



Tacoma Buddhist Temple

(Jodo Shinshu)

タコマ 仏教会 (浄土真宗)

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MYOKYO

明鏡

(MYOKYO, the Bright Mirror of Buddha Dharma always illuminates our LIFE)

December 2019



Temple Mission Statement *"To offer those in the Pacific Northwest an enduring community that values inclusiveness and acceptance in seeking enlightenment through Japanese Shin Buddhist teachings."*

Sensei's Message

Rev. Takashi Miyaji



This month Rev. Miyaji shares a message from the Gomonshu.

**Tacoma Buddhist Temple Welcomes the Gomonshu,
The 25th Head Priest of Nishi Hongwanji
September 3, 2019**



A Message from the Gomonshu

It is with great pleasure that I am able to pay homage together with you to Amida Buddha enshrined here at the Tacoma Buddhist Temple. Overcoming many difficulties and hardships, your ancestors established many Buddhist temples to share the Dharma here in the United States of America. Reflecting on their patience and resilience, I feel deep respect and appreciation.

In 2023, four years from now, we will commemorate the 850th anniversary of Shinran Shonin’s birth and the following year 2024, will be the 800th anniversary of the establishment of the Jodo Shinshu teaching. It is worth noting that the teaching clarified by Shinran Shonin has been revered and passed on to us by our ancestors for 800 years. Today, those who cherish his teaching are not limited to Japan and found across the world.

One important teaching in Jodo Shinshu is expressed in the phrase, *sesshu fusha*, which literally means to “grasp and never abandon.” In a poem composed by Shinran Shonin known as *Hymns of the Pure Land*, he writes:

Seeing the sentient beings of the nembutsu
 Throughout the worlds, countless as particles, in the ten quarters,
 The Buddha grasps and never abandons them,
 And therefore is named “Amida.”

Shinran Shonin adds explanatory notes to the phrase “grasps and never abandons them” and writes “*setsu* means to pursue and grasp the one who seeks to run away.”

In addition, Sakyamuni Buddha taught that the fundamental cause of our suffering is none other than our human desires. He explains that we suffer because we are inclined to be driven by our conveniences. In other words, we place judgment on things as good or bad depending upon whether they promote our selfish interests or not. Moreover, when human desires are limitless, and people excessively assert their egocentricities to others, resentment deepens between groups of people, and this paves the way for future confrontation.

Responding to this, Amida Buddha chases after those who have their backs turned towards the truth. The Buddha continuously works to grasp and guide people to the world of truth. This working manifests itself as the Name or the Nembutsu that is *Namo Amida Butsu*, which is always being directed towards us.

No matter how much science and technology may develop in the future, the essential nature of us human beings will never change. However, without regard to time and place, whether it be Japan, the US, or anywhere in this world, in the past as well and in the future to come, the Jodo Shinshu teaching will continue to be the spiritual basis for all people and enable them to truly find meaning in their lives.

It is my hope that every one of you will continue to deepen your appreciation of the Dharma and share it on every occasion with your family as well as to the people around you. Let us live each day to the utmost, appreciating the Buddha's compassion that extends to every one of us.

A Message from his Eminence, Ohtani Kojun
September 3, 2019

ほくべいかいきょうくじゅんかい
北米開教区巡回

ほんじつ みな ほくべいかいきょうく ぶつきょうかい ほんぞんあみだによらい まい
本日は、皆さまとともに、北米開教区タコマ仏教会のご本尊阿弥陀如来にお参りさせていただきました。
。ここアメリカの地においてお寺を創設され、み教えを受け継がれてこられた方々のご苦勞を偲び、篤く
けい い あらわ かんしゃもうしあ
敬意を表し、感謝申し上げます。

ねんご ねん しんらんしょうにんごたんじょうはっぴやくごじゅうねん よくねん りっきょうかいしゅうはっぴやくねん
さて、4年後の2023年は「親鸞聖人御誕生八百五十年」に、翌年は「立教開宗八百年」にあた
ます。しんらんしょうにん と じょうどしんしゅう おし ねん せんじん かたがた こんにち たいせつ
親鸞聖人の説かれた浄土真宗のみ教えは、800年にわたって先人の方々によって今日まで大切に
うけつ につぼん せいかいかくち つた
受け継がれ、そして、それは日本だけでなく、世界各地に伝わっています。

