffer. Only through being aware of and appreciating Amida Buddha's compassionate and salvific working, are we enabled to accept our true self. Shinran Shonin clarified that such ignorance is the very reason why Amida Buddha's salvific working has reached every one of us. Keeping in mind that we are always embraced in Amida's compassionate Light, let us live each day to the fullest, even though we have yet to see the end of the tunnel.

I feel truly assured hearing that many of you have been making efforts to share the Jodo Shinshu teaching within the greater society through various and innovative ways despite the current situation. It is my hope that your temples will continue serving as your spiritual home, and therefore, I humbly ask for your understanding and cooperation in support of your temples. I would like to conclude my new year's greeting with my heartfelt appreciation to you all.

**OHTANI KOJUN  
MONSHU  
JODO SHINSHU HONGWANJI-HA**

# 年頭の辞

2022年1月1日

新しい年のはじめにあたり、ご挨拶申し上げます。

昨年も一昨年に引き続き、私たちの生活は新型コロナウイルス感染症(COVID-19)の流行に対応したものとなりました。ここに、新型コロナウイルス感染症によりお亡くなりになられた方々に謹んで哀悼の意を表しますとともに、罹患されている皆さまに心よりお見舞い申し上げます。また、治療・対策にあたられている医師、看護師をはじめとする医療従事者の方々、ライフラインの維持に努めておられる方々に深く敬意と感謝を表します。

この新型コロナウイルス感染症は、私たち一人一人の生活に大きな影響を与えました。それは、同時に社会の問題も浮き彫りにしています。仏教を説かれたお釈迦様は、自分自身の考えにとらわれ、真実をみることのできない私たちの姿を指摘されています。私たちが自分の思い通りに行動したら、社会の中に対立や分断を生むことになります。



親鸞聖人は、ご和讃に「浄土真宗に帰すれども真実の心はありがたし 虚仮不実のわが身にて清浄の心もさらになし」とうたわれました。阿弥陀さまのおはたらきによって知らされる私たちの本当の姿は、縁起や無常、無我というこの世界の真実をそのままに受け入れることができずに悩み苦しむ姿です。親鸞聖人は、そのような私たちに阿弥陀さまのおはたらきが届いていると明らかにされました。いまだに新型コロナウイルス感染症の収束が見通せない世界ですが、阿弥陀さまのおはたらきを聞き、それを依りどころとして日々の生活を過ごしてまいりましょう。

現在の厳しい状況の中でさまざまな試みを重ねながら、今までとは違った方法で浄土真宗のみ教を広く社会へ伝える取り組みもなされていると聞き、たいへん心強く思います。これからもお寺が皆さまの心の支えとなりますよう、お寺の活動にご理解とご協力を頂きますことをお願い申し上げます、年頭のご挨拶といたします。

浄土真宗本願寺派  
門主 大谷光淳



# FROM THE EAST TO THE EAST

## 40th Anniversary of Ekoji Buddhist Temple

When I am at the BDK America offices in the Bay Area, I can look across the Pacific Ocean toward Japan in East Asia, then turn my gaze toward the East Coast of America. These two directions are significant in the life of Ekoji Buddhist Temple in Fairfax, Virginia. In 1981, Rev. Kenryu Tsuji and the Rev. Dr. Yehan Numata had the foresight to establish a Buddhist temple on the East Coast, where there were very few Buddhist temples, unlike the West Coast. Rev. Tsuji came from a family who had emigrated from Japan to Canada, and after ministerial training in Kyoto, he returned to Canada and founded several temples in Toronto and Montreal. He was later elected as Bishop of the Buddhist Churches of America, the national organization to which Ekoji now belongs.

The Rev. Dr. Yehan Numata was the founder of Mitutoyo, which is now a multinational manufacturer of precision measuring instruments simple enough to be used by hobbyists and advanced enough to be necessary in the airline and auto industries. The Rev. Dr. Numata also established Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai (BDK), the Society for the Promotion of Buddhism, which is the largest single organization supporting the academic study of Buddhism at seventeen universities throughout the world. To date, BDK has distributed over 9.6 million copies of The Teaching of Buddha to 63 countries, an accomplishment made possible by the translation of this scriptural compendium into 46 languages. Through its international network of scholars, BDK is engaged in the translation of the massive Chinese Buddhist canon into English. When completed, the translated books will number over a thousand volumes.

The Numata family temple in Hiroshima is named Ekoji. BDK is also the sponsor of temples similarly named Ekoji in Germany and Mexico. The Rev. Dr. Numata had a broad international vision about spreading knowledge of Buddhism throughout the world through books, scriptural translations, financial support and temple activities. Ekoji in Fairfax is one of the jewels knotted into Indra's Net.



From the time of its founding 40 years ago, BDK America has been a proud sponsor of Ekoji Buddhist Temple. In contrast to many Japanese Buddhist temples in California and Hawaii, Ekoji has a uniquely diverse membership, and can therefore lay claim to being an American Buddhist temple. This is extremely significant, not only because our communities are multiethnic but also because younger Japanese Americans are culturally more American than Japanese. The future of immigrant Buddhism lies in transforming an East Asian faith into a Buddhism that can thrive on the East Coast and anywhere else in America. Ekoji is already lighting the way and can continue to set an example by being creative and innovative because traditions that do not change die.

BDK America remains committed to supporting Ekoji's hard work of making the light of Buddhism shine from the East to the East.

George Tanabe  
President, BDK America

# THERE WAS A DREAM

BY KEN NAKAMURA

A couple of years after the Ekoji Buddhist Temple was started in 1981, I asked its founding minister, Rev. Kenryu Tsuji, why, when he retired after a long, distinguished career with the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA), didn't he retire to a small west coast temple and take it easy, or just retire. Why did he decide to establish a new temple? At the end of World War II when Canadian Japanese were being released from Canada's internment camps for those of Japanese ancestry, Rev. Tsuji and his wife, Sakaye, moved east to Toronto and founded the Toronto Buddhist Church and several surrounding annex churches. Later after serving many years in Canada, he left Canada to become the first North American-born Director of BCA's Education Department serving in that position for about 4-5 years. After that, he served for 15 years as the first North American-born Bishop, or Socho, of BCA. He was well-respected, liked, and an eloquent, inspiring speaker in both English and Japanese. I thought he could have gone anywhere he wanted.

