

Hikari the Light



August 2020

Live with Okagesama

The COVID-19 pandemic is still threatening our lives. We have not seen any light at the end of the dark tunnel yet. It is hard to imagine that already more than 500,000 precious lives have perished in the world to this pandemic. A couple of friends of mine are among them. It is said that the conditions to drag us to death are immeasurable (*shi-no-en muryou*). And yet we are living and breathing here today by so many visible and invisible conditions. Living here and now is conditional; when the conditional forces to live stop we must leave this world.

Our elderly people often say *okagesama* or *okagesama-de* (adding *de* becomes an adjective, e.g. “*okagesama-de* I am fine.”) The word expresses that we are living everyday by visible and invisible conditions. *O* and *sama* are honorific prefix and suffix respectively. *Kage* means shade or shadow which we often overlook or find difficult to recognize.

Once, I was asked by a young woman to draw a picture to express the meaning of *okagesama*. After thinking for a moment, I drew a picture of two people resting in the shade of a big tree on a very warm day. I said to her this is an original meaning of *okagesama*. It simply means “because of you.” “You” is not necessarily a person but many visible and invisible things around us which constantly support us and keep us alive, such as air, water, food, good teaching, kindness, love and so on. In the illustration, I drew two people comfortably resting “because of a tree.”

This is Buddha’s teaching which says: nothing exists by itself or for itself, meaning co-existing and co-arising. Our elderly people may not have a lot of knowledge about Buddhism but they indeed have wisdom from their life influenced by Buddha’s teaching. Perhaps, I-centered people do not appreciate such a beautiful word as *okagesama*. Yet, I-centeredness is always crushed and

outshone by the light of infinite wisdom and compassion of the Buddha.

Nowadays it may at times be difficult, inconvenient and very painful to persist; nonetheless, please keep in mind to live this life courageously, cheerfully and most of all sincerely, that is with *okagesama*.

In Gassho,
Yasuo Izumi, Minister
Buddhist Temple of Southern Alberta

迷いを照らす仏様の智慧

暑い日が続いています。皆さま如何でしょうか。今年一月に始まった新型コロナウイルスは衰えることもなく、益々、激しくなり多くの人々を苦しめ、不安の思いにさせています。人間の一生には、私たちの思い通りにいく(順境)と、思い通りにいかない時(逆境)がありますが、今は思い通りにしていない、逆境の時と言えるでしょう。多くの人々が別離の悲しみに泣き、あるいは不安を抱え、つらい思いで生きています。このような逆境の時には、人は神仏を頼むということがあります。今年の三月中頃にも、ある宗教団体から、「パンデミック撲滅に神様を頼みましょう、祈りましょう」、という電話がありました。しかし、正直に聞いた人は、今になって「神も仏もあるものか」と、決まり文句が出ることでしよう。

仏様は私たちを思い通りにして下さる方ではなく、人生を見通す智慧を与えて下さる方です。私たちの状態、特に、逆境を見つめ、超えさせて下さる方なのです。順境には得意になり、逆境にはオロオロしている私たち。うまくいけば笑い、そうでなければ泣く。時には愛し、時には憎む。喜怒哀楽が、時計の振り子のように左右に揺れています。仏様はこのような私たちの生き方を、「迷いの人生」と呼ばれるのです。仏様の智慧を頂きながら順逆を超えた広く、明るい、温かい世界が、今、与えられていることを聴聞を通して知らせて頂きましょう。どんなことがあっても受け入れて下さる仏様がいて下さるのです 合掌 泉康雄

SHORT STORY I heard the following story: It is a slow day in a small town in Alberta, and streets are quiet. Times are tough, everybody is in debt, and everybody is living on credit.

A tourist visiting the area drives through town, stops at a motel, and lays a \$100 bill on the desk, saying he wants to inspect the rooms upstairs to pick one for the night.

As soon as he walks upstairs, the motel owner grabs the bill and runs next door to pay his debt to the bakery. The baker takes the \$100 and runs down the street to retire his debt to the egg farmer. The egg farmer takes the \$100 and heads to pay his bill to his supplier, the co-op. The guy at the co-op takes the \$100 and runs to pay his debt to the taxi driver who also has been facing hard times and offers his service on credit. The taxi driver rushes to the hotel and pays off his room bill with the hotel owner. The hotel owner then places the \$100 back on the counter so the traveller will not suspect anything.