じょうどしんしゅう おし とくちょう せつしゆふしや しんらんしょうにん じょうどわさん あみだ
浄土真宗のみ教えの特徴に「攝取不捨」ということがあります。親鸞聖人は、『浄土和讃』に阿弥陀
さまのおはたらきを「じゅうほうみじんせかい ねんぶつ しゅじょう せつしゆ あみだ
十方微塵世界の念仏の衆生をみそなわし 攝取してすてざれば 阿弥陀となづけ
たてまつる」と記され「しる せつ に お せつめい
撮はものの逃ぐるを追はへとるなり」と説明されています。

おしやかさま ねんまえ わたし にんげん くる こんほんげんいん じぶんじしん ほんのう しめ
お釈迦様は2500年前に私たちが人間の苦しみの根本原因は、自分自身の煩惱にあると示されました。
ものごと じぶん つごう よ りかい じぶん おもいどおり なや くる わたし
物事を自分の都合が良いように理解し、自分の思い通りにいかないことで悩み苦しむのが私
かぎ よくぼう もと たが じ こ しゅちょう たいりつ ふか あらそ た
たちはです。そして、限りない欲望に基づいてお互いが自己を主張しては対立が深まるばかりで、そこには争いが絶えませ
ん。

あみだ 阿彌陀さまは、このように^{しんじつ そむ い わたし}真実に背いて生きる私^{わたし}たちをどこまでも^{おいともめ おさ と しんじつ せかい}追い求め、^{みちび}撮め取って^{つづ くだ}真実の世界に^{なもあみだぶつ ねんぶつ}導こうとはたらき^{つね}続けて下さっています。そして、このおはたらきは南無阿彌陀仏のお念仏となつて、常に私^{わたし}のもとに^{いた とど}到り届いています。

たとえ、どんなに^{かがくじゆつ はつたつ}科学技術が発達しようとも、^{わたし にんげん ほんしつ}私^{わたし}たち人間の^{じだい}本質はわかりません。これからの時代においても、^{にっぽん}日本・^{せかいかくち じょうどしんしゅう おし い ささ}アメリカだけでなく、世界各地で浄土真宗のみ教えは生きる^{みな}支えとなります。皆さまには、^{おし き まな かぞく えん かた つた おも}み^{こんご とども あみだ}教えを聞き学ばれ、ご家族などご縁ある方に伝えていただきたいと思ひます。今^{ひび す}後も共々に阿彌陀さまのおはたらきのもとで日々を^{ひび す}過ごさせていただきます。

FUTURE SCHEDULE

(Sun) December 8	Bodhi Day Service 10 AM/ General Meeting 10:45 AM/and Potluck to follow
(Sun) December 22	Temple Clean Up
(Tue) December 31	Year End Service with soba noodles, at 7 PM
(Wed) January 1, 2020	New Years' Service at 10 AM
(Sun) January 5	New Year's Party
(Sun) January 12	HO'ONKO SERVICE

President's Message



Condolences to Robert Nakayama's Family

My deepest condolence goes out to Anita Nakayama and family. We observed Robert "Bob" Nakayama's memorial service on November 13. Bob was a great supporter of the Temple. Bob was a past President of the Temple and past Northwest District Council President. Bob and Anita were always helping at all the Temple fundraisers, along with their family members. Bob will be greatly missed.

Fall Bazaar

June Akita and I thank everyone that helped make our Fall Bazaar and Craft/Rummage sale a success. If you have inputs about the new format, please send them to June or me. Without your continuing support, we would not be able to hold successful events. Thank you.

Annual Temple General Meeting

Our annual Temple General Meeting will be held on December 8, 2019, after our Bodhi Day service and before our Potluck lunch. Our Temple Committees will give a brief report on their year's activities and we will vote on Rev Miyaji's new salary as presented from the Board. I hope to see everyone there.

2020 Membership Pledges

Also, at the General Meeting I will present a chart that shows Membership Pledges from 2019. The Pledge requests are usually distributed in December and will be due in January 2020. This year the BCA Reverend Salary Guidelines were updated and approved. This results in a higher salary for Reverends. Tacoma has done its best to follow these guidelines. To do this will require more funds. Also, the yearly membership donations that we send to BCA (Buddhist Churches of America) were increased to \$148 per member and NWDC (Northwest District Council) to \$8 per member. This means that \$156 of your annual membership donation is sent out to support our regional and national organizations. Please consider increasing your 2020 Pledge during your family budgeting. Thank you.