In answering my question, he asked me if I was familiar with the Akira Kurosawa film, Kagemusha, or "Shadow Warrior". The Kurosawa film is about a common thief who is recruited to pose as a dead Japanese war lord to fool the domain's enemies. There is nothing similar between the two men except a strong, physical resemblance. Rev. Tsuji said that, in a way, he started off as a simple Buddhist temple priest, but along the way, he became an administrator of a large organization, sometimes going through the motions of a priest. Ekoji gave him a chance to become a temple priest again.

But after many years as a temple priest, and then as the administrator of BCA, there were problems he also saw in how we practiced and shared our Shin Buddhism, and he had ideas on adaptations that might be needed in developing an American Buddhism. Buddhists would say that the causes and conditions, Innen, were coming together that became Ekoji.

During his years with the BCA, Bishop Tsuji met several people, such as Homer A. Jack, Secretary General of the World Conference on Religion and Peace, an organization that Rev. Tsuji later became President of, and Rev. Dr. Yehan Numata, a highly successful Japanese industrialist and dedicated Buddhist philanthropist. Bishop Tsuji was familiar with the small Sangha led by Rev. Shojo Honda in Washington, D.C since 1958. He had also taken an active interest

interest in the development of a small Dharma School that had started in Washington in 1979. Rev. Tsuji talked to his friend, Rev. Yehan Numata, about the need for a Buddhist temple in Washington, and together, they came to a meeting of the minds that became the start of the Ekoji Buddhist Temple, "The Temple of the Gift of Light".

They dreamed of Ekoji as having two main purposes. In one sense, the temple would serve as the home temple for local Buddhists in the D.C. metro area to follow their Buddhist path, and also for those who were searching to meet an inner spiritual need. But Ekoji was to be more. It was to be a base from which the Buddha Dharma could find roots and then shared with everyone, particularly in the eastern and southeastern parts of the United States, but not limited to that geographically.

Physically, Ekoji would have a modern Hondo, or sanctuary, with a plain but beautiful altar. There would be classrooms for teachings and discussions, a real library where people can sit quietly and read and learn, and a Japanese garden where people can sit to find an inner quiet.

There was also to be a cultural and education center to be used for the promotion of Buddhist ideals and culture expressed through music, art, literature, dance etc. of Japan, Southeast Asia, and elsewhere. The center would sponsor programs that would foster the mutual understanding of the world's religions. There would also be a large hall for large meetings and for the local Sangha to get together.





And there would be a separate dormitory for at least 100 persons, to host followers and seekers so that they could attend lectures, seminars, workshops, and extended study; with ample parking for at least 100 cars.

In this common effort to share the Buddha Dharma to the wider community, Rev. Tsuji and Rev. Numata also worked together to start an Ekoji Temple in Richmond. Similar efforts were undertaken in Georgia, Texas, and Florida.

To meet the religious needs of Buddhists and those who are seeking to meet their spiritual needs in the Washington metro area, Ekoji would offer a substantive Dharma school for children, Sunday services for adults, meditation, lecture series, and discussion groups that are widely advertised and open to all. Ekoji would also have a monthly newsletter to be circulated, and would develop other publications to help spread an understanding of the Buddha Dharma.

*"Ekoji will be open to all who earnestly seek the Dharma."*

While Ekoji was primarily a Japanese American temple in 1981 when the temple was founded, the guiding spirit of Rev. Tsuji and Rev. Dr. Numata's dream can be seen in Rev. Tsuji's opening Dharma Talk made during the opening of Ekoji's doors in October 1981. Reporting on the service, the newsletter at that time said:

Rev. Tsuji reminded us that the temple, despite its beautiful appearance that day, was not a temple, not without true and earnest seekers of the dharma to participate and make it one.

He explained that 'Shinran Shonin said there should be no distinction between monk and layperson.' Rev. Tsuji expressed his own hopes to put those concepts into practice at Ekoji, where we will all eventually be leading services, discussing the Dharma and putting the Nembutsu into active use. Rev. Tsuji spoke of himself as not a monk but a farmer in priest's robes. 'We will all be priests disguised as workers, homemakers, fathers, and yes, even children,' he said.



'Ekoji will be a place where the differences of race, color or creed will disappear,' he said. 'Ekoji will be open to all who earnestly seek the Dharma.'"

Following Shinran's concept of "no priest, no layman," two months after the start of Ekoji, on December 27, the adult service was led by Mr. Shigeki Sugiyama, and the Dharma message was provided by Dr. Norman Kondo, who addressed the question, "Is Science Buddhism?" And for 40 years, Ekoji has continued to develop, guided by the Dreams of Rev. Kenryu Tsuji and Rev. Dr. Yehan Numata to share the Buddha Dharma.

