In the Japanese language, a commonly heard phrase is “okagesama de”. Okagae means “shadow”, sama, means “in the state/condition of (being)”, and de means “by”. Literally the phrase means “in the state of being within your/one’s shadow”. It connotes being within another’s debt and is often used as a response when someone has been honored with a favor by another. It is also a phrase used to express gratitude.

Buddhism was introduced into Japan about 1,500 years ago. Phrases such as “okagesama de” indicate the influence of the Buddhist teachings in the lives of the Japanese and show the influence that Buddhism has played on the political, economic, social, artistic and other aspects of Japanese history and culture.

In the Buddhist vocabulary, there is also a word called engi. Engi expresses an awareness of the deep karmic inter-relationship and inter-connectedness of all things. It expresses the universal truth that all things are connected to each other and nothing can exist by itself or solely on its own. Although we often say that “I can exist on my very own”, we could not exist without basics such as food, water, sunlight, air, companionship, etc. This concept or truth is not limited to just one condition but is universal in all aspects of our lives. Anything and everything has a connection with life and this is the “shadow” that we often forget.

The 8th Gomonshu, Rennyo Shonin, found a piece of paper that was trashed in the halls of Honzan, our Mother Temple. He questioned, “Who wastes this precious gift?” He was not looking at the fact that it may have been mere trash but was contemplating the countless number of causes and conditions which brought this piece of paper into existence. He was contemplating the source of the paper and the countless number of conditions of its existence—–the growth of a tree, it’s felling, the processing and manufacture to strip and make it into pulp, and finally the completion of something called “paper”. He was looking beyond just the immediate material thing. Of course, many other processes were required; it took a number of natural conditions and many hands to make this single piece of paper. He was also using the piece of paper as a metaphor to make us more aware of our lives.

Each of us has received human form because of the countless numbers of accumulated merits. For endless eons of time we have been transmigrating in the Ocean of Birth and Death trying to find a way to be free from this cycle. Receiving human form indicates that one has succeeded in gaining sufficient merits to receive this, one of the highest forms of existence. Receiving this human form means that we also need to sustain it by realizing the deep inter-relationships and inter-connectedness of all things which sustain it. We need to awaken to the truth and accept responsibility for understanding that so many things and other people unconditionally sustain and make our lives meaningful. As one who has received human form, we must understand our overwhelming responsibility to all things and others that sustain and give us purpose. As humans, we need help!

The phrase okagesama de, “because of you” recognizes the “gifts to sustain life” that are unconditionally given to us from so many different sources, material and non-material. However, too often we overlook or take these “gifts” for granted. When we take the time to reflect on life’s many miracles, this phrase helps us to reconnect to these karmic sources and universal truths. This phrase humbles us to realize that we cannot exist on our own. Contemplating upon this phrase, it helps us to become aware of a path that has always been there. It is the path to the realizing the Buddha’s unconditional vow to embrace us and help us more clearly to understand the nature of our existence. Awakening to this simple, but profound truth provides comfort and joy in appreciating the quality of daily life, a life of Namo Amida Butsu.

Cont. on p. 2
Okagesama de, cont. from p. 1

However, the phrase okagesama de is not the same as Namo Amida Butsu. There is no true way that we can fully understand the meaning and depth or benefit of calling the Buddha’s Name. Okagesama de is the awareness and means to help us realize that through Amida Buddha’s unconditional vow to embrace us, we are already on the path to understanding the fathomless depth of Buddha’s Name and Vow of unconditional wisdom and compassion.

Okagesama de, due to the workings of countless numbers of causes and conditions, which sustain me, I am able to exist and realize something about myself and the dynamics of life. Realizing that I am a “foolish being” embraced unconditionally by the universal Vow of the Buddha, I hopefully wish to realize a heart and mind of true gratitude.

Namo Amida Butsu

Obon Service and Obon Dance Festival Changes

Due to Bryant Park scheduling the dates of our annual Obon Service and Dance Festival have been reversed. The Hatsu-bon Service will be observed on Sunday, July 9. The Obon Dance Festival will be observed on Sunday, July 23. Please see the Calendar for times and additional information. The NYBC is also chartering a bus to go to the Seabrook Bon Odori on Saturday, July 15. Please gather for the bus at 12:30.

Wagashi (Japanese Confections) Class July 8

July’s cooking class will be on Wagashi. The topic will be mochi-gome, glutinous mochi rice, and will focus on making seki-han, red rice, and home-made domyoji, ground mochi rice use to make sakura-mochi. Please sign-up at the temple or call 212 678 0305 to reserve your spot. A donation of $30 is requested.

