



A Fire On the Opposite Bank

There is a Japanese proverb:

Taigan-no-Kaji meaning “a fire on the opposite bank.” When we see a fire on an opposite bank we do not really pay much attention. On the contrary, we feel at ease that the fire is not on our side. The implication of the proverb is our indifferent and unconcerned attitude about something which is actually serious and important.

When someone comes to us, complaining “I am getting old and death is coming to me soon.” We respond, “Well, it is natural. Everybody gets old and eventually will die.” We know the answer. But we do not seriously think that we are also getting old and eventually will die. We do not think that we are on the same boat. The thought of our own death and dying is always something which is over there. This is called “a fire on the opposite bank.” When we realize that the fire is burning at our own feet, we start, for the first time, to listen to Buddha’s teaching and begin to appreciate the boundless compassion of the Buddha called Amida Buddha. This is because Amida’s compassionate vow is for us who are deeply caught up and mired in the small world of ego attachment to our life of change. Amida Buddha looks upon all sentient beings as his own self.

We remember the word of Master Shinran (1173-1263): “When I ponder on the compassionate vow of Amida, established through eons ago, it was for myself Shinran alone.” “Eons ago” here symbolizes the depth of our spiritual

ignorance coming out of ego attachment. Master Shinran continues, “It is because I am being burdened so heavily with karma of my ego attachment, I feel even more deeply grateful to Amida’s vow which is made decisively liberate me.”

We must encounter Amida’s compassionate vow and hear the call expressed in *Namo Amida Butsu* (Take refuge in Amida Buddha!) which is working in our life, right here and now. Buddha’s boundless compassion will never leave us alone in our loneliness and anxiety.

Namo Amida Butsu in gratitude,
Yasuo Izumi, Minister
Buddhist Temple of Southern Alberta

年の瀬

今年の冬は比較的暖かく、心身ともに過ごし易い毎日です。この気候が続けば、日加友好日本庭園での除夜の鐘つきも楽でしょう。今年で14回目の「鐘つき」です。第一回は猛吹雪となってキャンセルを余儀なくされました。それから丸13年がアツという間に過ぎました。

「除夜の鐘」も庭園の年間行事として根付いたようです。多い年は100人以上になります。零下15度をもとせず、人種を問わず、皆、読経に耳を傾け、お焼香をし、合掌してから梵鐘を打ち、その音を静かに聞いています。梵鐘の音は、十方の衆生を常に思ってください。仏様の呼び声です。朝から晩まで、我執にとらわれ煩悩の明け暮れの私たちを呼び覚まし、反省を促し、抱きとって下さる声なのです。時間のある方はどうぞご参加ください。

合掌 泉康雄開教使(南アルバータ仏教会)

BUDDHIST Q & A

Q. What is my view about the Christmas holiday?

A. I see the Christmas holiday as a joyous season. I like its atmosphere. It is pleasant and fun to watch colorful lights on the street and to listen to Christmas songs. Christmas is, of course, the day to celebrate Jesus’ birthday. In recent years, however, this particular holy day has become commercialized and has become a very expensive holiday. Christmas is a religious event. Whenever religious events become too commercialized, their meaning will be lost.

During this month, Buddhists celebrate Bodhi Day, a day to celebrate Buddha’s enlightenment. We set up a Bodhi tree at the temple. The Buddha, Sakyamuni, discovered the truth of life on December 8, nearly 2500 years ago. The truth he discovered is called the Dharma. The Dharma is expressed as the Light of boundless compassion of Amida Buddha for us.

Islam celebrates Allah who is the Light of heaven and earth. Judaism celebrates Hanukkah, and Hindu and Sikh celebrate Diwali around this time as the Festival of Light respectively. We are always one in the Light! (Y. I.)

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403.327.1260 • www.theBTSA.com

BTSA Notes

“Where did the year go?” is a familiar exclamation whose sentiment is easily understood at this time of year. As we enter December and move toward year’s end, please keep in mind the key dates and events at the temple:

- Dec. 4: monthly memorial service, beginning at 10:30 a.m.;
- Dec. 11: Bodhi Day observance during regular Sunday service, 10:30 a.m.
- Dec. 18 and 25: no Sunday services;
- Dec. 31: Joya-no-Kane (year-end bell-ringing), Nikka Yuko Garden, 11:30 p.m., weather permitting (cancelled if below minus 20);

and later on:

- Jan. 1, 2017: Regular Sunday service on New Year’s Day, 10:30 a.m; and,
- Jan. 15: Ho-onko and monthly memorial service, beginning at 2 p.m., followed by the New Year’s Party.