Namo Amida Butsu



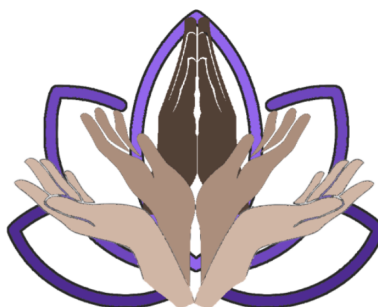
## ECHO EKOJI

WITH MOLLY & RICH

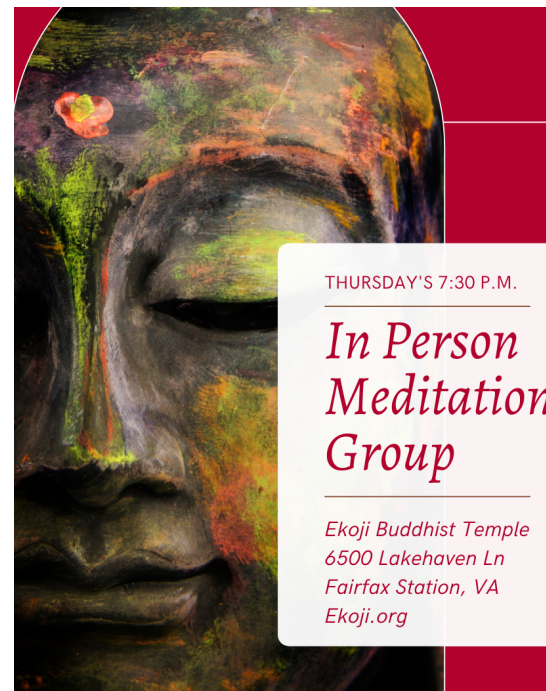


## TEMPLE CLEAN UP

10 a.m. on the  
First Sunday



WITH THESE HANDS



THURSDAY'S 7:30 P.M.

## In Person Meditation Group

Ekoji Buddhist Temple  
6500 Lakehaven Ln  
Fairfax Station, VA  
[Ekoji.org](http://Ekoji.org)

# 40 YEARS OF THE TEMPLE OF THE GIFT OF LIGHT

Four decades ago, the Ekoji Buddhist Temple, located in the suburbs of our nation's capital, opened its doors to all who wished to learn and live the Buddha-Dharma. An open and inclusive temple was the fervent wish and commitment of our Temple founders, Reverend Kenryu T. Tsuji and Reverend Dr. Yehan Numata. "Come As You Are" was the driving force of Ekoji, the Temple of the Gift of Light. And, come they did—of all ethnicities, of all colors, of all races, of all genders, of all ages, of all professions and of all religious backgrounds—drawing from the halls of Capital Hill to the DelMar VA and beyond.

To come hear the Dharma was the common thread linking the Sangha. Some stayed [in our case, 40 years], some tested the waters, some moved on, and some left and later returned, but all became part of the Sangha community we call Ekoji. Each and everyone of us heard the Dharma in many forms. To achieve an American Buddhism available to all, the temple held regular and special adult services, regular Dharma School services and classes, formal seminars, workshops and hosted many guest speakers, to the more informal gatherings of casual discussions, fund-raisers, and the famous and yummy pot luck lunches. Ekoji's Sangha found many paths to the Buddha-Dharma.

Tapping into the rich multi-cultural landscape of the Washington, D.C. metro area and owing to the remarkable diversity of our Sangha, we have met some extraordinary people over the years walking the path to the Buddha-Dharma. The impact of their talents, their kindness, and their sharing has truly enriched our lives and, in the process, we have encountered good friends and have found deep joy. One special person, our beloved friend, original and long-time Ekoji Sangha member, Nora Nagatani, recently passed away. Nora was a friend to all who passed through the temple's open doors. Nora's service at the Gardena Buddhist Church brought many current and former Ekoji Sangha members and many former Dharma School students and their children together again to collectively celebrate her life and to hear the Dharma. It was a testament to the efforts of Reverend and Mrs. Tsuji, who planted and nurtured our deep roots in the Dharma, to cultivate a Sangha beyond temple walls. The greater Ekoji Sangha, near and far, remain links in the Golden Chain, regardless the setting or location.

Each time we step into the Hondo, we are reminded of Reverend Tsuji's golden vision reflected in the diverse faces of the Sangha. As different as we are, we are all a link in the Golden Chain; Ekoji allows us to grow in the Dharma and to practice our compassion in many ways. Forty years after Ekoji first opened its doors, the vision of an open inclusive temple bringing the Buddha-Dharma to all who actively seek it remains the guiding principle. The legacy of Reverend Tsuji and Reverend Numata is still intact and thriving. We are forever grateful for their trailblazing efforts and for the precious gift of the Temple of the Gift of Light.

The pandemic brought many challenges, but with resolve and technology, the temple successfully pivoted to bringing the Buddha-Dharma to its existing Sangha and to a broader global Sangha. With in-person services resuming on a limited basis, we now realize how much we missed the temple and the Sangha. Going forward, we thank our resident minister, Reverend Nariaki Hayashi, Yukari, Daichi and the temple Board of Directors for continuing to keep the light of Ekoji bright and strong.

At the recent annual meeting of the Board, we would like to quote Board President Andrea Chapman, "Forty More Years!" Yes, together, we the Ekoji Sangha, can pledge to just do it.

Namu Amida Butsu.

In fond remembrance,  
Sangha Members Norman and Gail Kondo



# PORTRAIT OF SHIN BUDDHISM ORGANIZATION

BY JANE BLECHMAN

In September 1899, the San Francisco Chronicle newspaper announced that two ministers traveled from Japan to San Francisco. They came to start a Buddhist mission in response to Japanese immigrants wanting to hear the teaching of Buddha. It came to be known as The Buddhist Mission of North American.

Shin Buddhism continued to flourish as ministers and members came together to build the largest network of Buddhist temples in North America. These temples became the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) and consist of 60 temples and many sanghas. Our headquarters and office of the Bishop are in San Francisco, CA.

Our Bishop, Rev. Marvin Harada, oversees and manages all aspects of our tradition, including the Jodo Shinshu Center (JSC) in Berkeley, CA. The JSC is headquarters to the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) and the Center for Buddhist Education (CBE). There are other affiliated organizations housed at the center also.

IBS is the leading accredited American Buddhist graduate school and seminary with concentrations in Buddhist chaplaincy and ministry. In addition, it offers several Masters and certificate tracks.