Gassho,
David

Buddhist Women's Association News



It just dawned on me that Thanksgiving is right around the corner! I love Thanksgiving. Makes me think of all the foods we cook because of family tradition and special recipes. Great day to show gratitude to our friends and family, and watching guests gobble down food to the cook's satisfaction. My mom used to say it gave her a 'kimochi' feeling. I *finally* understand that.

Thank you to everyone who gave to our Food and Clothing Drive this year. With the cold weather approaching, having some fresh clean clothes will be welcomed by many. Thank you in advance for your generous donations.

Please remember to save any unused **toiletries** for shelters. You can put your items in the basket in the Maitreya class anytime.

If you have any suggestions for our next **Bus Trip**, please share with **Alex** or me as soon as possible.

If you have any pictures of any of our BWA ladies involved in any temple activity, please send to June Weled or me. We are working on a presentation of our year's events for our New Year's party in January 2020.

Special thanks to **Kazuko Inoue** for organizing our Special Luncheon at the Emerald Queen on November 17th. **Denise Cline and Donna Sasaki** helped everyone check in and eating quicker than quick!! This lunch was our way of saying "Thank you" to BWA ladies who didn't attend the World Convention but still contributed to our fundraisers and to non BWA friends who supported our many fundraisers these past few years. We were sad that some people could not attend this luncheon, but know that you were missed but more importantly, ***you are very much appreciated.***

Future Events:

Dec. 8 Bodhi Day Service and Potluck – 10:00 service
Dec. 22 Temple Year End Clean up

In gassho,
June Akita



BWA's 'Thank you' luncheon at Emerald Queen.

Dharma School News



A lot has happened this year and I am behind with the Dharma School article, so here are a few highlights to catch-up!

September was kicked off by the annual Young Buddhist Association (YBA) breakfast. Thank you to our high school YBA members, their families, and our fearless and faithful YBA leader, Tracy Ling! We also appreciate all the donations from the sangha.

This year there are changes with our teachers. After approximately 20 years of service, five teachers retired last June: Erik Hammerstrom, John and Crystal Inge, Fred Pelger, and lastly Donna Sasaki, who volunteered for over 40 years, including her time as the former superintendent up until 2 years ago! We thank them for their creative, engaging and meaningful activities, and best of all for connecting with our students as a caring adult. We are also thankful to have many returning teachers along with eight new teachers indicated with an*.

- Lumbini (0-1st grade): Karen Yoshitomi and Junko Yotsuuye.
- Prajna (2-5th grade): Merlaine Cook, Brett Johnson*, Melissa Pedrozo* and Kjirsten Winters*
- Maitreya (middle school): Erin Berkey, Kenji Shipp* and Kaila So*
- Lotus (high school): Megumi Azekawa*, Masahiro Sugano* and Alex Theissen*

It is a safety policy of Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) to have two adults in each classroom. If you would like to visit a classroom once or twice to see what we do or give one of our teachers an opportunity to leave so they can listen to sensei's adult sermon, please let me or one of our teachers know.

We also want to thank Lynne Tanino for her many years of service as the Dharma School treasurer and for recognizing student birthdays each month with a bag of treats! We are grateful to Junko and Erin for taking on these roles, respectively. And finally, a special thanks to Erin for helping with administration tasks last year. This role has been taken over by Brett & Megumi who will continue Erin's work of keeping us organized! On another note, and as you may know, we are the only Buddhist temple in Pierce County that offers a dharma school. We are fortunate to not only have students but also members who volunteer their time to teach. We offer a lot of flexibility for our teachers so they can share their knowledge, experiences and unique talents with students. Here are some examples:

In September, Alex Theissen, who is also a middle school teacher, led a mindfulness workshop for teachers. Our aim was to introduce mindfulness practices that students can chose to use, or not, in their daily life. I facilitated an opportunity for teachers to work together to derive at a means for their class to take a deeper dive into Sensei Miyaji's sermon. They also discussed how to help students think about how to incorporate Sensei's message into their daily life.

