



LONG BEACH BUDDHIST CHURCH SANGHA NEWSLETTER Winter 2020 - 2021

Message from the Minister: "Four Sights"

In Buddhism, the "Four Sights" refers to four events where Gautama (who would later become Buddha, the Awakened One) recognized impermanence as he witnessed the aged, the ill, the dead, and finally the holy man.

When I was 10 years old, I had a strange urge to learn about Shakyamuni Buddha's life which I accomplished through a comic book series *Buddha* by the famous cartoonist Osamu Tezuka. His story revealed to me that the world is filled with suffering from incurable diseases, natural disasters, warfare, racism, discrimination, etc. It was actually quite shocking for me to learn such vivid realities of the world. I would still prefer to see our world through a rosy-colored lens from the comfortable "palace" of blissful ignorance.

However, whether or not we are Buddhists, we all encounter events which teach us the impermanence of life. For me, it was my brother's illness and my mother's early death that taught me impermanence. So, we too have the experience of "Four Sights." The year 2020 was filled with events showing us the impermanence of life just as "Four Sights" did to Gautama 2,500 years ago.

But it is also important not to forget that Gautama also experienced how the human mind could transcend the sources of suffering. He taught us the potential of human beings to become buddhas (awakened ones) and his life demonstrated the possibility of such attainment.

We must look at this painful year of 2020 as an opportunity to acknowledge the "Four Sights" and understand its place in Buddha's teachings. What we learn from our experiences this year is truly what will matter to us, our family and friends as followers of the Buddha.

Gassho,
Gyokei Yokoyama



Message from the Board President

Dear Members and Friends,

2020 has been a very trying year with all the challenges and disruptions that Covid 19 has thrust into our lives. Here is hoping that 2021 proves to be a much better year.

The Long Beach Buddhist Church Board of Directors hopes you are following the health directives and are staying safe and healthy. We are still suspending all church activities that put us in direct contact with each other in light of the explosion of cases since the Thanksgiving holiday. We appreciate your continued support of the church in spite of this pandemic.

The Board usually has their annual election in December, but has decided to continue with the slate of officers that were elected for 2020. With your approval, I am again going to continue as President for this year.

Hoping this message finds each of you in this New Year with a hopeful mindset that we will be on an uphill climb towards reaching an end to this worldwide epidemic.

We look forward to being able to gather again in-person and resume our lives as before. Please be careful in your daily lives. We look forward to being able to meet face to face once more.

With Gassho,
Susan Eastman, President





Happy New Year! This is the time of the year when we can reflect on our gratitude for the previous year and make an effort to live at peace in 2021. 2020 was a painful year for many people and much suffering will continue into 2021. We can offer the merit of our Buddhist practice to all those beings suffering in hope that we all attain Buddhahood and help each other to ease suffering in our communities. Namu kie butsu, namu kie ho, namu kie so.

Gassho,
Seigaku Amato, Minister in Training

We Strengthen Our Faith

September 1943, in Poston War Internment Camp in southwest Arizona, Rev. Noboru Tsunoda addressed members of the Young Buddhists Association at their first “all-camp” gathering. He said,

“Buddhism in America is doomed. Such was the impression of many people following the outbreak of war and the resulting evacuation... However, contrary to this pessimistic view taken by the faint-hearted, we find that the very opposite phenomenon has taken place; the hardships and adversities of our faith in the Lord Buddha and His All-embracing Teachings [and]...our experience in the relocation center has shown more than clearly that religion does not consist of beautiful churches and a host of clergymen, neither does it consist of dogma as set down by ecclesiastical authorities... The fundamental basis of religion is in the strength of our faith.”

(from *American Sutra: A Story of Faith and Freedom in the Second World War* by Rev. Duncan Ryūken Williams)

What is the strength of our faith today? How do we measure our faith during this time of great uncertainty and change in our everyday lives?

