

Hikari the Light



April 2019

What does it mean? Another look.



In the Amida sutra which we often chant at the monthly memorial service, it says “Beyond a hundred thousand kotis of buddha-lands westward from here, there is a land called ‘Perfect Bliss’. In that land there is a Buddha called Amida who is expounding the Dharma at this moment.”

When we hear these kinds of words we might immediately feel that this is just a fairy tale. There is a Japanese proverb, “a fire on the other bank.” When we think that the fire is over there, it is just a story. It has nothing to do with us. We feel no urgency. But when we find the fire is right here it becomes real. Awakened beings, all buddhas teach us: It is very difficult for a compassionate calling voice of Amida Buddha from the far bank of Perfect Bliss to reach the people still struggling in the world of delusion. So, first, we must examine our life, our self. Buddhist meditation or quiet sitting will help to look into our ego-self. Do we not turn our backs to Amida’s call, namo amida butsu? If so, it is always difficult for the buddhas to approach us, we who are not awakened yet.

In order to listen to radio or watch TV we must tune to the program we want. We must first tune ourselves to what the buddhas are saying to us. “A hundred thousand kotis of buddha-lands from here” symbolizes our depth of spiritual ignorance that indicates the

buddhas and we are so far apart from one another. Koti denotes a number meaning 10 million. Since the plural is quoted—kotis—our depth of ego-self is incalculable. Although the distance is so great between the buddhas and us, Amida Buddha of compassion never gives up, never abandons us but moves in us. Amida Buddha is expounding the Dharma of the nembutsu at this moment. “At this moment” means the moment is always the immediate here and now for us. The nembutsu which is a call of Amida reaches us beyond time and space. In this sense, Amida’s realm embraces us every day in anytime, anywhere and under any condition, for young and old, strong and weak, good and evil.

I once heard about a humorous exchange. A man asked an elderly woman, “How can you reach Amida’s world when it is located very far westward?” With confidence, she replied “There is a short cut.” “What do you mean a short cut?”, the man asked. The woman smiled and said, “Amida Buddha comes to me with His calling, namo amida butsu right here and now.” For her and for us also, Amida Buddha of boundless compassion is always working here and now. Now, what does it mean that Amida’s world is located westward? The east is where the sun rises in the morning. It represents the beginning of life; the west where the sun sets in the evening symbolizes human death. We often enjoy the solemn beauty of a sunset in the western sky. Amida’s wish is that all sentient beings return to a beautiful and serene realm beyond this world of delusion and suffering caused by our notion of duality. This is the realm we must return to, but not “after we die.” Amida assures us we are already grasped and never to be abandoned in this world. It is natural we will be born in Amida’s realm, “perfect bliss” in the moment of our physical death.

愚痴 (ぐち)

4ヶ月ほど前に3人の娘たちが相談して、ワイフに犬のプレゼントをしました。良い友達になると思ったのでしょうか。少々迷惑だったのですが、子供の気持ちを考え、受け取りました。当時2ヶ月だった「太郎」はもう8ヶ月の犬になりました。種類はミニ「シュナウザー」で可愛いのですが、よく吠え、私たちによく噛みつくのです。去勢の手術もして、おとなしくなるはずだったのですが、よく吠えるのと、私たちの手を噛むことは同じです。番犬にはよい(とはいっても子犬)かもしれませんが、ワイフの手は傷だらけ。トレーニングに出すことも考えてはいますが、犬の送り迎えが大変になり、お金もかかります。「もらったはいいが。。。」と愚痴が出てきます。それは娘たちには言えません。喜んでくれると思ってプレゼントしてくれたのですから。私たちも、このように扱いにくくなるとは思っていませんでした。もう少し大きくなれば落ち着くだろうと、それを待っているのです。

それにしても、人間は中々、先が見えません。智慧を持っていないからです。仏様と人間の違いは一つだけ。人生をそのまま見通す智慧があるかどうか、ということです。智慧がないと愚痴が出ます。愚痴は、「智慧のない愚かな病い」と書かれています。犬のことぐらいのことであれば、大したたことはありません。しかし、自分の人生の先が分からなければ、それこそ大きな不安となります。聞法を通し、人生(いのち)の先を明るくしていただきましょう。

合掌 泉康雄

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403.327.1260 • www.theBTSA.com

In gassho with gratitude,
Yasuo Izumi, Minister
Buddhist Temple of Southern Alberta

CHAIR SCHEDULE April & May 2019

Services begin at 10:30 a.m. unless otherwise indicated.