October was the annual Halloween party! Thank you again to YBA students, their families and Tracy Ling for hosting this fun celebration for pk(prekindergarten)-8 students! Activities like these help YBA members build leadership skills by engaging with younger students. A special appreciation to Mrs. Yoshikawa for donating balloons and helium for the competitive balloon stomp to decorate the social hall!

Also in October, Dharma school teachers Brett Johnson, who is a public school band teacher, and Megumi Azekawa, a music therapist, organized a pk-12 singing activity in partnership with Donna Sasaki who played the piano and led students through several gathas including one she composed with Michiko Yukawa, "Gassho Around the World".

In November, Dharma School students volunteered at the annual Bazaar fundraiser (thank you everyone!) and Sensei led a pk-12 engaging activity to help them become more familiar with the religious items on the onajjin or shrine.

Coming up..

- Dec 1st: annual gingerbread making activity (pk-12) hosted by June Akita! Families remember to bring a bag of treats such as small candy canes, M&Ms, marshmallows, etc., anything that will fit on a small gingerbread house!
- Dec 22nd and 29th – Dharma School winter break so no class, but families please come to the temple clean-up on the 22nd
- Jan 5th no class due to the New Year's Party, but students and families, begin thinking about the talent you would like to showcase at the New Year's party.
- March 29, 2020. We are excited to announce we have invited Seattle and White River Dharma School students and families to visit our temple. We are resurrecting the Trip-City exchange that was popular when I was a Dharma School student ten years ago...well maybe it was more like 40 years ago but in any case, students will engage in fun activities and work together in the kitchen to prepare a shared meal.

Finally, the Dharma School wants to extend our condolences to Anita Nakayama for the passing of her husband, Robert. Over the last few years, students have become to know Mrs. Nakayama because she hosts the intergenerational Dharma School cooking class. We appreciate Anita and send well wishes to her and her family through this difficult time.

In gassho,
Merilee Tanbara

Young Buddhist Association News



As the weather gets colder, we are getting closer and closer to the holidays especially to the YBA led service of Bodhi Day.

On December 8th, the YBA is going to lead the annual Bodhi Day service in which we lead the chanting and conduct everything like giving a dharma message. We hope to see everyone there to support us and just spend time with each other during the potluck afterwards.

In October, we had the Halloween party. Thank you to everyone who dressed up and provided candy. It was wonderful to see everyone get into the spooky spirit. Also, a huge thank you to Mrs. Yoshikawa for providing the helium for the balloons. It was greatly appreciated from all of us.

I want to remind everyone that we have the holiday greeting annual fundraiser going on, you can either place the flyer in the foyer or we will be running a table at the Bodhi Day potluck.

Buddhist Education Committee News



For the past month, there has been a phrase that has taken the spotlight of the class. "Nothing is Precious". This phrase is not inherently related to Buddhism, but I think it does touch on points that tie closely with what we learn and experience in our daily lives. This phrase came about when one of my classmates had lost two of his erasers in the past week and was frustrated about how his things had turned out for him. However, instead of getting upset he simply let it go and recognized how he had felt. This is an important skill to have for my major in Landscape Architecture since our landscapes are constantly changing. Changing from season to season, from day to day, and from second to second. To take a photo is just capturing how something is in that one instant. The phrase was written on our community board and ironically was erased as soon as the class started.

In Buddhism, this relates to the idea that all that exists is impermanent. Recently, I had read an article from the Buddhist Church of San Francisco talking about the teaching of the Four Noble Truths. In one of the teachings, they stated "All conditions of happiness and joy are impermanent because all beings are subject to sickness, old age, and death". Also, "Impermanence cannot be overcome, but ignorance can. This is nirvana, this is perfect peace". Learning this continues to reinforce that impermanence is everywhere and we cannot fight but rather we can understand it and be able to live in peace with it.

Coming up in the next month there are a few events to keep an eye out for. The first special service being the New Year's Day Service happening on Wednesday, January 1st at 10 am. Then on the coming Sunday, January 5th, we will be having our New Year's Party where the Dharma School will be organizing performances and emcees talent show. Lastly, on January 12th we will have Hōonkō service, the service is important in observing the memorial of Shinran Shonin. We hope to see you soon!