CBE engages in dharma-centered activities for the public and our temple membership throughout the United States. Some of which include: workshops, conferences, Temple Leadership Training, Minister's Assistant training, certifications, Youth Retreats &

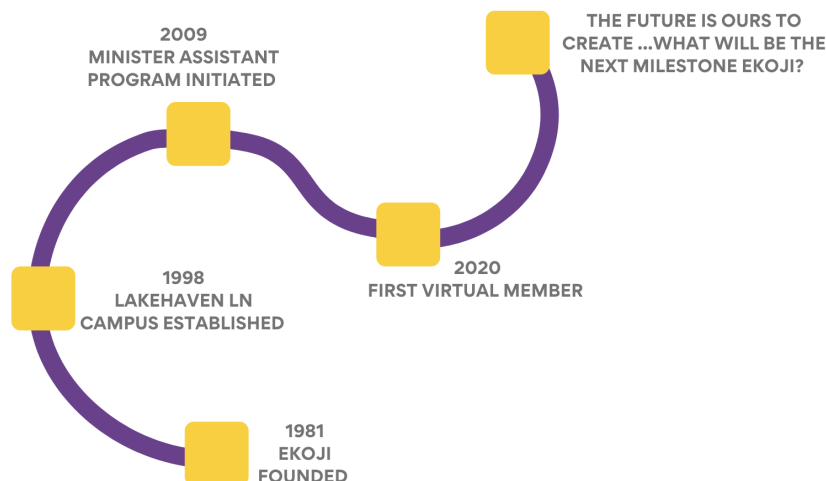
Exchanges, and seminars on diversity and inclusion, arts, and culture.

BCA is an excellent resource for Buddhist education; there is much to explore on their website.

BCA is divided into seven districts councils from the northwest to the east coast. Each district has a head supervising minister (Kyokusho), and each Temple has three representatives (Resident Minister, President, and one appointed). Ekoji is in the Central and Eastern District. EDC meets twice a year to exchange our Temple's news, and discuss issues that affect us. In addition, EDC offers grants to further the Temple's educational projects and for support. EDC also appoints representatives to the National Board, of which many also serve on National board committees.

Ekoji feels very lucky to have BDK America (Bukkyō Dendō Kyōkai) as one of our supporters. BDK is a non-profit foundation whose mission is to share the Dharma for greater understanding and foster world peace. BDK was integral in financing the Temple's present location in 1998 and the parsonage. Currently, BDK holds an Honorary Board position and continues to award grant money to our operating budget.

I imagine that the young priests from Japan who came in 1899 to further the word of Buddha never thought, over a hundred years later, we would be 60 temples and have an inclusive strong structure as BCA.



# THE MINISTER'S ASSISTANT PROGRAM AT EKOJI

BY ERICK ISHII

The Ekoji Minister's Assistant Program (MAP) started in 2009 due to, as do all things, causes and conditions coming together. With the impending retirement of Rev. Shoji Honda, we were told by the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) that the Ekoji Buddhist Temple (EBT) may not be getting another minister for quite some time due to a severe ministerial shortage in the BCA system.

In discussions with Ekoji leadership at that time, there seemed to be a consensus on the important role Ekoji played in teaching and spreading the Buddha Dharma. In doing so, it also helped cultivate the attitude of gratitude in our everyday experiences, and realizing just how much we are interdependent on others.

We all seemed to understand that Jodo Shin Buddhism was basically not all that different from other Buddhist paths in that it seeks to awaken us to true reality. But Jodo Shin Buddhism also has a rich tradition in speaking to the everyday person about living our very ordinary lives in the Dharma. This was unique among other Buddhist paths. We had all benefited from the lessons of the Gift of the Dharma that had been given to us by Rev. Kenryu Tsuji, Rev. Kenneth Tanaka, and Rev. Shoji Honda. As we faced the possibility of a long period without a resident, we thought it was important to find a way to help the temple continue to share the Dharma, and Shinran's teachings.

Since I served on BCA's National Board at that time, I sought the help of the BCA and Ministers'

Association. Around 10 people had volunteered from Ekoji's Sangha to undertake MAP training. BCA developed a schedule of ministers coming to Ekoji at least every month and sometimes twice a month for 4 months to provide training in ritual, chanting, history of Buddhism, and doctrine. Because of the amount of time involved, the training was neither thorough nor deeply philosophical. Its purpose was to help us get by until we were able to get a resident minister again. The minister at the New York Buddhist Church was assigned by BCA to be Ekoji's and the Seabrook Buddhist Temple's supervising minister.

Ekoji was fortunate that the expected long drought did not appear. For a short time Ekoji did not have a minister, but Sangha member, Laverne Iimori, had received her Tokudo ordination earlier that year. We also had the somewhat "trained" Ekoji volunteers to help. After about a half year, we learned that Rev. Kazuaki Nakata would be assigned as the Ekoji resident minister. He was transferred to California after two years, and he was followed by Rev. Kurt Rye, and then Ekoji's current resident minister, Rev. Nariaki Hayashi.

The BCA ministry has been constantly changing in an effort to continue the survival of Jodo Shin Buddhism in the United States. To address the current shortage of ministers, the BCA, in conjunction with the Institute for Buddhist Studies (IBS), which is BCA's seminary and graduate institute, and the Jodo Shinshu

International Office (JSIO) have now developed the MA Program for those individuals who may want to become a minister. Also, BCA is considering the idea of allowing those who are not fully certified as Ministers (Kaikyoshi-level), but do have lower levels of ordination and certification, to serve as Assistant Ministers.

For the present MAPs and now our Lay Leaders at Ekoji, we continue to serve as volunteers to assist our minister in enhancing engaged Buddhism and participate in other Temple activities as required. Some of the activities that you may have seen us perform are cleaning, setting up and taking down the ornaments on the Naijin, participating in Sunday Services, and sometimes even conducting the Sunday Service and providing our views on the Dharma when Rev. Hayashi is required to be elsewhere. Additionally, under Rev. Hayashi's supervision, we may assist with funerals, weddings, and other temple services as needed.