As in the past, BTSA is asking members to donate to the food bank box in the multipurpose room through mid-February, keeping in mind that the need continues long after the holiday season. BTSA will match the monetary value of the donated goods and turn everything over to the Lethbridge Interfaith Food Bank this time around.

Dana Day donations collected in October and November will be forwarded to the Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temples of Canada national office in Vancouver after vetted by the temple board at its December meeting. At month’s end it amounted to about \$1,400. A heartfelt thanks to all donors, with proceedings going to JSBTC to help it continues its valuable contribution to Canadian Buddhism.

Couple of administrative matters to consider: we’ll be closing the financial books, so those with outstanding claims should be turning in their requisitions or receipts before the end of the year.

November was a particularly hectic month as members prepared a variety of goods--chow mien noodles, manju, karinto, and other items- for the Bodhi Bake Sale on Nov. 6. Look over the photos from various sessions, ending in the bake sale.

The temple bought new hondo chairs and is expecting delivery in mid-December. Related to this is the decision to put up for sale 74 existing hondo chairs to make room for the new replacements. Please look over the photo and the \$10 chairs up for sale in this Hikari.

Before year’s end, the Bodhi Day commemoration will be held with the regular Dec. 11, service. Plan on attending this important Buddhist celebration and join in the party afterwards.

As the year comes to a close, I can’t emphasize enough how valuable BTSA has been to members and friends, especially in times of sorrow and distress. I’m constantly thankful for all the energy everyone has provided throughout the year in an assortment of ways to keep the temple vibrant, open and available to those needing its comfort. A great appreciation to all of you who give so unstintingly of your time, effort and skills--in unending ways--to help maintain this strong Jodo Shinshu presence in southern Alberta. Thank you very much everyone.

Akira Ichikawa

CHAIR SCHEDULE December 2016 & January 2017

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

Dec 04 SHOTSUKI
Chair: Roland Ikuta
Audio: Akira Ichikawa

Dec 11 BODHI DAY
Chair: Katie Nakagawa
Audio: Brenda Ikuta

Dec 18 & 25 NO SERVICE

Dec 31
JOYA NO KANE 11:30 p.m.
New Year’s Eve at
Nikka Yuko Garden
(weather permitting)

Jan 01 NEW YEAR’S SERVICE
Chair: Lorita Ichikawa
Audio: Akira Ichikawa

Jan 08
Chair: Robert Takaguchi
Audio: Ross Jacobs

Jan 15 HO-ONKO & SHOTSUKI
Chair: Roland Ikuta
Audio: Tak Okamura

Jan 22
Chair: Kynan Gordon
Audio: John Dubbelboer

Jan 29
Chair: Ross Jacobs
Audio: Sway Nishimura

MC designates: if you are unable to chair on your assigned date or have made other arrangements on your own, please inform Sway Nishimura. Thank you.



Bodhi Day - Dec. 11

BTSA will celebrate Bodhi Day this year during the regular Sunday service on Dec. 11. The official date of Bodhi Day is Dec. 8 and commemorates the day more than 2,500 years ago when Siddhartha Gautama achieved enlightenment and became the Buddha, perfect wisdom and compassion.

The historic prince of the Sakya clan is said to have meditated beneath a pipal tree, subsequently known also as the bodhi tree, and experienced an awakening (enlightenment) with the appearance of the morning star; hence the reference to him as “The Awakened One.”

At BTSA, a cake recalling the event will be served following Sunday service. Everyone is welcome to attend this joyous occasion.

Translation 3

Three Kinds of Tufts ...continued from the last issue

Genku said: “As to the Nembutsu, is it the Nembutsu of the land of China or the Nembutsu of Japan?”

Shoko could not answer for some time, but finally answered: “I seek the Nembutsu of the land of China.”

Genku said: “Then, you are, indeed, a disciple of the venerable Zendo⁴.”

At this time Shoko took a small ink stone out of his breast pocket and wrote two characters of his real name and offered them to Genku. This was to express the relationship of pupil and teacher. This was Shoko of Chinzei branch. This Shoko, while residing at Chinzei, had thought: “In the capital there is a monk called the foremost in wisdom in the world. What kind of a person may he be? I will go up to the capital and challenge that monk to a dialogue. If his wisdom is superior to mine and conquered me, I shall become his disciple. If I overcome him in the dialogue, he must become my disciple.

However, since Genku had seen through Shoko’s arrogant mind, this may have been the reason for the questions and answers. As for Shoko, he realized that making Genku his disciple would be impossible. Shoko’s arrogance and conceit were crushed, so he offered the characters of his name to Genku as a sign of his obedience as a pupil to his teacher.