-Kenzo Yoshitomi

Toban News

December Toban News



Upcoming Dates:

- December 8 – Bodhi Day Potluck/General Meeting
- December 22 – General Temple Cleanup
- December 31 at 7pm – New Year's Eve Service
- January 1 – New Year's Day Service
- January 5 – Family Service Installation of New Officers, New Members Recognition & New

Year's Party

- January 12 – Hoonko Service

All Toban Chairs: Please email/call your Toban group to invite them to our Bodhi Day Potluck on December 8. (1 salad, 1 dessert, rest – main dish per Toban group)

December 2019 & January 2020 Toban Groups: Toban chairs are responsible for calling group members for set-up and clean-up of temple events occurring in their Toban months. The Toban chairs for each group will coordinate with each other to set up the dates for the monthly clean up. Please let Erik Hamnerstrom know the clean-up dates to check for conflicts with other activities and to add to the Temple calendar.

November 2019
**Chikako Inoue
Richard & Tracy Ling
Ellen Shigeno
Kjirsten Winters
June & Barry Weled
<i>Email or Phone Tree Members</i>
<i>Frank Shigio (call Jeanette Hirano)</i>
<i>Peter Lee</i>

December 2019
**Kevin & Mayumi Ikeda
Masahiro Sugano
Elsie Taniguchi
Diane Taniguchi
Kosho & Michiko Yukawa
Erik Hammerstrom
Aimee Hamilton
<i>Email or Phone Tree Members</i>
<i>Ed & Kimiko Fujinaga</i>
<i>Violet Mizukami</i>

November Group Responsibilities:

- Monthly clean-up for November and December

December Group Responsibilities:

- Monthly clean-up for November and December
- Dust and vacuum pews in Hondo
- Bazaar: Provide snacks Tuesday for Bazaar clean up.
- Coffee hour (December 15th)

From Your Facility Committee



Gravity and the heavy, gnarly branches of our beloved wisteria conspired to complicate efforts to remount the beautiful ornamental after one of the supports rotted and gave out. After much grunting, trimming, and expedient engineering the crew finally got the inertial plant to rest on the new support.

Now we are one step closer to updating the range hood fire extinguishing system. A walk-through of the Social Hall kitchen with Chris from the Tacoma Fire Department helped to nail down requirements for bringing the noncompliant system up to speed.

Our new refrigerator in the Social Hall kitchen was lacking a temperature equivalent of yin and yang balance. I don't know which is which in this case, but we experienced a mechanical failure due to ice buildup on the new refrigerator's cooling components. Equilibrium was restored when a heater kit was installed to prevent icing on the coolant control unit. So, for a while our old refrigerator, cast out to the storage area, was working better than our new, shiny appliance.

In the spirit of making a good impression on the people showing up for the Temple Bazaar a work crew weed wacked the lot next to the parsonage temple.

Jeff Hiroo and Fred Pelger won't give all that dirt and debris a moment of rest. Their weekly visits ensure all those dust bunnies are evicted. Every Sunday Tom Hubbell cleans all the litter creating eyesores in our section of Fawcett Avenue. Mike Shiogi, David Yotsuuye, Robert Yotsuuye, Gary Ichinaga, Tom Hubbell, Tony Gregg, Rick Tanabe, and Del Sasaki work diligently to complete various facility projects. Kurt Osaka and Osaka Gardens work hard to maintain our temple grounds.

~Dave

Yearly Memorial Services



General Memorial Service Years for 2019

1st Year - 2018	17th Year - 2003
3rd Year - 2017	25th Year - 1995
7th Year - 2013	33rd Year - 1987
13th Year - 2007	50th Year - 1970

December 2019

3rd Year	Tanino, Ryomi	Shaku Ryo-Sho 良証	December 8, 2017
7th Year	Kawasaki, Leo Ryo	Shaku Ji-Sho 慈照	December 24, 2013
33rd Year	Asaka, Kay	Shakuni Wa-Jun	December 10, 1987
50th Year	Kawabata, Hana	Shakuni Shin-Shun	December 17, 1970

January 2020

7th Year	Higashi, Kimiye	Shakuni Shin-Koh 信香	January 22, 2014
13th Year	Nakamura, Kazuo	Shaku Wa-Gyo	January 9, 2008