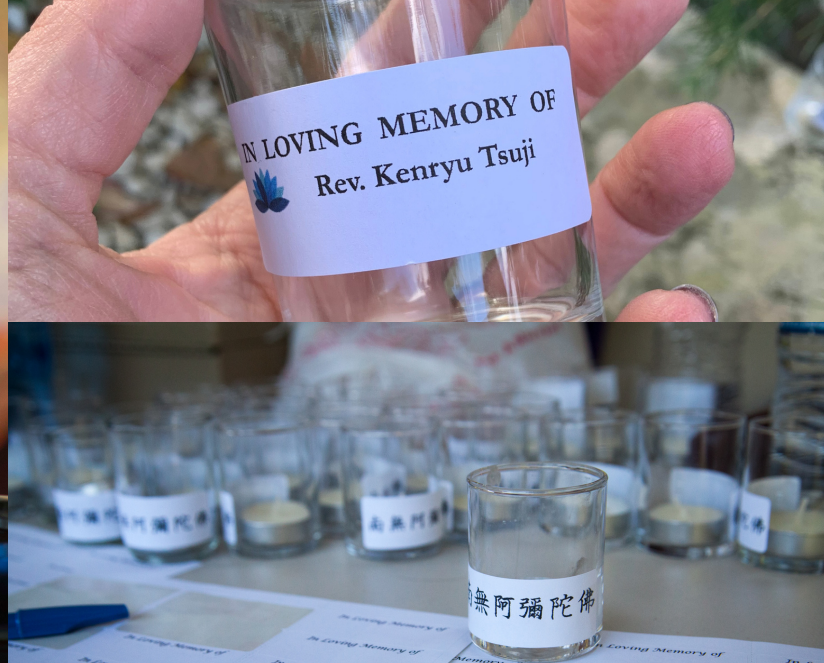
Also, under Rev. Hayashi's guidance, we have continued to elevate Ekoji's MAP level training, education, and learning the Dharma through our monthly classes.

For me, through the experience of being in this MAP program, I am constantly exposed to learning about the Dharma in my life. Recently, I learned from a fellow Sangha member about the difference between the attitude of "please," which is wanting something, and "thank you," which is a deep appreciation for what I have.

Thank you for my continuing opportunity to Learn,

Namo Amida Butsu





# EKOJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE PERPETUAL MEMORIAL EITAIKYO LIST

(as of November 26, 2021)

The Perpetual Memorial List, recognized at Ekoji's annual Eitaikyo Service, pays special recognition to all those whose dedicated work and contributions of their energy, time, talents, and resources supported the growth of the Ekoji Buddhist Temple and its Sangha. The name Ekoji means the "Temple of the Gift of Light". The temple members and friends honored in this list played an important role, which started eons before Siddhartha, in passing on the gift of the Buddha Dharma on to us. In recognizing these individuals, we have a perpetual opportunity to express our deepest gratitude and gassho to them.

## *In memoriam*

Rev. Kenryu Takashi Tsuji  
Rev. Shojo Honda  
Mrs. Y. June Honda  
Rev. Kenneth Kazuo Tanaka

Rev. Dr. Yehan Numata  
Mr. Shigeru Steve Yamamoto  
Mrs. Sumiko K. Yamamoto

Mrs. Geraldine Hamai Cantwell \*  
Mrs. Mitsu Yasuda Carl \*  
Mr. Takashi Horita  
Mrs. Mariko Horita  
Mrs. Akiko Iwata  
Mr. James Kitahara  
Mrs. Evelyn Kitahara  
Mr. Kenichi Kuwabara  
Mrs. Kim MacDonald  
Mr. John Malcolm  
Mr. Hisao "Mat" Matsumoto  
Mrs. Reiko Matsumoto

Mrs. Nora Mineyo Nagatani  
Mr. Robert Nakamoto  
Dr. Herbert "Herb" Oie  
Mrs. Lillian Oie  
Mrs. Mary Okamoto  
Mrs. Kimiko Sugiyama  
Mr. Shigeki Sugiyama  
Maj. Charles "Chuck" Teubert (USMC Ret.)  
Mrs. Frances Ushiro  
Mr. Masao Ushiro

\* In special recognition of their dedication and work on behalf of the temple, Ekoji requested that these individuals be given an Ingo, a special Buddhist name, by the Nishi Hongwanji-Ha in Kyoto

# EKOJI SHOTSUKI MEMORIAL LIST OF MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS

## JANUARY

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

## FEBRUARY

Lillian Oie  
1/25/1940 – 2/1/1998  
Fred Okamoto  
2/21/2000  
Rev. Kenryu Takashi Tsuji  
3/1/1920 – 2/26/2004  
Yone June Honda  
4/8/2014  
Kenichi Kuwabara  
2/5/1925 – 2/23/2015  
Hisao "Mat" Matsumoto  
2/13/2018  
Rev. Kenneth Kazuo Tanaka  
2/10/1935 – 2/8/202

## MARCH

Reiko Matsumoto  
3/12/2016  
Frances Ushiro  
3/10/2021

## APRIL

Junichi Kamikawa  
11/11/1922 – 4/2/2003  
Robert Thomas Miyashiro  
4/7/2003  
Geraldine Hamai Cantwell  
8/13/1944 – 4/6/2007  
Ralph Ishii  
4/16/2007  
Masaru Ushiro  
4/26/2008  
Rev. Shojo Honda  
6/25/1929 – 4/13/2015

## MAY

Rev. Dr. Yehan Numata  
4/2/1897 – 5/5/1994  
Claire Minami  
1/12/1915 - 5/24/2009  
Jon Craig  
May 25, 2019

## JUNE

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

## JULY

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

## AUGUST

Kimiko "Kimi" Sugiyama  
12/5/1925 – 8/31/2013  
James Grohl  
12/9/1938 – 8/6/2014  
Maj. Charles "Chuck" Teubert,  
USMC Ret.  
12/18/1950 – 8/21/2020  
Dr. Herbert "Herb" Kazuto Oie  
12/16/1933 – 8/31/2021