<p>Apr 07 Chair: Kynan Gordon</p> <p>Apr 14 HANAMATSURI & SHOTSUKI @ 2 PM Chair: Roland Ikuta Youth Chair: Kai Ichikawa</p> <p>Apr 21 Chair: Joyce Shigehiro</p> <p>Apr 28 Chair: Jeff Haines</p>	<p>May 05 NO SERVICE SPRING CHOW MEIN SUPPER</p> <p>May 12 Chair: Ross Jacobs</p> <p>May 19 Chair: Sylvia Oishi</p> <p>May 26 Chair: Val Boras</p>
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Note: Ross Jacobs will handle audio until placement of the new system is completed and operating

Temple AGM

Proposals to investigate the possibility of a temple columbarium and to pledge \$30,000 toward a documentary about Jodo Shinshu were among items agreed to Mar. 3 at the annual general of BTSA. The meeting, chaired by board chair Roland Ikuta, was well-attended.

An interest in a columbarium had been expressed at the board level and it was thought best to receive membership approval before proceeding. The documentary idea, called “Ripples”, was presented by Kynan Gordon and Arjan Gill who are seeking donors to produce a full length (minimum 45 minutes) film focusing on Jodo Shinshu, past, present, and future. Filming is slated to be completed this summer and the entire project completion in March 2020. Total cost of project estimated at \$100,000.

Kevin Sassa, investment adviser, described the temple’s primary financial goal of capital preservation, noting the hope of returns of 4 or 5 per cent. Currently, the BTSA portfolio at a third each in market/short-term bonds, cash and conservative stocks/bonds.

The meeting also approved (1) membership donations of \$100 per member for 2020, the same amount as for 2019; (2) an increase to \$15 per offering for the spring chow mein supper; (3) the elections of Eichi Tanaka and David Major to the board to replace retiring member Roy Sassa and Brenda Ikuta who stepped down.

Board Chair Roland Ikuta presented an update on the new audio/visual system in the hondo; and asked for feedback by Mar. 17 on the status of the Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temples of Canada Women’s Federation to determine whether BTSA members wish to join under its re-structuring.

Treasurer Trent Takeyasu reported BTSA is in good financial position in accord with the 2018 Review Engagement by Moriyama and Wolsey. The chartered accountants noted the favorable amortization of the BTSA building, and the continuing repayment by the Calgary Buddhist Temple of its loan from BTSA.

Reports also were given by the chair, Izumi sensei, and the following committees:---Dharma school; Programs and Operations; and Development.

Hanamatsuri

Hanamatsuri—Festival of the Flowers—honors the birth of the historic Buddha, Shakyamuni, and is scheduled Apr. 14 at 2 p.m. at the temple. Candice Shibata sensei of the Florin (CA) Buddhist Temple, near Sacramento, is guest speaker. Rev. Shibata also will be speaking Apr. 13 at the temple. Please see details in a related article.

The Buddha is said to have been born in India almost 2,600 years ago. The temple celebration will be held with the monthly memorial service (shotsuki) for April. Those observing shotsuki are asked to bring their homyo (Buddhist folder) for display during the service.

The service will be followed by a supper in the multipurpose room.



QUESTIONS... responded by Rev. Izumi

Hanamatsuri 花まつり - Buddha's birthday is also called *Kanbutsu-E* meaning a gathering to pour water or sweet tea over a baby Buddha standing in flowered enclosure. The custom came from the idea that a legendary dragon who had the power to make rain celebrated the birth of the baby Buddha by pouring sweet rain from heaven to wash him. Because the Buddha was born we are able to listen to the Dharma, universal law of oneness of life. During the service children enjoy pouring tea and to show their respect and gratitude by putting their palms together to the Buddha. Adult can do so after the service. Let's celebrate Buddha's birthday together!

Hatsumairi 初参り (Infant Presentation Ceremony) - This ceremony which commemorates a child's first temple visit is conducted during Hanamatsuri (some temples on the birthday of Shinran Shonin).

Monto-Shikisho 門徒式章 - *Monto* literally means the follower of the gate (of the teaching of Shinran Shonin). *Shikishō* refers to a colorful ceremonial cloth with designs such as the *sagarifuji* (wisteria) or the dharma-wheel. Sometimes it is simply called *shikishō*. During visitation to Jodo Shinshu Buddhist temple, followers wear it over their shoulders. Every *monto* is encouraged to wear it. *Shikishō* as well as a *nenju* (*Juzu*) is a sign of humble respect of the teaching and a self-awareness of being one of the followers of Shinran Shonin. (*Shikishō* and *nenju* are available at the temple.)