February 2020

7th Year	Morita, Kikuko Dorothy	Shakuni Ki-Shin 紀信	February 23, 2014
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March 2020

1 Year	Fujioka, Tadashi		March 9, 2019
1 Year	Miki, Hisato		March 15, 2019
7th Year	Jensen, Mitsuko Oku	Shakuni Bi-Sho 美照	March 21, 2014
17th Year	Nakashima, George Masaru	Shaku Shin-Yu	March 27, 2004
17th Year	Murakami, Shigeru	Shaku Han-Po	March 31, 2004
33rd Year	Yamasaki, Kumazo	Shaku Ei-Sho	March 7, 1988
33rd Year	Fukuyama, Asao	Shaku Myo-Cho	March 7, 1988
33rd Year	Konishi, Akiye	Shakuni Ji-Ko	March 31, 1988
50th Year	Kosai, Waki	Shakuni Sei-Myo	March 2, 1971

Greeters Schedule

Greeters:

Note: Please have new visitors sign in their name and give them the following booklets:

- Temple Information Booklet
- Messages from the Buddha (mini booklet with pale pink cover)
- 1/2 page list of Temple activities & "Want More Info." (1/2 sheet form)

Lastly, please do a headcount and enter it in the attendance sheet in the visitor folder.

If you are not available on the day you are assigned, please find your replacement.

December	1	Alex Thiessen & Jeff Hiroo
	8	Jim Doyle & Tony Gregg
	15	Lynrae & Tom Hubbell
	22	Yasuko Morita & June Weled

	29	Michael Shiogi & John Inge
January	5	Ken Tanino & Coco Inoue
	12	David Yotsuuye & Bobby Yotsuuye
	19	Denise Cline & David Campbell
	26	Wendy Hamai & Henry Stoll
February	2	Del Sasaki & Rick Tanabe
	9	Kevin & Mayumi Ikeda

Monthly Book Club

Buddhism Today!

January 9 (Th) at 7pm at Kings Books

Featured Book:

*Green Buddhism: Practice and
Compassionate Action in Uncertain Times*

Stephanie Kaza

Welcome new members!



Aimee Champion

1. Please tell us where you were born and raised.

I was born in Independence, MO but moved around as a child. My father worked for the railroad. I now consider WA home.



2. Why have you chosen to join the Tacoma Buddhist Temple?

I chose to join TBT after experiencing a near-death experience wherein I was gifted Buddhist sensibilities. TBT's offerings are well-suited not only for my own more academic study and practice but also for my daughter's developing sense of self.

3. Do you have any skills or interests that can add to the Temple and the Sangha?

I'm an attorney, an Usui Reiki Master and an artist. I'm happy to share these skills as needed.

4. What is the one thing you want the Temple to know about you?

My husband has a brain injury and severe peripheral neuropathy but I live in a state of well-being because of the NDE and my practice of Buddhism.

Claire Silver

1. Please tell us where you were born and raised.

I was born in San Jose, CA and have spent time living in Santa Cruz and Mountain View before moving to Tacoma. My great grandfather settled here years ago and I have a very large family in this area.



2. Why have you chosen to join the Tacoma Buddhist Temple?

I became interested in Buddhism in my twenties but did not focus on it during the years I was busy with career and family. I now have more time to focus. I believe that spiritual practice works best as part of a community and I love the family atmosphere at TBT.

3. Do you have any skills or interests that can add to the Temple and the Sangha?

I owned a family business with my husband for 15 years where I mostly managed HR and finance. I have been on the board of several non-profits as secretary or treasurer. I am an avid reader and read about a book a week. I LOVE sewing, crafting and gardening. I also worked as a baker for several years when I was young and can make a pretty good pie.

4. What is the one thing you want the Temple to know about you?

One thing! I love walking outdoors. I recently went hiking in Utah and last year traveled to Peru.

Gomonshu Visits Tacoma, September 3, 2019





Oral Histories about the Temple

– NOW ONLINE –

In the spring of 2019, Dr. Erik Hammerstrom's class from PLU interviewed temple members Crystal Inge, Miyoko Kanda, and Donna Sasaki for an oral history project. Recordings and transcripts of these interviews are now available online, through partnership with UW-T, as part of the Tacoma Community History Project.

