

LONG BEACH BUDDHIST CHURCH

SANGHA NEWSLETTER

Fall 2021

Message from the Minister, Seigaku Amato

With the celebration of the Ohigan service at the church, we welcomed the arrival of Autumn. Ohigan お彼岸 means the other shore and is a time when the shore of the living, this world of delusion, and the shore of enlightenment, the world beyond, are at their closest. Because of this closeness, we clean up our butsudan, tend the graves of our loved ones, and make offerings to the Buddhas and our ancestors. Day (nirvana/awakening) and night (samsara/suffering) are of equal length during Ohigan, symbolizing the opportunity to cross over to the shore of enlightenment because it is so close to us on this day. Because of this, we practice the 6 paramitas very diligently. The 6 paramitas are:

Dana Paramita- generosity
Sila Paramita- precepts/conduct
Ksanti Paramita- patience
Virya Paramita- energy
Dhyana Paramita- meditation
Prajna Paramita- wisdom

These are the perfections of practice embodied by the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas to ease the suffering of all beings. By paying close attention to how we practice these paramitas in our daily lives we are able to limit the suffering of ourselves and others, embodying our vow as Buddhists to strive for the enlightenment of all beings. We do not have to wait until the day of Ohigan to practice these 6 paramitas but should practice them year-round. I have found a good way to do this is to take 1 paramita and be mindful of it in 1 day. As you go about your routine investigate how you can work with it in the circumstances of your life.

For example, Dana paramita, or generosity, can mean so much more than we may think. In the morning, offering incense at the butsudan for the benefit of our friends, ancestors, and all beings is a great way to practice generosity. When we are leaving our home, straighten up the shoes by the door to make it easier for a friend or family member to put on their shoes before they leave. Offering to help carry items for our parents, or grandparents can mean a great deal and shows how we appreciate their sacrifices and hard work raising us. All our efforts practicing the 6 paramitas benefit ourselves and all beings, as the true nature of our lives is not separated by barriers. When you are happy, I am happy, and this happiness extends universally to everyone in all directions.

Namu kie butsu
Namu kie ho
Namu kie so

Seigaku Amato



Message from the Board President

Dear Members and Friends,

The Board hopes you are all well and keeping safe while this pandemic continues on. The church is committed to returning to some of its normal activities soon. Last Sunday was a celebration for Seigaku Sensei's anticipated birth of his daughter. A most happy event coming soon.

We are hoping that we can have a Chow Mein Dinner Fundraiser in March of 2022. I will be having knee replacement surgery the beginning of November, so I should be healed by that time.

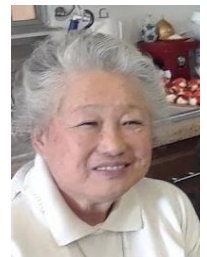
Thank you all for the support for this year's Obon celebration. Although it was reduced in activities, it was very successful. Many thanks to Robert Yasumura for overseeing the program for us.

November 7th will be the Long Beach Buddhist Church's 64th Anniversary. We hope you can join us for Bento lunch on this day. Flyers will be going out as reminders and for reservations for lunch.

We are formally requesting a search for a new minister for our church. It may be a long process since we are hoping for a minister that speaks English as well as Japanese. Meanwhile, Seigaku Sensei has agreed to continue as our minister-in-training as this search continues.

Looking forward to your continued support for the church and its activities.

With Gassho,
Susan Eastman, President



In Memoriam

We extend our deepest condolences to the families of the late:

Mrs. Mitsuko Yamamoto

Mrs. Hisako Miyamoto

Mr. James Hajime Yamamoto

Upcoming Events

November 7 – 64th Church Anniversary service
December 5 – Jyodo-e (Bodhi Day)
December 12 – January Shotsuki (Memorial Service)
December 19 – Church clean-up
December 26 – No service
December 31 – Joya no Kane (New Year Eve Bell) 4:00 p.m.

November Buddhist Study Group conducted by Seigaku Amato

This November we will begin our Buddhist Study Group at Long Beach Buddhist Church. The study group is for anyone, regardless of experience, who would like to deepen their practice of Buddhism by exploring the language, history, and practice of Buddhism. We will explore many topics and materials will be provided by the teacher. There is no fee for classes but donations are always appreciated.

Classes are Thursday Evenings at 7 pm and start with a short 15-minute meditation.

11/4- Introduction to the language of Buddhism

Have you ever wondered about Karma, or how it works? What about Shunyata or Samsara? What exactly are precepts and why should we follow them? This class will focus on the vocabulary of Buddhism and how we can understand difficult concepts and philosophies in our daily lives. Participants will be provided a "cheat sheet" that they can use to navigate the teachings of the Buddha.

11/11- Maka Hanya Haramita Shingyo

This class will focus on the Maka Hanya Haramita Shingyo, Heart of Great Perfect Wisdom Sutra. Each Sunday we chant the Hanya Shingyo and is a foundation of our practice as Buddhists. By using English translations we will break down the meaning of this sutra and how its message is a powerful tool to relieve suffering. We will participate in a chanting workshop and investigate how and why we chant.

11/18- Have you ever been curious about meditation?

Meditation is difficult...or is it? There are many misconceptions about meditation practice as it relates to Buddhism. How long should we sit? Why do we sit? How should we sit? What if I can't sit on the floor? I'll give you a spoiler to the last question, no, we don't have to sit on the floor. The answers to all these questions, and more, will be available as well as a guided meditation followed by a Q&A. Bring your questions!

11/25- NO CLASS

No class on this Thursday, but that doesn't mean we can't still study. Try out what we've learned from class at home and keep a short log of your experiences. Was practice harder at home? Did a family member or friend join in? What did you find most interesting about practicing at home? Jot it down on a sheet of paper and we will share our experiences in class on 12/2.