## SEPTEMBER

Akiko Iwata  
9/27/1999

## OCTOBER

Nora Mineyo Nagatani  
6/201945 – 10-23-2021

## NOVEMBER

James "Jimmy" Kitahara  
6/14/1905 – 11/1992

## DECEMBER

Takashi "Tak" Horita  
12/19/2007





# VIRTUAL VANTAGE POINT

BY RICHARD MALONE

Greetings! I've been an on-again, off-again visitor to Ekoji since 2018. I live in Fredericksburg, so the drive to the temple for me is about an hour. I have always found the sangha to be welcoming and inviting, which makes the drive worthwhile. As someone who is mixed race and a member of the LGBT community, I am deeply grateful for how accepting Ekoji is regardless of one's background. Coming from a Lao Theravada upbringing, I have had some "othering" experiences over the years at other temples, and such has never been the case at Ekoji.

Just like with small businesses and other houses of worship, Ekoji has had to adapt to these rapidly changing times. Before the pandemic, I was too shy to introduce myself to many people at Ekoji. But joining the virtual programming on Zoom, I felt way more comfortable. I have made many friends in the dharma over the past year, actively participating in Sandra's weekly discussion groups and Ann Stegner's monthly Buddhist movie discussion group. I've seen people from as far away as Canada and the West Coast participate in virtual services, and I got to experience meeting Shin Buddhists from other temples in the Eastern district in the EBL conference in May. The social aspect of Ekoji's virtual content is an undeniably valuable tool for the temple to spread the dharma.

When the temple finally reopened for in-person services, I jumped at the opportunity. Virtual content cannot replace the feeling of interconnectedness of sangha we get chanting together in person. I was surprised to find how many people recognized me after the reopening of the temple, more than before the pandemic in my case. I love how we still have the opportunity to continue the weekly discussion groups in person with the attendees on Zoom, and I still participate in the monthly movie discussion group with Ann. Andrea and Maya have done a great job at continuing the conversation after our services. And since I do live an hour away, I have the added convenience of being able to join on Zoom if I can't make it to the temple on a Sunday. While I do prefer attending services in person, I am deeply grateful for the flexibility virtual services offer.

Shinran Shonin started our denomination during a period of great upheavals in Japanese history, and the Covid-19 pandemic has also caused great upheavals in the modern day. Such is impermanence. Our way of life will always change, and if we wish to adapt to the times we have to change how we operate. Ekoji Buddhist Temple and the BCA have rightfully adapted to the changing times, and virtual programming is here to stay. The pandemic has offered a lesson here: that we can plant seeds of spreading the dharma in novel ways. I hope we can all take a moment to appreciate the unique gifts Ekoji has to spread the dharma, even during a pandemic.

## EKOJI MOVIE DISCUSSION GROUP



Film: "Walk With Me"

Ekoji Zoom Room

Jan. 16, 2022

2 p.m. ET

All are welcome to join this casual group, which meets once a month to discuss a variety of movies with Buddhist or spiritual themes, including both documentaries and popular films. Previous films discussed include The Departure, Incendies, Hector's Search for Happiness, The Matrix, Departures, Cloud Atlas, When My Time Comes, and Spring, Summer, Winter, Fall... and Spring. In these times of stress, uncertainty, and disconnection, the meetings offer an opportunity for much-needed social time, and to reflect on the relevance of the Buddha's teachings to our everyday lives.

Participation is encouraged, but we also welcome those that would prefer to simply listen in. No previous knowledge of Buddhism needed. We meet through Zoom on the 3rd Sunday of each month, though we will not be meeting in December. The next meeting will be held at 2 pm on Sunday, January 16th, and we will discuss the documentary Walk With Me: <https://www.amazon.com/Walk-Me-Thich-Nhat-Hanh/dp/B07773R99M>

If you have any questions about the movie group, please email [annstegner@gmail.com](mailto:annstegner@gmail.com). We hope to see you soon!

# SPREADING THE BUDDHA-DHARMA ON CAMPUS

BY WYATT SPAGE

I attend a small college in Fredericksburg, the University of Mary Washington, or UMW. While I've been there, I've been active in several clubs—mostly political—and even held a position on the executive board of one. However when the pandemic started, I shifted away from politics. In light of all the suffering caused by COVID-19, I began to fall back on my faith. Everything from school to doctor's appointments went online around this time, so I could more easily attend Ekoji's Zoom services. Paradoxically, even though I was more physically separated from our sangha than ever, this brought us closer together.

I knew when I returned to college, physically, I would yearn for this same connection. Unfortunately, UMW didn't have a Buddhist student club. So, I decided that I would make it. At first, I put up fliers around campus advising "Interested in Buddhism? My name is Wyatt Spage, and I'm looking to make a Buddhist student organization at UMW. If you're interested, please email me." In the months that followed, I received 4 replies which snowballed into a community of 20 members. In fact, our sign up sheet at the club fair boasted 30 signatures.

With all the paperwork out of the way, the Buddhist Student Sangha was born. And our sangha is a success in my eyes. We have presentations of various aspects of Buddhism every week, followed by a discussion; we've visited Ekoji for meditation; and we've had movie nights at the end of every month. Now, there has been some trouble along the way, member retention being one. However, I know that if more people at UMW knew we existed, they would join; UMW has classes on Buddhism that attract hundreds of students. So, I am confident that the BSS will blossom and spread the Dharma even further at UMW.



