

LONG BEACH BUDDHIST CHURCH

SANGHA NEWSLETTER

Spring 2022

Message from the Interim Minister, Seigaku Amato

Lotus Sutra Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva Universal Gateway Chapter

“When living beings suffer hardships, burdened by immeasurable woes, the power of Avalokiteshvara’s wondrous wisdom can relieve the suffering of the world.”

Kanzeon (Avalokiteshvara) Bosatsu is the Bodhisattva that represents great compassion. The quote above describes how the compassion that comes from great wisdom relieves the suffering of the world. Wisdom is understanding the nature of emptiness. Empty of what? Empty of an individual unending self that is separate from the world. We think there is “me” that goes about in the world, as something separate from everything it encounters. Based on my experiences interacting with people and situations, I develop preferences. From these preferences I create a sense of myself as separate from everything and a narrative begins to form about me and the world I live in.

From this narrative I suffer when things don’t go my way, or are out of my control. When People treat me badly, hurt me, or I experience pain, I too feel that I am wronged and then it is easy for anger, envy, and resentment to grow. From the seeds of these “three poisons” of greed, anger, and ignorance suffering follows both for me and for others based off of my actions. When my actions are motivated by the three poisons I’m creating karma that will cause suffering in both this life and into the future, rippling out in endless directions.

So, how can compassion that comes from wisdom of understanding emptiness save the world from suffering? Just as Kanzeon has deep compassion for all beings, I too can cultivate this compassion. Understanding that all beings are empty of an independent permanent enduring self, just like me, I am better able to remove the narrative that I alone suffer. I can better understand that those that are acting from the three poisons around me, treating me poorly, are suffering from their own actions and ignorance and I can cultivate loving concern for them.

By generating loving concern for all beings, even those that wrong me, I am able to see that I am not defined by their actions. I don’t have to hold on to their guilt, shame, and anger that they project onto me through their harm. When those that act from greed, anger, and ignorance experience the results of their actions (karma), they will begin to understand that the hurt they have caused others has also hurt them.

This is wisdom that comes from understanding emptiness. By understanding the nature of our self is not different than anything or anyone we encounter in our lives we begin to understand that our lives are just the manifestation of Buddha in all its many forms. How then do we stop the wheel of suffering that rolls on from our karma? We stop it by doing Sange, the act of repentance. Before the Buddha we burn incense, do bows, and recite, “All my past and harmful karma, from beginningless (without beginning, having always been) greed, hate, and ignorance born from my body, speech, and mind I now atone for it all.” Then, we make a vow to live from this wisdom of emptiness and act with compassion for all beings, just like Kanzeon. Through this atonement, vow, and action we bring the compassionate action of Kanzeon into the world and relieve the immeasurable woes of the world.

Namu kie butsu
Namu kie ho
Namu kie so



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Message from the Board President

Dear Members and Friends,

We hope that this newsletter finds everyone well!

The church is currently renovating and making necessary repairs to the minister's residence. There were many issues that needed to be addressed and fixed, and some renovations have been made to make the residence a more comfortable livable space.

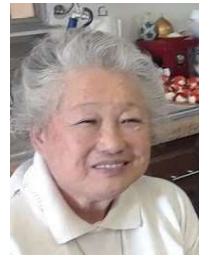
We are also in contact with Soto Mission to look for a permanent minister for Long Beach Buddhist Church. Meanwhile, we graciously thank Seigaku Sensei for doing an excellent job filling in as interim Minister for us while the search continues.

Please mark your calendars for June 5th! The Board is still working out the menu details but we are planning to have a food sale fundraiser and will be notifying all of you very soon.

My knee is mending well, the pain is almost gone from the surgery, but my right knee is getting worse, so my doctor has asked when I plan to have it replaced. I will see him at the end of April. I am not looking forward to being incapacitated for an additional 4 or 5 months so soon.

We hope you are staying well and we hope to see you all at our church activities.

With Gassho,
Susan Eastman, President



Hanamatsuri Service on April 3, 2022

Please join us for a Hanamatsuri service at church followed by a special social hour with sushi and other treats.

LBBC Ofukuwake Project Begins Its 2nd Year

Due to the lack of social contact and isolation that many of us were experiencing over the past couple of years, board members of the Long Beach Buddhist Church gathered to start a program to reach out to older adults in our community. This program, known as the Ofukuwake Project, began in March of 2021 and after a successful first year will continue to provide monthly newsletters, phone calls and temiyage (bento) deliveries to participants. Through grant funding from Keiro along with in-kind donations and support from volunteers and community members, the Ofukuwake Project has plans to continue through February, 2023. We are grateful to the participants, volunteers, Japanese/Japanese American businesses and community members for their contributions to this program. We look forward to another year of sharing good fortune through this Project!