

Spokane Buddhist Temple

Volume 65, 2019 - Issue 8
This newsletter is published monthly by
the Spokane Buddhist Temple
927 S Perry Street
Spokane, WA 99202



Everyone is welcome to attend all
activities and services. Visit us online at:
www.spokanebuddhisttemple.org
email: spokanebuddhisttemple@gmail.com
www.Facebook.com/SpokaneBuddhistTemple

Calendar of Events

August 2019

- Aug 4th Sun 10:30 am Sangha Service & Dharma School
12:00 pm Religious Education Committee Meeting
- Aug 5th Mon 5:00 pm Bon Odori Dance Practice (see Page 6)
- Aug 10th Sat 3:00 pm **Annual All Sangha Picnic** (see Page 3)
- Aug 11th Sun 10:30 am Shotsuki Hoyo Service & Dharma School
12:00 pm Board Meeting
- Aug 16th Fri 5:30 pm (New Time) Odyssey Dinner (See Page 7)
- Aug 18th Sun **OBON FESTIVAL **NO 10:30 am service****
- Aug 25th Sun 10:30 am Sangha Service & Dharma School

Also See Page 3
For the "Gathering
Of Joy" Article



Congrats to
Sensei Melissa
Opel

Who received her
Tokudo
Ordination

Spokane Buddhist Temple OBON FESTIVAL

Honoring our Ancestors
927 S Perry, Spokane, WA
Sun. 8/18/19 - 3 pm - 7 pm



Schedule

3 - 7 pm Japanese Art & Desserts



4 pm Hatsuon Service

5 pm Taiko Drummers

6 pm Japanese Dancers

Free - All Ages Welcome
Come Dance With Us

509-534-7954



Spokane Buddhist Temple

AUGUST 2019

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Sangha Services— Our Sangha Service (Sangha is the Sanskrit word for Buddhist community) is a traditional Jodo Shinshu service with chanting led by a Doshi. Services are at 10:30 am on Sundays at the Temple. We meet after service for refreshments and sometimes a dharma discussion.

♦ **GET THIS NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL**

We no longer mail out the newsletter.

IT IS EMAILED IN COLOR. Email:

SpokaneBuddhistTemple@gmail.com

♦ **For the latest Temple Information**

VISIT OUR FACEBOOK PAGE:

www.facebook.com/SpokaneBuddhistTemple

♦ Visit the **Buddhist Churches of America** Website:

www.BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org

There is a wealth of information, podcasts, and information about Shin Buddhism on this site.

Support the Temple Through Amazon Smile every time you shop



- Go to: smile.amazon.com
- Log in or create a new account
- Select “Spokane Buddhist Church” in the charity search box.
- Bookmark it, and shop away!

It doesn't cost you anything and the temple gets a percentage of all qualified purchases.

Spokane Buddhist Temple Team

-Supervising Minister-
Rev. Katsuya Kusunoki
Seattle Betsuin



---Minister Assistants---
Sensei Paul Vielle (ret.)
Sensei Melissa Opel
MA Chad Donoho
MA Eric Kerkove

---2019 Board of Directors---
President - Celeste Sterrett
Vice President - Becca Opel
Secretary - Shawn Boltz
Treasurer - Lisa Geiss
Chad Donoho
KNona Liddell
Tina Rodeen
Patricia Ohashi
Curtis Cooley

Have questions? Contact Board
President Celeste Sterrett
at 509-599-8378
dcsterrett@yahoo.com

DHARMA SCHOOL

will be available **Every Sunday!**

Thank you Aiko, Jacqui, Marji & Nanami





August 10th - Annual All Sangha Potluck Picnic!

Each year we get together for a fun All-Sangha picnic.
**Kids & friends are welcome! Please come and enjoy this time
with your fellow Sangha members!**



Martena Peterson welcomes us to her home:
4213 N Bessie Rd, Spokane Valley

(North on Argonne Road from I-90, cross the Spokane River, left on Maringo Drive, which is the 1st left after the river going north, right on Bessie Road) (509-994-4231) Martena has a huge fenced yard with lots of shade.