At that moment, the traveller comes down the stairs, states that the rooms are not satisfactory, picks up the \$100 bill and leaves.

No one produced anything. No one earned anything. However, the whole town is now out of debt and now looks to the future with a lot more optimism.



BTSA Minister: Rev. Yasuo Izumi
403.382.7024 • yasuo123@shaw.ca
470-40 St S • Lethbridge, AB T1J 3Z5
403.327.1260 • www.theBTSA.com

BTSA Notes from the Board of Directors

The BTSA continues to be very active despite the COVID pandemic. Thanks to so many volunteers who continue to help with funeral plans, Obon, Hikari news letters and the more frequent email mail outs.

The new physical features at the temple are the solar panels which were installed over the first three weeks in July. They look great and most feel that they do not detract from the physical look of our temple. Please see the accompanying picture and article by David Major.

In board news Sylvia Oishi stepped down due to work related issues. We thank her for so many years of dedicated service and advice for the temple. She will continue to sit on a couple of the subcommittees. Rachelle Muskovich has volunteered to join the Board of directors in replacing Sylvia. It will be great to have more input from younger members of our sangha.

Obon services were conducted July 18th and 19th with approximately 175 people attending in person and another 100 people viewing the service virtually. Thanks to all who volunteered to make this happen with our new COVID procedures in place. The Obon committee felt the services went well and all felt safe with the precautions in place. Thanks to Brenda Ikuta for coordinating these efforts.

It is hoped that regular Sunday services can resume in September. The board will make further decisions based on public health officials recommendations and the state of the COVID out break numbers. It is also hoped that many of the regular activities at the temple such as Yoga, meditation classes, Taiko, Odori and the exploring Buddhism classes can resume with modifications to how we meet. Further decisions will be made at the August Board of Directors meeting and announcements will be made in the September Hikari newsletter.

The BTSA will be taking a summer break for the rest of July and all of August as is usual.

The AV committee is continuing to be very active and helping in producing content for our Pod cast, facebook page and making services available on our You tube Channel. Please visit our You Tube page to look at the content. Thanks to the efforts of Ross Jacobs we now have the ability to live stream and record our services including funeral services.



A recent photo inside BTSA with new seating arrangements to accomodat social distancing.
photo: Brenda Ikuta

Solar Panels Installed

A couple of years ago we came to the realization that the utilities at the temple, particularly the electricity component was a bit of an orphan. We didn't fully understand how it worked and what the various controls were for. This lead to a more extensive review of our overall activities and eventually down a path to becoming an "ecoSangha". Everything was put on the table for discussion, eg: using styrofoam containers for the chow mein supper, installing solar panels, buying bottled water.

We tackled the issue of electricity by acquiring a year of 15-second data from the city Electric Department (thanks to Trent) and analyzing that data to see when and where we were using electricity. There was no rhyme or reason to our usage which lead us to believe that we could make some intelligent changes to increase efficiency. It also allowed us to make a reasonable assessment of what the consequences would be of installing solar panels. Long story short: we had a town hall in the Fall of 2019 including a tour of a net-zero home, and with overall support of the attendees, approached the Board of Directors at the 2020 AGM to get approval to apply some of the temple assets toward installing a solar panel array.

In March 2020 the BTSA awarded a contract to EnergySmart Systems to install the array on the south-facing slope of the roof. The estimated completion date of mid-April was significantly delayed by COVID-19 and some other regulatory issues but, as many of you will have noticed, the BTSA roof has been graced with an array of panels that will produce 75,000 kWh of electricity per year. At 2:08 pm MDT on July 28 the panels were brought to life and began to produce electricity. At the time of this writing, on a clear, sunny day at 11a.m. we are exporting almost 40 kWh to the grid.

We will have more to report to show how the panels are working as the summer progresses. I would like to thank the Board of Directors and in particular, our President, Dr. Roland Ikuta, and Treasurer, Trent Takeyasu, for their dedication, trust and support in achieving this step on our path toward an ecoSangha.