Tokudo 得度 - *Tokudo* (an abbreviation of *toku-dochō*) in Jodo Shinshu means to receive a certificate (*dochō*) of one's enrolment in the priesthood. Upon receipt, one must follow the teaching of Shinran Shonin and continue to deepen one's appreciation of that nembutsu teaching. *Tokudo* is a life-long commitment. Furthermore, one must propagate with humility, honor and harmony the teaching as the main principle and not subject it to disgrace.

JSBTC AGM

The annual general meeting of the Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temple of Canada is scheduled Apr. 26-28 at the Vancouver Buddhist Temple. BTSA representative is Deanna Jones. Also attending will be Kynan Gordon, possibly Sylvia Oishi, and Donna Dubbelboer for the Women's Federation proposed to undergo major structural changes.

Izumi sensei has been invited as guest minister for a special JSBTC Tsuito Hoyo and Shotsuki (monthly memorial) service on April 28 to observe the 115th annual anniversary of the Vancouver temple. A fall commemoration also is planned with Orai Fujikawa sensei as guest minister. Both Izumi and Fujikawa sensei are former resident ministers of the Vancouver temple.

Spring Chow Mein Supper



Images from fall supper, 2018



Still a month away, the spring chow mein preparations have already started with tickets distributed at the mein-making on Mar. 16. A reminder that the price for each supper has been increased to \$15 as approved at the temple AGM in early March. The supper is scheduled for May 5 (Sunday). Sunday service is suspended that day. Greater details will be available in the May Hikari

Mein Noodles for Sale



BTSA has bags of mein noodles for sale at \$3.50 each, with a limit of four bags. Interested buyers can put their order in with Emily Stitt, Mary Shigehiro or Jan Okamura. The best time to get in touch with any of them is Sunday right after temple service.

Chow Mein Supper Tickets

If you are a member and have no contacts to get Chow Mein Supper tickets you can contact Roland Ikuta at 403-317-0078 or email Rolikuta@shaw.ca. There is a maximum of 6 tickets per member at \$15 per ticket. The limited number of tickets (100) are available on a first come first serve basis.



2019 Membership Form

- Full Membership (\$100 for each member) Student Membership*

Last Name: _____ First Names(s): _____

Last Name: _____ First Names(s): _____

Home Address: _____

City, Province, Postal Code: _____

Telephone No.: _____

Cellphone No.: _____

Email: _____

- Check to receive The Hikari newsletter by email only.

Please send this form and your remittance to:
Buddhist Temple of Southern Alberta Treasurer
470 40th Street South
Lethbridge, AB, T1J 3Z5

*Note

Student membership is limited to persons 18 years or older who are currently registered in a recognized educational institution. It is free of charge with a valid student ID card. Student Members are not entitled to vote at general meetings or to hold office in the BTSA and this category does not include membership in the Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temples of Canada, the national organization.

LET'S EXPAND THE CIRCLE OF THE DHARMA!

Membership – 108
(at March 22)

Shotsuki Donations

March 2019

Dorene Gordon
Randy Higa
Shinako Sheila Higa
Rumiko Ibuki
Ray & Donna Journoud
Ken Ohno & Nancy Eng
Lorraine Ohno
Randy Ohno
Setsuko Ohno
May Nishikawa
Reyko Nishiyama
Bob & Eiko Shigehiro
Emily Stitt
Harry Sugimoto
Kazuko Sugimoto
Brenda & Lester Tanner
Shizo & Dorothy Tomita

Total - \$630

Other Donations

March 2019

Joyce Adachi
Richard & Valerie Boras
Rachael Crowder
Jim & Atsuko Hagihara
Rumiko Ibuki
Yasuo & Sachi Izumi
Lethbridge Okinawa Cultural Society
Yutaka & Chiyomi Matsuno
Shig & Katie Nakagawa
Lisa Nakamura
Heidi Oishi
Ayumi Sawada
Yoshiko Sawada
Craig & Sachi Scharf
Jim, Marion & Shannon Tomiyama
Kimie Tsuji Estate

Total - \$3,175

Please inform us if your name has been omitted from or misspelled in the donation lists. Anyone wishing his/her name not to be acknowledged in print, please let us know so it will not be published.
Thank you.

April MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

April is BTSA's membership drive month, and we look forward to all our current and past members to renew their ties if they have yet to do so. Last year, we ended up with 198 paid-up members and hope we can match or exceed that by year's end. This was less than 200 for which the JSBTC allows two votes.

Consider filling out the Membership Form in this issue, perhaps with a view toward achieving the 200 level again.

Please keep in mind people may join throughout the year. April was simply designated specially as the membership drive month to highlight how we count on the joiners. Thank you.

Rev. Candice Shibata, Guest Speaker



Rev. Candice Shibata will speak on "Attachment, Love & Loss: A Shin Perspective on Grief" in the BTSA's guest speaker series Apr. 13 at 1 p.m. This event is free of charge and open to the public, discussion & refreshments to follow.

Rev. Shibata is a Jodo Shinshu minister at the Buddhist Church of Florin, California. She has a Master's degree in counseling psychology as well as in Buddhist Studies. Within her family she is of the 14th generation to be a Buddhist minister. She will be the guest speaker at BTSA's Hanamatsuri service on Apr. 14.

REGULAR EVENTS

NCS Adult Taiko Tuesdays @ 7pm
Contact David Tanaka 403.330.1548, david@albrio.com

Minyo Dance I Tuesdays @ 4pm

Minyo Dance II (Beginners Level) Mondays @ 6pm
Contact Pat Sassa 403.329.3105 or sas7@telus.net

Tonari Gumi Tuesdays @ 1 pm
Contact Heidi Oishi 403.330.6461 or heidi.oishi@gmail.com

PROGRAMS

Yoga with Valerie Kunimoto Wednesdays
Gentle Beginning Yoga @ 9:30-10:30am
Gentle Restorative Yoga @ 11am-12pm
April 3 - May 8 (excluding April 10)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Condolences

Mr. Takeo (Duke) Oshiro (Calgary) passed away on March 6 at the age of 95 years.

Yoga Nidra Workshop led by Valerie Kunimoto
Saturday, April 6, 10am -1pm at the BTSA

Dr. Oishi: Opioid Challenge Talk



More than 60 persons attended a talk by Dr. Arlene Oishi who spoke Mar. 20 at the BTSA about the current problems with narcotic (opioid) addiction in Alberta. Dr. Oishi runs the opioid replacement program through her clinic (Prairie Treatment Opioid Dependency Clinic) in Lethbridge.

Dr. Oishi noted that the number of deaths from opioid overdoses has doubled every year since 2011. Alberta recorded 746 deaths in 2018, with 47 in southern Alberta.

A summary was provided of drugs considered as opioids and the history of their development and use. Dr. Oishi also talked about why this has become such a problem in our society, and how the chronic use of opioids can lead to long term chemical and structural changes in our brains.

Dr. Oishi concluded by focusing on treatment strategies that are currently aimed at harm reduction (trying to prevent deaths). These include the availability of Naloxone kits, the supervised safe injection site (ARCHES), the clean needle programs and using replacement therapy with drugs such as Methadone and Buprenorphine/Naloxone. A robust question-and-answer period followed.

TOBAN UPDATE

Each Toban serves four separate months during the year, which includes one of our three major service suppers, tea after regular services and monthly clean-up. You don't have to join a toban to volunteer!
Contact lorita.ichikawa@gmail.com

Thanks to **Toban 3** for fun Musubi-making session and special lunch for Shotsuki as well as the weekly tea and treats. Great to see so many join in to help each of the Sundays in March.

Toban 2 will be up for April with Hanamatsuri and Monthly Memorial Service at 2 pm on April 14. We will have a great meal and birthday cake to top off the special service and Dharma child/youth program for the historical Buddha's Birthday

Soup Kitchen 2019

Thanks to **Toban 4** for preparing lunch at the Soup Kitchen in March.

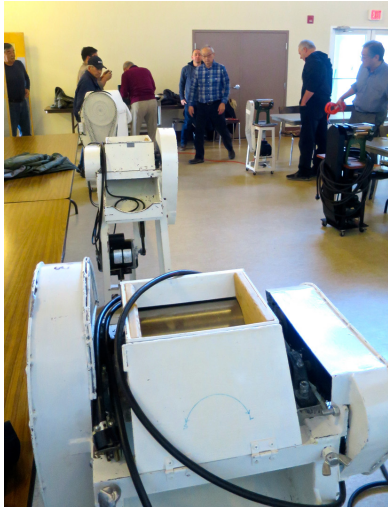
Lilly's Crew will coordinate on April 23.