There will be hamburgers (meat & vegetarian) supplied by the Temple, so please bring a side dish, salad, dessert, etc. to share. Bring a lawn chair & your beverage.



Bring a White Elephant gift, wrapped, to exchange.
Don't put your name on the gift; a \$10 top limit on the item please.



Congrats to Sensei Melissa Opel

Who received her Tokudo Ordination
in July in Kyoto, Japan
at the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha



Gathering of Joy: A History of Japanese American Obon Festivals and Bon Odori

Excerpts from Japan Town Newsletter (sfjapantown.org)

Obon is an annual Japanese Buddhist festival that commemorates the dead. It is based on a Buddhist text which describes how a devout monk dances with joy upon successfully releasing his deceased mother's spirit from the Realm of Hungry Ghosts. Today, participants dance to express their joy to be living happily and to honor loved ones who have passed away.

Obon is held outdoors during the summer months—in the street or in temple parking lots and courtyards. Central to its celebration among Japanese Americans are the folk dances (*Bon Odori*) performed to music that includes the steady beat of a taiko. The guiding purpose of *Bon Odori* is to set aside the ego through unselfconscious dancing. Participation is customarily diverse—with young and old, formally trained and informally trained dancers, Japanese Americans and non-Japanese Americans.

Tracing its roots back to Japan, *Bon Odori* evolved out of the *Odori Nembutsu*, a popular Buddhist chant and dance from the late Heian (794 – 1185) and Kamakura (1185 – 1333) periods. By the 1600s, it became widespread and very popular in rural communities, providing a break from farm life. During the Meiji period (1868 – 1912), *Bon Odori* was banned, as it was thought to encourage immoral behavior, especially among the young. The ban was lifted during the Taisho period (1912 – 1926), and new songs and dances were created, combining Western instruments with traditional Japanese ones.

While associated with Buddhism, *Obon* is celebrated and embraced by all, regardless of one's religious background. Buddhist temples schedule their *Obon* events over the weekends from late June through August. These festivals are well attended, drawing large multi-generational and multi-racial crowds. Each temple's festival is unique.

The Illusion of Otherness

By Eric Kerkove, Minister's Assistant



It is a basic tenet of Shin Buddhism that all people are equally embraced by the wisdom and compassion that permeates all of existence. There are no *chosen* people whom the universe favors above others and so we can rest easy with the knowledge that our liberation from suffering is assured regardless of whether or not we (or anyone else) feel that it is deserved.

Despite whatever relief might come with the understanding that we are all in the same boat, it is still human nature to mentally file our fellow ship-mates into different categories. This behavior is unavoidable and nothing to be ashamed of, and while everyone is different in some ways, no one is different in *every* way. Our brains are designed to put things into groups so that we can interact with our world efficiently, and since we engage with different people differently, we tend to identify markers (sometimes consciously, sometimes not) that cue us in to how we should proceed with our interactions.

If I'm on a college campus and I see two young people sitting under a tree reading textbooks, I can reasonably assume that they are students there. I might also suppose that the nearby man wearing a beret and rose-tinted sunglasses is an art teacher, although I would be less confident about that supposition. The distinguished woman with the brief case I see stepping out of the Lexus could be the college's vice president for finance but I would only be guessing at that point. Regardless, how should I pick who to talk to if I am trying to find the cafeteria?

Now imagine that one of the students is wearing a hijab. Should I ask her about the cafeteria or should I worry that an unknown man approaching her will be unwelcome? What if the man with the beret smiles at me? Does that mean that he is gay and will try to hit on me if I try to talk to him? If the woman getting out of the Lexus looks down at her watch should I assume that she is too busy to talk to me and will resent the inconvenience?

Suddenly I shifted away from assumptions based on experience and logic, and moved into fears born of limited understanding and some assumptions based on stereotypes. How much more confused and uncomfortable might I be if the people in questions were of different races, ages, and/or were speaking different languages? How many more gaps in my understanding might I try to fill in with unfounded details that create a less and less accurate picture of the people around me?

Just as it is natural to group people together based on what we know of them (no matter how limited), it is also natural to be uncomfortable when we feel like we don't know enough. Fear of the unknown is a basic human instinct, and yet thankfully we were born into an age where we are not subject to the same level of unassailable ignorance as our ancestors. While there are times when fear is a healthy thing, there is no longer an excuse to readily dismiss others as dangerous savages or barbarians (if there ever was).