David Major



Solar panels were installed atop the temple southside roof during July. The addition will make the temple more energy efficient.
photo: David Major

Proposal: Columbarium within our Temple

Requesting Membership Feedback by September 30th, 2020

What is a columbarium? A place for the respectful storage of urns containing cremated remains. Our columbarium would consist of a series of closed compartments (niches) designed for the storage of 2-4 urns each.

Why have a columbarium? Izumi Sensei says that it creates a connection between the Temple and those who bring their ashes of their loved ones to the Temple to be stored. It will serve as a reminder of the life of impermanence through which we appreciate Buddha's compassion. It will also raise revenue for the Temple which is fundamental to our ability to share the Buddha's teachings. It will become one of our Temple's treasures.

More people are beginning to opt for cremation as opposed to burial. The benefits of cremation and columbarium placement are:

- Being above ground (many are uncomfortable with the idea of burial)
- It offers a dedicated location where family and friends can visit those who have passed
- An indoor space where people can pay their respects in comfortable surroundings
- Better for the environment because it takes up less ground space than burial
- Cemeteries are running out of space and we are running out of space for more cemeteries
- Columbarium storage is generally less expensive than the cost of cemetery plots and burial expenses

Where would we put it? The proposed location of the columbarium would be in the space that is presently the library, adjacent to the boardroom. The library could easily be moved into the Dharma classroom.

Details of Construction: The columbarium niches would be in two sizes, the standard size holding 2 urns and the larger size holding 4 urns. The niches would be owned for a long term period and for a specified one-time payment (approximately \$2,300 to \$4,800). Wesbridge Construction has estimated the cost of the renovation at \$55,000.00. This would include 3 walls of niches (144 compartments), a small butsudan in one wall, and a glassed partition wall with a door separating the boardroom meeting area from the columbarium. The compartments are anticipated to be made of wood, each with an opaque glass front in a door that can be opened for insertion/removal of the urns.

The cost of rezoning to allow for the renovation is estimated to be \$5,000. If all the niches were put to use, the eventual revenue to the Temple is estimated at \$360,00 to \$400,000.

Who can use it? The use of the niches may be restricted to members of the Temple, their loved ones, or Jodo Shinshu Buddhists. The Board may consider offering spaces to others. All niche ownership would be subject to Board approval.

At present, the Jodo Shinshu Temples in Steveston, Vancouver, and Calgary all have columbariums.

Contact Information: In order to assist the Board in its decision as to whether to proceed with this project, we would ask that you respond to the following survey questions. You may do so by advising the Columbarium Committee through Sylvia Oishi at sylvia.oishi@gmail.com or by mail to the **BTSA at 470 40 Street S, Lethbridge, AB, T1J 3Z5** (attention: Sylvia Oishi). Please feel free to discuss the matter with any of the Board members. Your views will be kept confidential to the members of the Board and the Columbarium committee.

SURVEY: (Additional comments are welcome)

- **Should our Temple have a columbarium on site?**
- **Would you or your family or friends use a columbarium at the BTSA?**

Thank you, we appreciate your feedback!