One day, three years later, Shoko, carrying a sutra-box, came before Genku and said: “I feel a longing for my native province, Chinzei. I would like to return there. May I have a permission to leave?” So saying, he took leave of Genku.

As Shoko was leaving through the gateway, Genku said: “How regretful that Shoko is leaving without cutting the tuft of hair.”

These words must have come to Shoko’s ears, for he immediately returned and asked: “Since I became a disciple of the Buddha, many years have passed. However, I have never been admonished for not cutting the tuft of my hair. It is absolutely incomprehensible. I cannot go on the road with this admonishment ringing in my ears. In order to hear and understand the details of the matter, I have come back.

continued to the next issue ...

4. Zendo: Shan-tao (613-681) in China

Ring Out 2016 Fondly at Joya-no-Kane



Bell-ringer with sensei at 2015 ceremony

The annual Joya-no-Kane (year-end bell-ringing) ceremony will have its 13th replay on New Year’s Eve at the Nikka Yuko Garden, weather permitting. This event, sponsored jointly with BTSA and the Garden, is open to the public beginning around 11:30 p.m. The ceremony will be cancelled if the weather falls below -15 degrees C.

In keeping with Jodo Shinshu tradition, the bell is struck 108 times to drive out the same number of ills believed to be responsible for human suffering. This is done to cleanse oneself to welcome the new year with a clean slate and renewed vigor.

Hondo Chairs For Sale



BTSA is offering 74 chairs for sale, in anticipation of new replacement chairs expected to be delivered in mid-December. The assortment is depicted in the accompanying photograph.

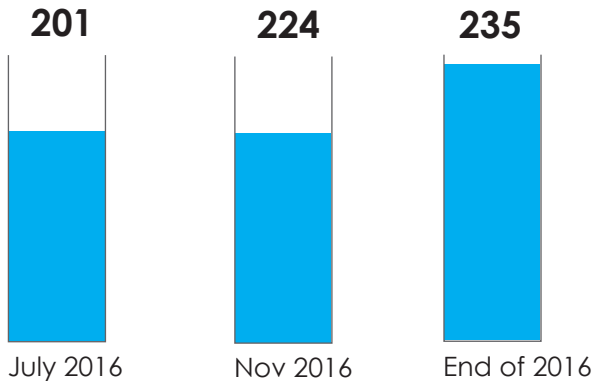
The chairs are being sold for \$10 each. Because we might need them for emergency use, as in a funeral, they will be available for possession after we receive the new chairs.

If you’re interested in purchasing any, please check with Akira Ichikawa or Roland Ikuta

May There Be Peace In the World and the Buddha's Teaching Spread

Please join our Sangha (BTSA) and support the Dharma (Buddha's teachings) — Thank you!

MEMBERSHIP GOAL



Shotsuki Donations

November 2016
 Jim & Atsuko Hagihara
 Shirley Higa
 Neil Hinatsu
 Dave & Val Kunimoto
 Mark & Shelley Murakami
 May Nishikawa
 Sway & Toshiko Nishimura
 Kaz & Setsuko Ohno
 May Ohno
 Tak & Jan Okamura
 Roy & Pat Sassa
 Ayumi Sawada
 Yoshiko Sawada
 Tom & Mitsuko Shigehiro
 Tom Shimozawa
 Fumi Sugimoto
 Hajime Harry Sugimoto
 Kazuko Sugimoto
 Robert & Judy Takaguchi
 Fugi Takeda
 Bill & June Terakita
 Shizuo & Dorothy Tomita
 Joe & Sumiko Tomiyama
Total - \$805

Other Donations

November 2016
 Rachael Crowder
 Faculty of Education
 University of Lethbridge
 Shinako (Sheila) Higa
 Shirley Higa
 Ben & Peg Hughes
 Rumiko Ibuki
 Yoshiko Imahashi
 M. Mitzi & Kerry Ishida
 Kenneth Ito
 Grant & Doris Jeffery
 Tosh & Kazuye Kanashiro
 Dave & Val Kunimoto
 Douglas & Susie Mikado
 Shig & Katie Nakagawa
 Roy & Minie Nakatsuru
 Nikka Yuko Japanese Garden
 Shane & Etsuyo Nishi
 Jaglit & Jeet Panesar
 Florence Senda
 Tom & Mitsuko Shigehiro
 Guy & Joyce Sunada
 Tom & Tsuyako Tajiri
 Masaye Tanaka
Total - \$3,030

2016 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!