Unfortunately, greater access to knowledge and exposure to diversity has not decreased the human tendency towards tribalism. We tend to be most comfortable with people who are like us and may invent excuses to condemn those who are not. That woman with the Lexus clearly makes more money than me, so she is probably an entitled snob. The student in the hijab probably hates me as an infidel. If the man with the beret actually *is* gay then he must be attracted to every man he comes into contact with. If I am willing to embrace these irrational conclusions, I can then feel justified in being critical of complete strangers.

An inarguable truth of human existence is that we are *all* different from one another. And yet there are no differences that can make us more or less human than anyone else. It is one thing to feel out of place around new people, but it is completely delusional to posit that any person or group is better than any other person or group based on personal traits, whether they be physical or cultural. Remember, the universe doesn't play favorites! (continued on page 5)

Unfortunately, even if a person can get beyond the primitive fear, ignorance, and tribal mindsets, there is still the ever-present specter of *pride*. If I accept that none of the things that make me different from other people make me better than them, then how can I be special? People can put a lot of effort into building a pedestal to stand on, and are generally resistant to the idea that their sense of superiority is based on ignorance and fear. Fortunately, however, our existence is not enhanced by being “better” than anyone else, so there is no value in trying to prove that we are. We all have our place in the bigger picture.

People who raise themselves above others because of their race, their wealth, and so on, are playing a very hurtful and destructive game of make believe. To believe yourself worthier than anyone else to pursue a meaningful life is to fail to even understand what that means. To have a life that is softer or easier than someone else’s is nothing to be proud of. On the contrary, we should reflect on where in our lives we might be taking more than our share, and how we can remedy that instead of making a point of drawing attention to it.

Whether or not you accept the arguments presented above, there is not a person on earth who brought him or herself into being. All sentient creatures come into being not by their own efforts, but, instead, owe their existence to the infinite and unfathomable web of causes and conditions that made their lives possible. A person may be proud of his or her heritage, but they certainly cannot take any credit for it. A person can find joy in their circumstances, but those circumstances don’t make them a superior human being. A person should be grateful for the chance to exist, but never suppose that they are more deserving of life than anyone else.

A sentient existence is not the result of two parents or even of a long line of illustrious ancestors—it is the result of all the sentient beings who came before. Because all things are interconnected, everything that exists is shaped by everything else, even if the relationships are not always readily apparent. To fear and hate others is to fear and hate oneself, and to proclaim one’s superiority over others is to proclaim one’s ignorance of who and what they are.

Remember that you are embraced by the wisdom and compassion of the universe, just as you are. Remember, too, that so is everyone else.

Bon Odori Dancing at the Obon Festival

The Bon Odori dance is done to the accompaniment of Japanese folk songs and Taiko drums. The folk dances usually tell stories of traditional occupations such as fishing and farming. Everyone is encouraged to join in with the seasoned dancers, who often wear colorful yukata (summer kimono) or happi coats.

It doesn’t matter whether you are Buddhist or not, whether you are new to Bon Odori or whether you have “two left feet.” The important thing is to leave your ego behind and simply express your joy and gratitude for life through the dance. This year’s festival also includes Japanese Arts, Spokane Taiko drummers, and a Hatsubon Service honoring our ancestors.



**Come Dance August 18th @ 6:00 pm
on the lawn between the Temple and Terao Hall**



Gomonshu Visits Pacific Northwest

On September 3rd, the Gomonshu-sama will be visiting the Northwest District Buddhist temples and the Seattle Betsuin will be hosting a welcome banquet. The Gomonshu is the head priest of our sect of Buddhism and we are extremely honored and excited to welcome him to the Pacific Northwest.