Obon Donations

July 2020

Joyce Adachi	Tobie Sakamoto
Roy Adachi	Gord & Joy Saruwatari
Eiko Aoki	Kevin Sassa
John & Donna Dubbelboer	Roy & Pat Sassa
Judy Fukushima	Ken Setoguchi
Dorene (Keiko) Gordon	Sumio & Shirley Setoguchi
Garry & Marie J. Goudie	Bob & Eiko Shigehiro
Shinako (Sheila) Higa	Joe & Mary Shigehiro
Shirley Higa	Joyce Shigehiro & Trevor Van Sluys
Helen Hikita	Shari Shigehiro & Craig McMahon
Tomi Hisaoka	Tom & Mitsuko Shigehiro
Chris & Susan Huntley	Tom & Fumi Shimozaawa
Akira Ichikawa	Tomoko Shono
Mike Kado	Emily Stitt
Lily Kaga	Hajime Harry Sugimoto
Kiyomi Kamitakahara	Noris & Sachi Taguchi
& Estate of Sab Kamitakahara	Kazuko Takaguchi
Gene Kawade	Robert & Judy Takaguchi
Michie Kawasaki	Barbara Takeda
Chizuko Kimura	Blaine Takeda
Taxi & Doreen Kitagawa	Fugi Takeda
Dave & Val Kunimoto	Kenneth Brent Takeda & Lila Ho-Takeda
Allan Leavens	Tomiko Takeyasu
Yasue Maruyama	David & Linda Tanaka
Kinuko Matsuno	Eichi & Betty Tanaka
Yutaka & Chiyomi Matsuno	Glen & Pamela Tanaka
Gary E. & Beverly S. McIlroy	Masaye Tanaka
Joyce Miyashita	Betty Taniguchi
Mark & Shelly Murakami	Cathy Taniguchi
Richard S. Nagai	David Taniguchi
Rie Nagai	Dr. Frances Tatebe & Ralph Arnold
Setsuko Nagai	Bill & June Terakita
& Estate of William T. Nagai	Carolyn Terakita & Dr. Leigh J. Morris
Jim Nakagawa	Clifford Thomas
Shig & Katie Nakagawa	George Tokuda
May Nishikawa	Shizuo & Dorothy Tomita
Sway & Toshiko Nishimura	Joe & Sumiko Tomiyama
Mitsuko Oga	Kaz & Marjory Tomomitsu
Noriko Oga	Tak & Yoko Tsujita
Ken Ohno & Nancy Eng	Kenneth N. & Angelina Tsukishima
Setsuko Ohno	Keith & Kathleen Kaoru Turnbull
Heidi Oishi	Marie & Ken Uyesugi
Tak & Jan Okamura	Ken & Ruby Yamamoto
Joanne Planidin	Minoru & Alan Yoshida
Darcee Richardson	
Irene Sakamoto	

Total - \$20,585

2020 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.: _____ Cell: _____

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 to July 22 - 179

Ho-onko & Hanamatsuri Donation

January, July 2020

Gord & Joy Saruwatari
John & Donna Dubbelboer
Gary E. & Beverly S. McIlroy
Gord & Joy Saruwatari
Kazuko Takaguchi

Total - \$250

Shotsuki Hoyo

July 2020

Judy Fukushima
Shirley Higa
Tomi Hisaoka
Rumiko Ibuki
Mona Kado
Martin & Karen Kaga
Yutaka & Chiyomi Matsuno
Ken & Vickie Nakagama
May Nishikawa
Sway & Toshiko Nishimura
Yoko Nishimura
Noriko Oga
Ken Ohno & Nancy Eng
Heidi Oishi
Lilly Oishi
Tak & Jan Okamura

Emily Stitt
Dawn Sugimoto
Hajime Harry Sugimoto
Robert & Judy Takaguchi
Fugi Takeda
Glen & Pamela Tanaka
Masaye Tanaka
Betty Taniguchi
Clifford Thomas
Shizuo & Dorothy Tomita
Jim, Marion & Shannon Tomiyama

Total - \$2,275

Other Donations

July 2020

Anonymous Cash Donors
Eiko Aoki
Ray & Susan Arakawa
Linda Bingham
Don & Marcia Dougherty
John & Donna Dubbelboer
Jack & Mitsuya Fujino
Kaz & Yori Hiraga
Rumiko Ibuki
Akira Ichikawa
Rev. Yasuo & Sachi Izumi
Kiyoshi & Emiko Irene Katsumoto
Ken & Amy Kurio
Gary E. & Beverly S. McIlroy
Misae Masuda
Kinuko Matsuno
Richard S. Nagai
Rie Nagai

Ken & Vickie Nakagama
Jim Nakagawa
May Nishikawa
Sway & Toshiko Nishimura
Mitsuko Oga
Setsuko Ohno
Heidi Oishi
Sylvia Oishi & Terry Hanna
Tak & Jan Okamura
Evelyn Osaka
Darcee Richardson
Ken & Keiko Sampson
Gord & Joy Saruwatari
Roy & Pat Sassa
Joe & Mary Shigehiro
Joyce Shigehiro & Trevor Van Sluys
Tom & Mitsuko Shigehiro
Naomi Shikaze
Hajime Harry Sugimoto
Noriko Sugimoto
Yvonne B. Sugimoto
Noris & Sachiko Taguchi
Kazuko Takaguchi
Fugi Takeda
Ayako Taniguchi
Betty Taniguchi
Clifford Thomas
George Tokuda
Shizuo & Dorothy Tomita
Jim, Marion & Shannon Tomiyama
Joe & Sumiko Tomiyama
John Wolsey