<b>FULL</b>	<b>ASSOCIATE</b>	<b>VIRTUAL</b>	<b>STUDENT</b>
<b>\$500</b>	<b>\$250</b>	<b>\$250</b>	<b>\$25</b>
<b>BECOME A MEMBER OF EKOJI!</b>			

# LOTS OF WAYS TO VOLUNTEER AT EKOJI... NO EXPERIENCE NEEDED!

MAYA HORIO  
TREASURER  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

I suspect (because I too am guilty) that our sangha members new and old almost certainly fail to notice all the volunteer efforts that go into maintaining Ekoji's physical campus, online presence, and ability to share the Buddha-Dharma on a weekly basis. We benefit each week from Rev. Hayashi and his Minister's assistants setting up the onajin and preparing for service; from Ed Sams working to line up our crew of service chairs; from Yuko Keicho and our Ekoji musicians sharing their talent and love of music; from Roger Scott, Bob Shimokaji, and Erick Ishii humbly and quietly taking care of facility upkeep big and small; and the list goes on and on. Ekoji lives and breathes off volunteer efforts, but as with most small organizations, it's usually a small percentage of the whole that tackles the largest percentage of the work. Whether it is your first time visiting the temple or your fortieth year, there are dozens of ways that you can volunteer and help share the burden of caring for the temple and sangha needs. No matter what role(s) you choose, I think you'll find that volunteering allows ample opportunities to hear and apply the Buddha's teachings. Helping with temple upkeep reminds us of our aging facility and the impermanence of us all. Working with other sangha members reinforces the idea of interdependence and the sangha as one of the Three Treasures. Becoming more deeply ensconced in the sangha and in the care of our temple also more deeply ingrains the gratitude that we feel for each other, for the temple, and for the continuous opportunities provided to us to hear and experience the Dharma every day. If you are interested in helping with any of the below, please reach out to [ekoji.info@gmail.com](mailto:ekoji.info@gmail.com) so we can direct you to the best point of contact.

## **Cleaning the temple:**

Everyone is welcome to help clean the Hondo on the first Sunday of each month from 10am. There are no assigned roles and plenty of work to be done! All cleaning supplies are provided, so you just need to bring yourself. On other Sunday mornings, if you arrive early before service, you can always feel free to grab a broom from the maintenance room by the Hondo water fountains and sweep the foyer or sweep the leaves during the fall from the exterior walkways.

## **Service chairs and**

### **Ekoji musicians:**

Ed Sams has long served as our awesome service chair coordinator, helping to train new volunteers and scheduling chairs for each service. You do not need to be an expert in the Dharma or an experienced chanter to help chair the service, since Ed walks

volunteers through the service script and related rituals; you only need a humble heart and a loud and clear voice! We also continue to benefit from Yuko Keicho's excellent guidance in lining up our weekly Ekoji musicians for each service. Our musicians' talents range from piano to guitar to hand drums to singing, and our sangha relishes the opportunity to experience the emotional side of the Dharma that music has a way of evoking. We are happy to expand these groups of volunteers at any time and can put any interested individuals in touch with Ed or Yuko.

### **Facility maintenance:**

Ekoji's campus is now more than twenty years old, and our aging facilities need continuous care. Replacing lightbulbs, removing rust from the garden gates and exterior rails, doing touch-up painting, plumbing and carpentry repairs, etc—the list is

constant and ever-growing. It can be hard to tell when you're just sitting socially distanced in service next to someone who might have handy skills, but if you're handy and/or just ready to get your hands dirty, we'd love to have your help. Our beautiful garden also requires regular weeding and expert pruning and shaping, and the work has overtaken the capabilities of our small group of volunteers. We are thankful to Gabrielle Harrison for serving as our Garden Coordinator these last few years, but Gabrielle has asked to turn the reins over to a new Coordinator who can track what work needs to be done when. We also need more volunteers who are willing to help implement the garden maintenance plans; this is a great task for folks who love to work outdoors and who are looking for more flexible hours to volunteer beyond just Sundays.



**Membership care and feeding:**

We are fortunate to receive a steady stream of visitors both in-person and online, and many often have questions about how to become temple members. Team Purple—Lesley Poon and Vickey Churchman—did an amazing job at managing our membership drives, but both have had to step down from that role, so we are looking for new volunteers to help manage the membership support. Our new membership platform, Wild Apricot, has eased some of the administrative tasks, and we are excited to help members transition to using this platform. This volunteer role is perfect for individuals who enjoy meeting new people, checking in on member welfare, introducing members to each other, and building those interpersonal ties.

**Teaching our youngest Sangha members—the Children's Dharma School:**

Ekoji's Dharma School includes students from ages 4 to 17, and we rely on our cadre of Dharma School teachers to relay the Buddha-Dharma in ways that keep the students engaged and learning. Our current school year involves two all-age classes per month, with one hybrid in-person and virtual class, and the other an all-virtual class. Teaching our students is incredibly rewarding and helps all of us explore and engage with the Dharma in new ways. Volunteers do not need to have teaching experience—only the willingness to learn (most of us keep just one step ahead of the students!) and be questioned, and the ability to convey ideas in different ways.

**Supporting Ekoji's online presence and other outreach:**

Ekoji's social media platforms and website are critical to drawing in new visitors and sharing the Buddha-Dharma beyond our physical campus and local region. Andrea Chapman continues to ably serve as the "voice of Ekoji," manning these platforms and maintaining our website. Andrea and Molly Kuramoto, now also with the help of Rich Wolford, have been developing and releasing episodes of our new Echo Ekoji podcast, sharing the real-life experiences and perspectives of everyday Buddhists and making a lesser-known religion accessible to all. We would welcome volunteers who enjoy engaging communities through social media or developing web content, and/or volunteers who are willing to share their experiences as a podcast participant. These are great roles also for our virtual sangha members or other sangha friends who cannot often visit Ekoji's physical campus. We are also seeking volunteers to help organize Ekoji's community service efforts (like our current sock drive!), serve as liaisons to local interfaith organizations and initiatives, and/or to help organize Ekoji's informational booth at local festivals (whenever those resume post-pandemic).