REGULAR EVENTS

Tonari Gumi Tuesdays, 12-3pm Last meeting before winter break Dec. 20th and resuming January 10, 2017

The Lethbridge Karaoke Club Wednesdays, 1:30pm Last session will be Dec. 14 to resume on January 11, 2017. Contact Nao 403.327.7357 or Tad 403.942.7783 We welcome new members.

NCS Taiko will not meet in December and will commence January 10 or 17 in the new year, Tuesdays @ 7pm Contact: David Tanaka 403.330.1548, david@albrio.com

Rai-On Taiko will continue Friday evening sessions through December. Contact: kyan.gordon95@gmail.com

Minyo dancers will not meet in December and will recommence January 3, 2017, Tuesdays, 4:30pm Contact Pat Sassa 403.329.3105

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bon Odori Meeting will be held Sunday December 11 at noon following the Bodhi Day Service and tea. Michelle Day, Nikka Yuko Japanese Garden will join the committee and all members interested in beginning the planning for the **BTSA Bon Odori Japanese Dance Festival, July 15, 2017** to be held at the Garden for this special year. Contact: lorita.ichikawa@gmail.com

TOBAN UPDATE

Thanks to volunteers of **Toban 2** for providing tea and refreshments, najjin set up and cleanup in November. Special appreciation to Brenda Ikuta and all toban members and friends for the planning and preparation of another successful Bodhi Day Bake and Craft Sale held November 26. **Toban 4** is up for the quiet month of December. Please join following the Shotsuki/Memorial Service December 4 and for tea and cake to celebrate Bodhi Day, December 11. No regular services will be held December 18 – 25. Our first regular service in the new year will be January 1. The Shotsuki/Hoonko/New Year's party will be at 2 pm, January 15.

Please mark your calendars for the new toban and soup kitchen schedules for 2017.

Toban Rotation 2017

January	Toban 2	July	Toban 4
February	Toban 3	August	Toban 3
March	Toban 4	September	Toban 2
April	Toban 3	October	Toban 4
May	Toban 4	November	Toban 3
June	Toban 2	December	Toban 2

Soup Kitchen 2017

Thurs. Mar. 23	Toban 2
Wed. April 5	Toban 4
Thurs. June 22	Toban 3

Thanks go to Lilly Oishi for confirming the dates that our temple will provide lunch at the Soup Kitchen. As with all of our activities, both members and friends are invited to participate. **Contact** 403.327.1668 or lorita.ichikawa@gmail.com

“Buddhism in the Bay” Tour June 17-24, 2017

A BTSA committee has organized a tour of the San Francisco Bay area customized to include accommodations at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley and visits to three Jodo Shinshu Temples

Our dates of travel are June 17-24, 2017 (8 days, 7 nights - Saturday to Saturday). We will be a group of 25 people, members of the Lethbridge and Calgary Temples. From the outset we will reserve 16 spots for Lethbridge members & 9 spots for Calgary members.

We will be staying the week at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley (1/2 hr from San Francisco). The attractions of this location are many - the residence style accommodations are very reasonably priced; it includes a najjin and a Buddhist bookstore; it is adjacent to the Berkeley Buddhist Temple and across the street from the University of Berkeley campus. It includes a full kitchen to which we will have access and where we will eat our breakfasts each day.

We plan to attend Sunday service at the Berkeley Buddhist Temple. We will also be visiting the Jodo Shinshu Temples in San Francisco and San Jose.

Monday thru Friday we will have a full guided tour with a bus and escort. We will spend three days sightseeing in San Francisco, one day in San Jose, and one day in the Napa Valley where we will express our gratitude for grapes!

We have already reserved flights at an excellent price through Westjet, direct from Calgary to San Francisco & return.

The estimated cost of the tour including flights, accommodation, & guided tour package is \$2,800 Cdn. These are single occupancy rates; there are no double occupancy rates. This tour package is fairly all inclusive & includes transport from the SF airport to Berkeley & return, 9 meals (dinners & lunches) and entrance fees to all major attractions on the tour.

We anticipate that a detailed itinerary will be available within the coming weeks. We will make it available at the BTSA Temple as well as on our website. The same information will be provided at the Calgary Temple and website. Registrations will occur upon payment of a deposit of \$200/person. Final payments will be due in April.

For further information or to register, contact Sylvia Oishi at sylvia.oishi@gmail.com or call 403.892.2318 (mobile).

Taber Bus Discontinued

The bus service from Taber to Lethbridge on Shotsuki Sundays will be discontinued due to low usage. We have been running the program now for almost three years but in the past few months there have not been sufficient interest in using the bus.

Due to the on going relationship with the transport company--Lethbridge Concierge Services--it is not fair to keep one of their vehicles on hold in case we need to use the system. We thank them for the great service they provided.