Total - \$6,351.29

Sensei's New Booklet

Dharma: My Guiding Light No. 14

--short stories in English and Japanese short talks--



Buddhist Temple of Southern Alberta
南アルバータ仏教会

Copies of *Dharma, My Guiding Light*, No. 14—A collection of Izumi sensei's dharma messages compiled in booklet form are still available for sale at the temple.

A donation of \$2.50 each is requested to help defray publication costs. They're also available by mail for those who are unable to get to the temple. Please write to:

Buddhist Temple of Southern Alberta
470 40th Street So.

Lethbridge, AB T1J3Z5

or email sensei: yasuo123@shaw.ca.

Temple support also contributed to its publication.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Condolences

Minoru Min Yoshida (89) June 23

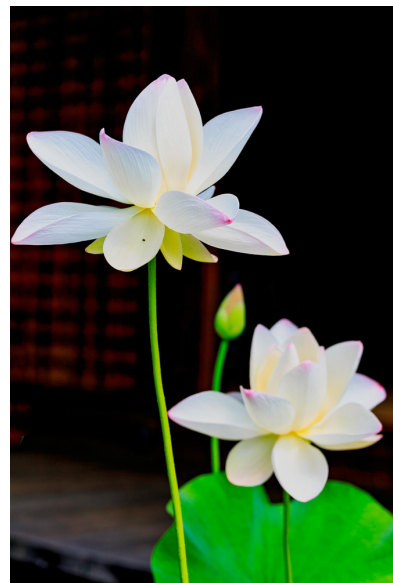
Deanna Aiko Wolsey (44) June 25

Saburo Kamitakahara (88) June 28

Shirly Shizuyo Taniguchi (92) June 28

Kazuko Sugimoto (93) June 29

Nancy Toshiko Nakatsuru (60) July 25



<https://makersplace.com>

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

Obon Summary

Thank you to Izumi Sensei and all the volunteers and attendees of the Obon 2020. Despite feelings of trepidation in opening the temple to large gatherings, the cooperation and assistance of everyone in attendance allowed all four events to proceed smoothly. Thank you for wearing masks, maintaining a safe distance, hand sanitizing, and visiting outside the temple. We hope that everyone felt 'safe' and were able to benefit from the temple experience. We would also like to express sincere appreciation for your generous donations in these unusual times!

Attendance for the services was as follows:

Saturday AM36
Saturday PM 36
Sunday AM 44
Sunday PM 37

Those who preferred to view the service from home were able to watch a pre-recorded service Saturday or watch the live-broadcasted service on Sunday afternoon. If you would like access to these recordings they can be found on the Buddhist Temple of Southern Alberta YouTube channel:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmr9wf_4Rpwg4IT2JyetzVg

We apologize if there were any registration or online difficulties. We would appreciate any feedback regarding your Obon experience so we can continue to improve: brenda.ikuta@gmail.com

In gassho,
Brenda Ikuta



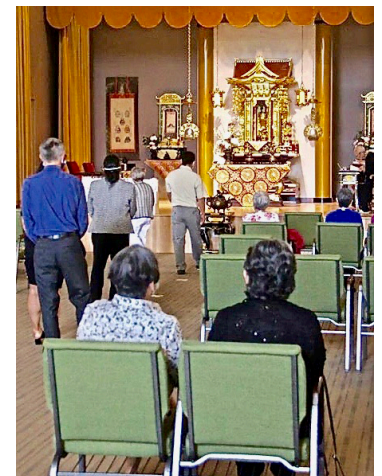
Physical-distancing



Families observe Hatsubon



Sutra-chanting



Oshoko



Izumi Sensei



MC Roland Ikuta



Signing in