Eiko Otake to Perform at Hiroshima and Nagasaki Memorial Service—August 6

Born and raised in Japan, MacArthur Fellow Eiko Otake is a New York-based movement artist, performer, and choreographer who for more than 40 years worked as Eiko & Koma. Since 2014, she has directed and performed a solo project, A Body in Places, in which she collaborates with photographer and historian William Johnston to create and present a series of exhibitions showing her dancing in irradiated Fukushima and elsewhere. She teaches an interdisciplinary course about the Atomic Bombings and Nuclear disasters at Wesleyan University and Colorado College.

Eiko will perform a short movement piece following the Hiroshima and Nagasaki Memorial Service on Sunday, August 6.

Eastern Buddhist League Conference at the Midwest Buddhist Temple, September 1-3

This year’s EBL conference theme is “North American Buddhism: A Path Forward”. Shin Buddhism has been present in America for over 100 years and participants at the conference will explore ways to grow Buddhism in North America by building diverse Sanghas. To that end, MBT has planned a series of seminars that will generate ideas and actions that participants can take back to their temples.

Reverend Kurt Rye from Placer Buddhist Church is the Keynote Speaker and as many of us know, he is an engaging, thoughtful and interesting speaker.

EBL conferences are a time for recreation and renewing acquaintances, and there’ll be time for fun and fellowship. All activities are taking place at MBT and the MBT website at www.mbtchicago.org has comprehensive information about this Conference.
おかげさま
ニューヨーク仏教会住職　池田アール

ありがとうを感じた時、よく「おかげさま」と言います。「大辞林」によれば、「お陰（かげ）とは、1神仏の助け。護（かご）、2他の人の助力、援助、庇護、3物ことが原因となって生じた結果。効果・利益、または望ましくない結果や影響にもいう」と書かれています。「おかげさま」という言葉は、仏教の教えから生まれた感謝（かんしゃ）の心をあらわす言葉です。

仏教はインドから中国や朝鮮へわたり、552年ごろ日本へ伝えられました。また、ごぞんじのように、政治、文化、経済などあらゆるものに大きな影響（えいきょう）をあたえています。仏教をかたらずに日本の歴史や文化をかたることはできないでしょう。

仏教は「縁起（えんぎ）」であるといます。縁起について、中村元の「仏教語大辞典」に、「他との関係が縁（えん）となって生起（しょうき）すること。AにによってBがおこること、よって生ずることの意で、全ての現象（げんしょう）は無数の原因（因）や条件（縁）相互に関係しあって成立しているものであり、独立自在（どくりつじざい）のものではなく、諸条件（しょじょうけん）や原因（げんいん）がなくなれば、結果（果）もおのずからなくなるということ。仏教の基本的教説（きほんてききょうせつ）」と書かれています。原因や条件が相互に関係してなりたち、一つとして独立した存在はなく、また条件や原因がなくなれば、結果（けっか）もおのずからなくなるといわれます。私たちは「誰のせわにもならず、立派に独立している」と考えています。しかし、それはまちがいです。我々は食べ物、水、太陽光、空気、人々などによって生かされているのです。この宇宙（うちゅう）に、一つでなり立っているものは何もありません。

本願寺第八代宗主　蓮如（れんによ・1415−1499）様は、紙が本堂に落ちていたので「一枚の紙もむだにしてはならない。」と言われたそうです。当時紙は貴重品でしたが、それだけのため紙をそまつにするのをあつかってはならないと、注意されたのではないでしょう。紙を作るためには、目に見えない多くの「はたらき」や「ぎせい」によって紙が作られたのです。それを教えてくださったのです。

人間は不思議（ふしぎ）な因（いん）と縁（えん）によって生まれ、多くのものに支えられて存在（そんざい）します。しかし、私たちは他のものによって支えられ、生かされていることを当然と思い、感謝「おかげさま」を忘れがちです。我々は煩悩（ぼんのう）があるので、謙虚（けんきょ）に感謝（かんしゃ）し、頭を下げる事がむずかしいのです。もし、私の頭がさげるとら、「すくわれた」のだと教えていただいています。

「おかげさま」と感謝することは、お念仏・南無阿弥陀仏と同じ、めざめへの道でしょう。親鸞さまはとても謙虚でした。謙虚に感謝することなく、めざめはしないでしょう。阿弥陀仏の光（知恵）は本当のことが見えない私たちを、みすてることなく、てらし続けてくださいます。

