



Long Beach Buddhist Church Newsletter January 2018

## Happy New Year!

2018 is a year of the Dog. This year is known as the year of extinction. The fruits will fall onto the ground and the tree will return to its original state. By letting go of the flowers, leaves and fruits, the true nature of ourselves and the world we live in will be revealed.



### *The year of the Dog*

I hope this letter finds you in good health and spirit. Throughout the year 2017 that there were members and friends who has been through illness, injury or many other stressful situations. As followers of Buddha's teachings, we acknowledge the hardship as a part of life and *Shugyo*, training, to cultivate our strength to achieve peace, joys and wisdom within such hardship.

On the evening of December 31<sup>st</sup>, I rang *Joyano kane* (the year-end purification bell) 108 times. Each time I rang the bell, I prostrated. I offered incense and prostrated 108 times, each time taking about 3 to 4 minutes. Traditionally, it is customary to cleanse our delusions and attachment by the time the new year starts. This year, I offered the incense and the sound of the bell to every one of those I met in our life and wished for their happiness... whether they are alive or dead. It was as if I were physically with them in the silence on the new year's eve. By the time I finished the 100<sup>th</sup> bell, my memories were all renewed and the life I had in the past felt blessed again.

From the time we were born, we met our family and all those friends from kindergarten, elementary school, junior high and high school, college, companies, girl friends or boy friends, spouses, neighbors and people who were just there for you. Each relationship gave us a clear definition and meaning of who we were and how we mattered in their life.

Then, the realization comes that such personal connections created many untold stories of our parents and ancestors and all people and living beings. The closer we feel to our own life experience and relationship, the closer we are able to feel to other sentient beings.

We call this kind of practice a *Metta* practice, the practice of compassion. This starts from clarifying our love to the most intimate person in our life. Eventually it allows us to be in touch with the most real elements of other being's life and helps us understand the hardship, suffering, joy and love of living beings. As I rang the last bell, I said "I love you." to my son, then, I heard the voice of thousand's Spirits echoing in the mind sending love to their most beloved one. May the year 2018 bring you deep wisdom and compassion to all beings.

Gassho, Rev. Yukinori Gyokei Yokoyama

# Long Beach Buddhist Church 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Long Beach Buddhist Church celebrated its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary on November 12 last year. We thank you for all your support to make the celebration ceremony and the luncheon a big success.



We thank Mrs. Keiko Moriwaki, Mrs. Joanne Leivici, Mrs. Keiko Shibata and Mrs. Atsuko Yomogida and many others for organizing the special celebration luncheon at the Long Beach Marriot hotel.

Thank you to all for joining us to celebrate this special occasion.

## Kokuzo Sensei and Nitta (Oshima) Sensei



We'd like to express our special thanks to Rev. Oshima and Rev. Kokuzo and Mrs. Kokuzo for traveling all the way from Japan and Hawaii for this ceremony.



We would like to thank all the reverends who joined the celebration ceremony: Rev. Oshima from Kaizoji, Ibaraki, Japan, Rev. Kokuzo from Taiyoji, Waipafu, Hawaii, Rev. Akiba and Rev. Miyazaki from Soto Zen Buddhism North America Office, Rev. Ohara from Saikoji, Toyokawa, Japan, Rev. Stuard, McCarthy, Peterson, and Johnson from Sozenji, Revs. Ford, Greenwood, Thompson from Blue Cliff Zen Sangha.



Finally, we would like to thank “Kokoro Taiko Group” for making our celebration luncheon extra special with a wonderful Taiko performance.

## Church Clean Up

We had a year-end church clean up or *Nenmatsuno Oosoji*, on December 17<sup>th</sup>. We would like to thank the members and friends of the church who helped us clean the church.



Atsuko Yomogida, Paul Sumida, Shizuko Sumida, Ruby Eason, Joanne Leivici, Devin Seigaku Amato, Ryoko Miyazaki, Honda, Kohan Tekin, Robert Yasumura, Miya Yasumura, Aya Yasumura, and Grace Yasumura.

## Improvement of the Church Facility



Mr. Osamu Nishimura completed the renovation of the restroom for the Sanctuary in November. The bathroom is now accessible by wheelchair with so much space. We'd like to thank him for his excellent job.

## Casino Tour



We had a one-day tour to Pala Casino in November. We will continue planning a tour for people who need entertainment.

## Shinenkai (Celebration of New Year) and Setsubun e (Celebration of Spring)

### January 28th 10 am

We will be celebrating the beginning of the new year on January 28th from 10 am. *Juroku Zenjin* or Sixteen Guardian Deities of Buddhism are enshrined at the beginning of the year and chant Heart Stura wishing for the good fortune and prevention of disasters and illness.

Please join us to celebrate the beginning of the new year by attending the service and electing the new board of the directors for Long Beach Buddhist Church. There will also be a luncheon and a Bingo game after the service.

## Reverend's Personal Note



(Iwoji temple, Shinshiro, Aichi)



(With Leo on November 18<sup>th</sup> in Canada)

I will be traveling to Japan from January 4<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> to see my siblings and relatives and visit the graves of my parents at Iwoji temple, Shinshiro, Aichi pref. Japan. This is the first visit back to Japan since I left the country in 2012.

With some Buddhist friends, I'm also starting a grass-root project to facilitate the interactive dialogues between the Japanese Buddhist priests and the Western Buddhist leaders and practitioners.

There will also be an official meeting in Tokyo on January 12 where I will have an honor to present to the current state and the future vision of the Buddhist mission in North America to the central authority.

Gassho,  
Yukinori Gyokei Yokoyama

# 謹賀新年

明けましておめでとうございます。旧年中は大変お世話になりました。

昨年からロングビーチ仏教会のメンバーやご友人らの中で、病気や怪我をされ方、肉親を失った方、いろいろな苦難を経験された方が多く見受けられました。

自然災害に病、心身の衰え、生き別れや死別。釈尊が説かれた無常のみ教えとして、私たちは常にこうした命の真実と向き合ってきました。

奇しくも、戌年の今年は「滅」を表す年とされています。花や実、葉が大地にかえり、木が本来の姿に戻るという意味があるのだそうです。何かを失うことで、本来の自己に回帰できるという智慧を示しているとも言えます。



私が育った愛知県の奥三河では、花祭りという行事があります。冬の寒い季節に山間部の集落では、かまどで湯を沸かし、夜通し神々を祭る音楽を奏で舞を披露します。冬の間簡単に命を落とすことのある集落では、長く寒い冬を越し、春を迎えられることが本当に奇跡的な嬉しいことであったのだと祖父や父から幼いころに聞いたことがあります。

日本人や日系人は門松を飾ったり、年越しそばやお節料理を食べたりします。

縁起の良いことをし、縁起の良いものをそろえて一年の幸せを祈る習慣について、どういう理由や理屈があるのか何度も尋ねられることがあります。こうした習慣を理屈だけで説明することはできないとよく感じるがあります。

ただ生きていられることに対する感謝、命を次の世代につなげていく願いが、さまざまな形で日本人の習慣になっていると言えるのではないのでしょうか。

新年の法要は災厄を消し、幸せな一年になることを祈る祈祷から始まります。

ロングビーチ仏教会でもまた祈祷法要を行い皆様の健康と無事を心よりお祈り致します。皆様にとって、この一年が心安らかなものとなることを心より願っております。

どうぞ本年もよろしくお願ひ申し上げます。

合掌

ロングビーチ仏教会