**Fundraising and temple finances:**

We continue to aim for financial self-sufficiency, but we are far from achieving that goal. If you enjoy numbers and/or have a gift for strategic finance management, we encourage you to volunteer

to help with temple fundraising efforts and executing general temple finances. We are thankful to Rich Wolford for kicking off our Gift of Light capital campaign, and we are looking for a new lead for that effort as we transition the campaign to more of an annual fund approach. We also need volunteers to help organize and staff our ad hoc in-person and virtual fundraisers, and we are scouting for a new chair for the temple's biggest fundraiser—our annual Obon summer festival.

**Overall oversight and execution of temple business affairs:**

Last but certainly not least, we always encourage sangha members to consider running for Ekoji's Board of Directors. Serving as a Board member offers a concrete way to apply your understanding of the Dharma to managing temple operations, and to support, build bonds with, and learn from your fellow Sangha members. We work closely with Rev. Hayashi and the Minister's Assistants to provide opportunities to hear the Dharma while serving as responsible stewards of temple resources and the well-being of our Sangha. Any temple member in good standing can be nominated and elected by the sangha to serve on the Board. There are no special skillsets required, as most Board duties are learned "on the job." The desire to serve the temple, coupled with the life bandwidth to be able to give of your time and energy, is really all you need to be ready to serve on the Board.

# THE ROLE OF SERVICE CHAIR

BY ED SAMS

Every Sunday morning the Sangha gathers to hear and encounter the Dharma. The kansho is rung, Sensei enters the naijin, the service chair then conducts oshoko and walks to their lectern to voice an introduction to begin the service. For many years myself and others have been fulfilling this role.

What may seem a simple process has had quite a history over the last ten years or so.

My introduction to service chairing began when I was on the Board of Directors. At that time one of the requirements for being a Board member was to fulfill the role when needed. And so, ready or not, my turn came.

Looking back on it what an experience it was on many levels! Along with the pressure of public speaking, filled with anxiety, deeply desiring to provide a meaningful and smooth presentation I somewhat, mechanically I felt, muddled through it. At the time there was little structure for the Service Chair to follow aside from ensuring each step of the service order was properly introduced. There was scant attention devoted to wording nor to tailoring the language to our audience as to whether they were established members or new individuals visiting us for the first time perhaps.

Since that awkward initiation refining the process and tweaking the role in many ways has been a collaborative effort that has involved several ministers and many dedicated Sangha members. A significant effort has been directed towards making the role, its' language and structure, reflect the need to present clear and concise language that accommodates all attendees regardless of their time at Ekoji. The language has been clarified so that all can understand the practice and rituals of Shin Buddhism. It hasn't been easy, but it has been rewarding. Precise scripts have been created for multiple types of services, a time consuming but instructive lesson for someone like me who arrived at Shin Buddhism later in life. One can learn so much when being a Service Chair!

Over the years I've come to realize that fulfilling the role of Service Chair is substantially more than the 'mechanical' adventure I first experienced. For me it's become a practice in Buddhism in that one must set the ego aside as it's not important. What is important I've found is facilitating others to encounter the Dharma via an enjoyable and understandable service, one that allows a deeper rendezvous with the Teachings of the Buddha and those of Shinran Shonin.



**Sunday, 11 a.m. ET Hybrid Service - Zoom, YouTube & In Person**  
**Thursday, 7:30 p.m. ET Meditation - In Person**

**ALL ARE WELCOME!**

**First Sunday, 10 a.m. ET Temple Clean Up - In Person**  
**Third Sunday, 2 p.m. ET Buddhist Movie Discussion - Zoom**

# DONATING TO EKOJI'S PRESENT AND FUTURE

BY MAYA HORIO  
TREASURER  
EKOJI BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Every year at our annual meeting, we discuss the need for Ekoji to move towards a more self-sustaining financial model. Although I have only served in the Treasurer role since 2016, I suspect this might be true of almost every annual meeting for the past 40 years. We have not yet met that goal, as we continue to heavily rely on the financial support of Ekoji's benefactor organization, Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai (BDK). BDK's financial support has allowed us to benefit from full-time ministers since our founding, and they have also supported us with ad hoc grants for extraordinary facility repairs and upgrades.

As noted when we kicked off our Gift of Light Campaign Fund, we are working to become self-sufficient so we can cover the expenses for religious, education, and maintenance activities and continue to share the Buddha Dharma well into the future. Ekoji's primary source of income continues to come from member donations, big and small. There are several ways to donate financially to the temple, but it can be easy to forget some of the lesser-used options. We hope you find the below list of options useful, and if you have any questions, please reach out at any time to [ekojitreasurer@gmail.com](mailto:ekojitreasurer@gmail.com).

- **Regular monetary donations** via cash, checks made payable to Ekoji Buddhist Temple, or electronically through Paypal to [ekojitemple@gmail.com](mailto:ekojitemple@gmail.com). Many donors have created monthly auto-payments from their banks or through Paypal.
- **Activate or renew your annual Ekoji membership** and submit your pledge amount.
- **Make a pledge or donate to the Gift of Light Fund.** The funds raised through this campaign will provide the financial foundation for Sangha programming and temple facility costs. Three years in, the Gift of Light Fund has raised more than \$117,000.
- **Take advantage of your employer's matching contributions.** Many organizations will match some percentage of their employees' financial contributions to registered 501(c)3 non-profit organizations (which includes Ekoji). We are happy to provide the temple's 501(c)3 status paperwork as needed.
- **If you are over the age of 70 ½, consider making a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD)** direct from your IRA custodian to Ekoji. QCDs can be counted toward satisfying your required minimum distribution and reducing your taxable income, as long as certain requirements are met.
- **Consider including Ekoji in your estate planning.** Including Ekoji in your will, living trust, and/or as a designated beneficiary on your IRA, 401(k)s, bank accounts, etc, can help support the temple's continued ability to share the teachings of the Buddha-Dharma.



- **DONATE**
- **RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP**
- **RSVP FOR SERVICE**
- **RESERVE A MEMORY CANDLE & MORE**

<https://ekojibuddhisttemple.wildapricot.org>