Perhaps Faith is the outcome of a search for reference points in the midst of darkness, insecurity, or brokenness. In these troubled states, where do we look for confidence, for security, for wholeness? We know we must take a step forward, but where do we set our foot; will the ground be there to meet it?

Our faith may be hidden at times, but we can find it in the memories and stories of our ancestors, and in the wisdom and compassion of our own hearts – our own Buddha Nature.

The Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh says that when we respect our blood ancestors and our spiritual ancestors, we feel rooted. If we find ways to cherish and develop our spiritual heritage, we can avoid feelings of alienation, or separation and aloneness, and become whole again.

When we choose to live our everyday lives open to the Dharma, the teaching of Shakyamuni Buddha, we can lose our sense of being lost! We can suddenly see through our sense of separation, to wholeness. We can see that our everyday self and our Absolute Self – our Buddha Nature – are ‘not two’. As Taizen Maezumi Roshi wrote: “If our practice of Buddhism has any purpose, it is to close the gap between yourself and yourself” – between your everyday self and your Buddha Nature. (from *Appreciate Your Life: The Essence of Zen Practice*).

We have every reason to feel very separated these days – socially distanced from friends and even family! We remember fondly the church activities that brought us joy in the past. And besides these memories, we also *DO* everything physically possible to maintain the health and well-being of our community:

- We wear masks when we have to leave our homes;
- We reach out by telephone to our family and friends to monitor their conditions; and
- We listen to health experts and follow their recommendations and guidance.
- We isolate now so that later on, when we do gather, no one is missing.

We adapt to circumstances; we strengthen our faith. This temple, this community which has nurtured our ancestors and all of us for nearly 65 years, is a realization of the strength of our faith. We are here together in spirit every day to affirm that strength – our faith.

Gassho,
Doshin Johnson, Minister in Training

2021 LBBC Calendar*

Updated 01/09/21

JANUARY

- 3 Regular Service
- 10 Regular Service
- 17 Regular Service
- 24 Regular Service
- 31 **Shotsuki/Shinenkai**
(Regular)

FEBRUARY

- 7 **Setsubun**
- 14 Regular Service
- 21 Regular Service
- 28 **Shotsuki**

MARCH

- 7 Regular Service
- 14 **Ohigan**
- 21 Regular Service
- 28 **Shotsuki**

APRIL

- 4 **L.A. Buddhist Fed**
Hanamatsuri
- 11 **LBBC Hanamatsuri**
- 18 Regular Service
- 25 **Shotsuki**

MAY

- 2 Regular Service
- 9 Regular Service
- 16 Regular Service
- 23 Regular Service
- 30 **Shotsuki &**
Memorial Day

JUNE

- 6 Regular Service
- 13 Regular Service
- 20 Regular Service
- 27 **Shotsuki**

JULY

- 4 Regular Service
- 11 Regular Service
- 18 Regular Service
- 25 **Shotsuki**

AUGUST

- 1 Regular Service
- 8 Regular Service
- 15 Regular Service
- 22 Regular Service
- 29 **Shotsuki**

SEPTEMBER

- 5 Regular Service
- 12 **Ohigan**
- 19 Regular Service
- 26 **Shotsuki**

OCTOBER

- 3 **Chow Mein Dinner?**
- 10 Regular Service
- 17 Regular Service
- 24 Regular Service
- 31 **Shotsuki**

NOVEMBER

- 7 **64th Anniversary**
- 14 Regular Service
- 21 Regular Service
- 28 **Shotsuki**

DECEMBER

- 5 **Jyodo-e (Bodhi Day)**
- 12 **Shotsuki**
- 19 **Church clean-up**
- 26 No Service
- 31 **Joya no Kane 4PM**
(Fri) **(New Yrs Eve Bell)**

*Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, we will be offering all services via Zoom until further notice. Check our website for updates at www.lbbuddhistchurch.com.

Please join us on Zoom at <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/8111889419>

Or call (669) 900-6833, Meeting ID: 811 188 9419

Services will begin at 10:00 a.m.

Services and events are subject to change.

For additional information, contact the church (562) 426-4014