Reservations are available now for sustaining members of the NW District temples. Please go to the Seattle Betsuin website to register (www.seattlebetsuin.com). The cost is \$30 for the dinner. Make your reservation soon, in order to hold your spot.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- ★ Sept 7th/8th Sat/Sun Workshop & Ohigan Service with Rev. Tanaka
- ★ Oct 6th Sun Bishop Umezu's visit & Buddhist Naming Ceremony

Have you danced at the Obon Festival? Do you want to learn the Bon Odori dances? They are easy to learn folk dances, led by instructor Jacqui Pierce. You are Invited to **Bon Odori Dance Classes** on **Mondays at 5 pm** in the Temple basement led by Jacqui:

Come Learn the Dances: July 29th, August 5th

Then come dance with us:

- 8/11 at Kuronekocon (Anime convention)
- 8/18 at the Spokane Buddhist Temple Obon Festival 6 pm
- 9/6 Japan Day at the Interstate Fair Spokane
- 9/21 Rockwood Center 1:30-2:30pm
- 11/10 Fall Folk Festival Spokane Community College



Questions: Contact Jacqui at jacquipierce@yahoo.com

Shotsuki-Hoyo

The August Shotsuki-Hoyo remembrance service will be held on August 11th. According to temple records and other sources, a total of 17 people passed away during the month of August of their respective year:

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| David Brady, Sr. | Tokujiro Ikeda |
| Yuriko Ito | Bobby Gene Jordan |
| Tomoyoshi "Tom" Kirihara | Yoneichi Kirihara |
| Yuriko Kirihara | John Francis Munighan |
| Asao Oki | Takashi Osumi |
| Tsuneo Otsuki | Bob Wheeler |
| Joseph Phillip Workman | (Mrs.) Fusayo Wakayama |
| Robert Hideaki Yamagiwa | Leo Yukio Kiyohiro |
| Carolyn Sakai | |



2019 Sarana Affirmation Service (Kie Shiki) on 10/6/2019

Do you have your Buddhist Name?

If you have yet to receive a Buddhist Name (Homyo), please consider taking advantage of an opportunity to participate in a Sarana Affirmation Service (Kie Shiki) at the temple on Sunday, October 6th at 10:30 am. Socho Umezu, the Bishop of the Buddhist Churches of America will officiate at the affirmation ceremony.

Those wishing to participate in the ceremony are requested to complete and submit their application to the Spokane Buddhist Temple by September 15, 2019. A fee of \$35 is payable to the Spokane Buddhist Temple. We will have applications available at the Temple or email us at SpokaneBuddhistTemple@gmail.com for an application.

Spokane Buddhist Temple

927 S. Perry Street

Spokane, WA 99202-3462

Other Groups Renting Space at the Spokane Buddhist Temple

Passage Meditation Group

Tuesday evenings. We are focusing on Sri Easwaran's form of passage meditation and his 8-Point Program for daily living. This form of meditation fits with our Buddhist as well as any spiritual path. Passage meditation was designed specifically for the Western "monkey mind." It is a very disciplined approach to slowing down and focusing. It is difficult, but very rewarding! We are currently studying Easwaran's book, Essence of the Upanishads. Please read Sri Easwaran's book - Passage Meditation - that can be found on the web at easwaran.org - then practice meditating for a month before joining our group. More information: call Mary Naber: 509-570-6876. Also, "Learn to Meditate" on the web: <http://www.easwaran.org/introductory-passage-meditation-course-introduction.html>

Keiko Von Holt & Sumi-E Keiko teaches the Japanese watercolor art of Sumi-E at our temple. Please contact her if you are interested in her classes. Email: keikossumie@aol.com.

**We have "adopted" the Odyssey Youth Center
once a month, by providing a nutritious and fun dinner to the teens & young adults at the
Odyssey Youth Center (in our neighborhood)
This month it is on Friday - August 16th**

Meet by 5:30 PM (NEW TIME) at the Temple with a main dish, dessert, salad, etc. in a disposable container. Make a card showing the main ingredients (allergens, meat, dairy, etc.) We will walk the food up to the center. ***We really appreciate the cooks, but monetary donations are accepted as well, towards food purchases.***

Odyssey Youth Center is a youth-led, adult-supported organization committed to creating, sustaining, and advocating for safe and affirming programs, policies, and services for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth community.

Contact Susan or Kathy to participate:
naturalke@gmail.com or susanhales2015@gmail.com

Any special or requested food items will be announced the Sunday before the delivery date.