弥陀仏の誓い「全ての人を必ず救う」ということをうたいなく信じ、常に自分をかえりみて、お念仏することが大切です。

ごいっしょに、お聴聞（ちょうもん・聞く）の生活をしていきましょう。

南無阿弥陀仏

(Trans. by A. Ishida)
KOKORO

Shotsuki Hoyo Memorial Services Schedule for 2017

Shotsuki hoyo is a traditional monthly service to remember your loved ones who died during that month, particularly in the intervals listed below. The Memorial Service provides a way to express your gratitude and recognize their continuing influence in your life. To arrange a shotsuki hoyo memorial service, please talk to Rev. Earl Ikeda or one of our minister’s assistants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2016 … 1st Year</th>
<th>2015 … 3rd Year</th>
<th>2011 … 7th Year</th>
<th>2005 … 13th Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001… 17th Year</td>
<td>1993 … 25th Year</td>
<td>1985 … 33rd Year</td>
<td>1968 … 50th Year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The names of the persons we will be remembering this month and next are listed below.

**July 2016**

**Shotsuki Hoyo Service**

Sunday, July 2

Arai, Juhei 1953  
Hasegawa, Hikoji 2008  
Hasegawa, Sono 1999  
Hashimoto, Mineko 2014  
Hashimoto, Roy 2015  
Horishige, Fuji 1935  
Horita, Tome 1978  
Inaba, Masaharu 2011  
Ishida, Yoshie 1979  
Ishii, Manken-Toku 1988  
Kato, Kimiko 2014  
Kuchiba, Ayako 1986  
Matsushita, Mae 2009  
Matsushita, Michael Minh 2005  
Mine, Isekichi 1972  
Mitsui, Suma 1951  
Mitsuuchi, Koichi 1993  
Nishimura, Sakae Lotus 1999  
Okuyama, Yasuo 1994  
Otsuki, Joe Shigeo 1987  
Sasaki, Toshi, NA  
Seki, Kazuo 2004  
Seki, Hoken 2015  
Seki, Reverend Hozen 1991  
Sugai, George Yoshio 1982  
Takeda, Hana, NA  
Tashiro, Kayoko 1962  
Wakuya, Nancy Kimiyo 1998  
Yampolsky, Philip 1996  
Yasuda, Emi 1963  
Yasuda, Noo Kemi 1955  

**Shotsuki Hoyo Service**

Sunday, August 6

Armstrong, Jesse J. 2010  
Bakhrushin, Irene 1988  
Cohen, Edward 1984  
Frias, Glenis 2008  
Fukuyama, Janet 1991  
Harada, Kiyomi Kim 1997  
Harada, Sadako 2000  
Hashimoto, Frank Tatsuya 1987  
Hashimoto, Mineko 2014  
Ikuta, Masayoshi 2013  
Inoue, Chizuko 2010  
Kikuchi, Inomatsu 1958  
Kondo, Makiko 1998  
Magome, Hiroko 1992  
Mitani, Taeko 1988  
Miura, Tadashi 2013  
Miyazaki, Toshiaki 1998  
Murase, Jiro 2014  
Murata, Jeanne Kiyoko 1989  
Nakagawa, Masahiko 1996  
Namba, Yosuke 1941  
Niki, Tsutomu 2005  
Norbu, Athar 2001  
Okuma, Goze 1944  
Okuma, Tokusuke 1961  
Primus, Edward W. II 1986  
Shindo, Kazuya 1945  
Soeda, Saihiro 1964  
Takahashi, Kiyoshi 1997  
Tamura, Masashiro 2007  
Taoka, Tadashi 1935  
Theodore, John Noel 1999  
Tono, Matsuhei 1971  
Tora, Shinichiro 1998  
Yamamoto, Dean 2015  
Yanagida, Shizuye 2012

In Memoriam

Our condolences and deepest sympathies to the friends of Midori Sasamoto who passed away in May at the Isabella Home.

A long-time NYBC and ABA (Adult Buddhist Assoc.) former member, Jane Yasuda passed away in CA on May 21, 2017. Her late husband, Ken, was past NYBC Board of Trustees chair and ABA president. There will be a memorial service in the fall. We extend our deepest condolences and sympathies to the family, relatives and friends.

**Untitled Poem by Richard St. Clair**

*Today I am feeling the weight of impermanence*
the fact that we cannot rely on anything of this realm except
the pure pristine teaching which leads us to Buddhahood
the teaching of the Pure Land gifted to us by none other than
Amida Buddha Himself.*

*As Master Shinran has said ONLY THE NEMBUTSU IS TRUE AND REAL*
these are words that often in my dark mind I rebel against
as I indulge my blind passions, even though I know Master
Shinran’s words are true.