The class would like to thank the temple and their interviewees for their support.

Interviews can be accessed at: <https://bit.ly/2XpHGne>

The Tacoma Community History Project also has two other interviews about the temple: interviews from the early 1990s with Rev. Yukawa and Yaeko Nakano.

7 years of living the Eightfold Noble Path

~Richard Ling

About 7 ½ years ago, my oldest son, David, came home from his swim club practice and excitedly proclaimed, "I want to play water polo!" Apparently, the Curtis High School water polo coach had seen him swimming and called him out over a loudspeaker; as we later found out, the water polo coach would often watch the club practice and attempt to recruit good swimmers to play water polo, much to the swim club coach's chagrin. And thus, began our journey as a water polo family.

David embarked on his high school and club water polo career, and it was eye-opening. The amount of work that the players did was exhausting to watch. Not only did they have daily afternoon practices that were 3 hours long, but there were also morning practices several times per week as well. Game days would often involve a morning practice followed by an evening game. After each home game, the Curtis High school varsity would always swim a set, typically 1000-1500 yards, longer if it was an easy game, shorter if it was a hard game. The reasoning for the post-game swim set was to ensure that the team would have the endurance to play an overtime game and finish as strongly as they started; the coach at Curtis High School coach trained his players (and specifically the starters) to have the endurance to play 6 quarters (4 quarters plus 2 overtime periods). My understanding of this practice only became clear during David's junior year. After David scored the tying goal with 9 seconds left, the state championship game went into overtime. During the overtime periods, it was clear that Curtis had the endurance, while the team they were playing were noticeably too tired to compete; this was the start of Curtis' championship run, as they defeated Bellevue High School, the 4-time defending champions.

After 2 consecutive undefeated seasons and state championships, David went off to college where he began to play club water polo at Washington University in St. Louis. While his hope had been to play collegiate water polo at the varsity level, he chose to attend Washington University. Although water polo was not a varsity sport at Wash U, they were the 3-time Division III national champions as he entered as a freshman. 3 years later, Washington University has now won 6 consecutive Division III Club national championships, and David has been a starter throughout.

Having watched his big brother play water polo, Ryan decided to start playing as well. Because he did not have the swim background that David had, Ryan had to work extremely hard to improve his swimming. While Ryan did not make the varsity at Curtis during his freshman year, he has subsequently made the varsity team since then. This year, Ryan's senior year, he was elected as one of the three co-captains, a role that he has taken very seriously. As a vocal leader and a leader by example, the team has been a reflection of his qualities: team-oriented, hard-working, and disciplined. Over his varsity years, the team's record has been 87-2 and has won 3 consecutive state championships. Including the 2 consecutive state titles that David's teams won, Curtis High School has won 5 consecutive state championships.

Water polo is a hard sport. It is a grueling test of endurance and strength and requires the qualities embodied by the Eightfold Noble Path: putting out best effort; seeing the bigger picture; having the right mindset in performing drills and sets; and being sportsmen, playing hard but fairly.

It is often said that we don't choose our vocations and avocations; they choose us. We have tried to instill a strong work ethic and discipline into both of our children. Unsurprisingly, they have chosen a sport which requires these qualities to succeed. And we can't be prouder of David and Ryan.



*December 2019

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 Sangha/DS Service 10 AM DS Gingerbread house	2	3	4	5	6	7
8 Bodhi Day - Lotus class 10 AM, Gen. Mtg. 1045 Potluck to follow	9	10	11	12	13	14
15 Sangha/DS Service 10 AM Coffee hour to follow	16	17	18	19	20	21
22 Sangha Service 10 AM Temple Clean Up	23	24	25	26	27	28
29 Sangha Service 10 AM	30	31 Year End Ser. 7 PM, Soba	1-Jan	2	3	

*January 2020

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 New Year's Ser. 10:00 AM	2	3	4
5 Sangha Service 10 AM New Year's Party	6	7	8	9 Book Club - King's Books 7:00 PM	10	11
12 HOONKO/DS 10 AM	13	14	15	16	17	18
19 Sangha/DS Service 10 AM Board Mtg.	20	21	22	23	24	25
26 Sangha/DS Service 10 AM BWA NY luncheon	27	28	29	30	31	