Soup Kitchen Toban 4

Toban 4 inaugurated BTSA's 2019 soup schedule Mar. 20 with a good turnout. Helpers in front, from left, Eietsu Chiba, Heidi Oishi, Irene Karia, Jan Okamura and Mitsuko Oga. Back row, from left, George Tokuda, Joyce Adachi, Lilly Oishi, Noriko Oga, Yoko Tsujita, Tak Tsujita, Tak Okamura, Sachi Scharf and Dave Kunimoto. The menu consisted of meat balls, macaroni and cheese, mixed vegetables and green salad.

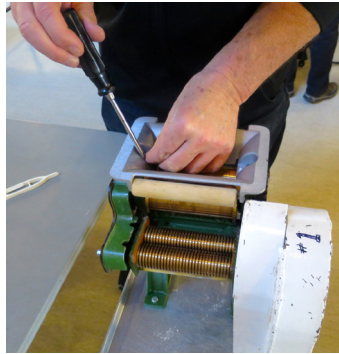


Making Mein in March



Presses

Members turned out in great numbers to get ready for mein-making Mar. 16, beginning on the previous Thursday when Roy Sassa gave a quick crash course on readying the presses and cutters for action.



Calibrating a cutter



Members informed of the prep

The next day—Friday—mixing the ingredients and shaping the dough into cakes kept a number of helpers engaged during the morning.



Eggs and mix for the dough



Cliff & Glen at a mixer



The other mixer

On mein-making day, more than 60 members and Dharma friends converged on a beautiful day for the final result—mein noodles for the spring chow mein supper May 5 and for sale to those wanting to purchase several bags. Cliff Thomas was on hand to distribute supper tickets that the board decided at the annual general meeting to raise to \$15 each. Lots of socializing accompanied the day-long session which was filmed by Arjan Gill to preserve a record of the mein-making process as a tool to introduce future helpers to the event.



A grand day for mein



Kitchen coming to life



Cutting dough cake



Dough work line



Overview of cutters



Flattening the dough



Close-up of cutter



Getting ready to bag



Set out to dry and sort



... and weigh



Arjan filming & Kynan



APRIL: TOBAN 2

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
*OFFICIAL BTSA ACTIVITY						
	6pm Minyo II	1pm Tonari Gumi 4pm Minyo I	9:30am Beg. Yoga 11am Res. Yoga		12pm Spiritual Care Mtg. at CRH	10am Nidra Yoga 10:30am Explore Buddhism*
	1	2	3	4	5	6
10:30am Regular Service*	6pm Minyo II	1pm Tonari Gumi 4pm Minyo I	2pm LCC visit* 7pm Board Mtg*			10:30am Explore Buddhism* 1pm Buddhist Seminar*
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
2pm Infant Presentation Ceremony/ Hanamatsuri Buddha's Birthday*	6pm Minyo II	1pm Tonari Gumi 4pm Minyo I	9:30am Beg. Yoga 11am Res. Yoga 2pm LCC visit*			10:30am Explore Buddhism*
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
10:30am Regular Service*	6pm Minyo II	1pm Tonari Gumi 4pm Minyo I	9:30am Beg. Yoga 11am Res. Yoga Ministers' Mtg/ JSBTC Mtg.	Ministers' Mtg/ JSBTC Mtg.	Ministers' Mtg/ JSBTC Mtg.	Ministers' Mtg/ JSBTC Mtg.
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
10:30am Regular Service* Ministers' Mtg/ JSBTC Mtg.	6pm Minyo II	1pm Tonari Gumi 4pm Minyo I				
28	29	30				

MAY: TOBAN 3

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			9:30am Beg. Yoga 11am Res. Yoga		12pm Spiritual Care Mtg. at CRH	
			1	2	3	4
Chow Mein Supper * Sunday Service cancelled	6pm Minyo II	1pm Tonari Gumi 4pm Minyo I	9:30am Beg. Yoga 11am Res. Yoga 2pm LCC visit* 7pm Board Mtg*			10:30am Shin Buddhism and Nihongo*
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
10:30am Shotsuki Monthly Memorial Service*	6pm Minyo II	1pm Tonari Gumi 4pm Minyo I				10:30am Explore Buddhism*
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
10:30am Gotan-E Shinran Shonin's Birthday*	6pm Minyo II	1pm Tonari Gumi 4pm Minyo I	2pm LCC visit*			10:30am Explore Buddhism*
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
10:30am Regular Service*	6pm Minyo II	1pm Tonari Gumi 4pm Minyo I				
26	27	28	29	30	31	