*As I encourage others note to rely on the things of this sam-
saric realm of suffering*  
Cont. on p. 6

Page 4
Gertrude Kihara and I went on a People to People tour, an educational one, to Cuba. While still in Florida, we were instructed not to drink the water, brush our teeth or rinse our mouth- only bottled water. Also, since sewer system was poor, all tissues had to be put in separate containers when using the toilet -wow! Due to the embargo, no American banks, so no ATM, checks or credit card use-what!!! We had to have enough cash for any emergencies, medical, etc.

Our 9 days in Cuba started in Havana with cultural experiences which included visits with local artisans of photography, ceramics, choral music, schools of dance and music, art museums and Afro-Cuban dancers. We tried our hands at learning the salsa and no doubt the mojitas helped loosen us up at 10:00 in the morning. We learned about their history, their lifestyle and socialism with free medical care and education thru college and university. We visited their national wildlife preserve seeing large rats and numerous crocodiles, toured cigar factory where they made hand-rolled cigars and a non-functioning sugar mill. We rode a bumpy, old sugar cane train with steam engine. During the trip, we had the thrill of riding other modes of transportation like a vintage 1950’s classic car with ours being a bright pink convertible. We also, rode bici taxis (bicycle taxis) and a jarring ride on a horse-drawn wagon with wooden benches seating 6 people- poor horses!

We visited other colonial towns, like Bay of Pigs where snorkeling is now very popular, the fishing village where Ernest Hemingway wrote his novel, “Old Man and the Sea” and his home where his boat is kept. On a country roadway, we came upon endless strips of unhusked rice kernels being dried on the road and being swept up and bagged as far as the eyes could see (amazing!). At Santa Clara, we saw a statue of Che Guevera holding children and visited a mausoleum where his ashes and his comrades are interred. At Trinidad, the oldest Spanish town, we walked along cobble stone streets.

Cuba has had to learn to be self-sustaining without help from super powers. Hence, they employ organic farming as there is little chemicals, machinery or replacement parts. The country is just reawakening, finding a renewed interest in tourism, and determined to maintain its form of socialism. What they lack in materials or good public transport system, they make up through using their human resources. Gertrude and I were very glad we had gone on the tour and wonder what improvements would be made in 5-10 years!

On June 9th, Yoriko and Tony Armstrong, Re. Earl and Dai Miyazaki visited the opening of Fugitive Vessels, which is a display of ceramics inspired, imagined, and created by NYBC member and ceramist Auguste Elder. The exhibit is in the basement of the Jefferson Market Library until the end of June and actually appeared to be a part of the Library’s regular exhibits - the subjects came from the library itself. Mr Elder’s work uses traditional Japanese pottery firing techniques and is inspired by Buddhist concepts of impermanence and Etruscan burial traditions.
We have just finished up our last full performance of the season, performing for the Hartford Japan Society Festival in CT. It was a nice gathering with many vendors and performances, including another shishimai for us to take notes on.

As we move into July we will be preparing for Obons. We will be performing for Seabrook and NY Obon (as well as helping out with the Bon Dance drumming). Because of the scheduling this year, some of us hope to make the trip down to Ekoji Obon as well to support our other temple and support our sister group Nen Daiko.

Nen Daiko has been chosen as one of the performers for the 2017 North American Taiko Conference final concert, Taiko Jam. We are super excited to support them and also we are excited to go and enjoy NATC. This is a gathering of taiko artists throughout the country, and really throughout the globe, coming together and sharing knowledge and passion for taiko drumming. Members of Soh Daiko will be taking workshops and otherwise enjoying the experience of meeting new and old friends alike.

www.sohdaiko.org
www.facebook.com/sohdaiko
Clockwise from top, the Uke Strummers, Teddy Yoshikami and Children’s Taiko, Tony Di Tomasso on Uke and Derik Kumagai looking cute as ever with his stylish man bun.
Cont. from p. 6

And my burdensome blind passions.

Namu Amida Butsu

Thank You for saving me, dear Amida, as foolish bombu not worthy of You yet You are my Savior nevertheless.

Namu Amida Butsu

Thank You, Amid Buddha! I worship You Amida Buddha! I adore You, Amida Buddha!

Deadline for submitting articles, information and photos for the June Issue of Kokoro is Tuesday, August 15


Articles and especially photographs are welcome and will be published subject to suitability of content and availability of space.

Send contributions to Kokoro
Editors: Gail Inaba, ginaba@optonline.net and Mariko Kato at mkatony@hotmail.com.