We would also like to thank Eileen Kunimoto from Taber who has helped organize the service over the past two years. If anybody has any questions about the discontinuation of this service please contact Roland Ikuta.

Bodhi Bake Sale Day

After much preparation through November, and a little more on the morning of the bake sale, the event was open to the waiting crowd finally at 1 p.m. Buyers went over the goods quickly and most were sold out within 45 minutes. Thanks to all the volunteers who spent countless hours preparing all the things on sales, the workers who helped run the sale, and everyone who donated pastries, cookies, crafts and other goods. We also want to thank all those who turned out and purchased the goods to help the bake sale succeed.

Please look over the photos from events preceding and on the day of the bake sale.

Manju-making - Nov. 20



Making anko balls



Covering anko



To be steamed

Dough and Mein Making - Nov. 11 & 12



Tosh Ibuki and Eichi Tanaka press dough into a cake



Next day mein-making party



Cutting dough



Ready for the wok



Deep-fried noodles



Cooling and Packing

Packaging Dharma Chips - Nov. 20

Bake sale photos: John Dubbelboer, Akira Ichikawa



Getting ready



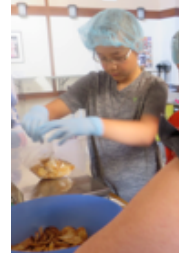
To be packaged



Helping hands



Many more helping hands



Weighting

FOR CHILDREN ONLY

Have you ever seen a cat like the one in the drawing? I often see them at Japanese stores and restaurants. This type of cat is called a "Maneki Neko" or a "Beckoning Cat." I'd like to share a story about such a cat named Tama. Tama was a female cat.

One fine day, a group of people were enjoying a picnic near a Buddhist temple. Tama was sitting on the entrance steps of the temple, lying stretched out and enjoying the warm sunshine. Suddenly, the weather changed. Black clouds appeared in the sky. Soon a storm brew in with wind and rain. The group of people ran about in confusion. They cried out, "What should we do?!"

One of them saw Tama on the steps of the temple. Tama was now sitting up with her right paw held up. "Hey look, the cat is inviting us inside!", the man said to others. They all dashed up the stairs to the temple for shelter. A kind Buddhist monk appeared at the entrance and welcomed them into the temple. He offered them tea and gave a dharma talk to them. They were all happy to listen to the dharma talk.

They knew now that the cat beckoned them to the temple to listen to the teachings of the Buddha. They all thanked the kind monk and Tama, a cat. (Y. I.)



Bake Sale Day - Nov. 26



Preparing items for the bento conceived by Sheila Oishi

Bento



Table of donated pastries



Chow mein noodles



Tasty manju



Waiting crowd in foyer



Dharma Class table



Looking over the goods

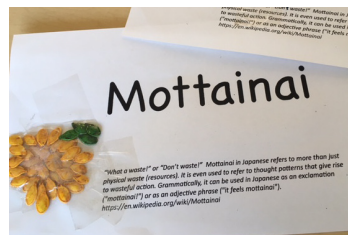


THE BUDDHIST TEMPLE OF SOUTHERN ALBERTA
children & youth dharma classes

Thank you to our Dharma students who helped out with the packaging of Dharma chips for this year's bake sale. And to those who came out for the afternoon to sell them out! The kids' cheerful faces greeted customers at the door.

Brenda provided a meaningful activity after Halloween, using her leftover pumpkins to make cupcakes and the seeds for snacking and decorating. MOTTAINAI!

It was not mentioned in the October Hikari, but just prior to Halloween Brenda once again saved the day and brought in a lesson about how chocolates are made with plenty of samples. Thank you for all the great ideas, Brenda- we truly appreciate it!





DECEMBER 2016: TOBAN 4

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
OFFICIAL BTSA ACTIVITY				8:30am Explore Shin Buddhism	CRH Advisory Meeting	10:30am Calligraphy* 1:30pm Explore Buddhism* 3
10:30am Monthly Shotsuki Memorial Service* CRH Memorial Service 4		1pm Tonari Gumi	8:30am Explore Shin Buddhism* 1:30pm Karaoke 2:30pm Correctional Centre Visit* 7	8:30am Explore Shin Buddhism* 8		10:30am Calligraphy* 1:30pm Explore Buddhism* 10
10:30am Bodhi Day Service* 11	7pm Developmental Committee meeting 12	1pm Tonari Gumi 13	1:30pm Karaoke 7pm Board Meeting* 14			10:30am Calligraphy* 1:30pm Explore Buddhism* 17
No Service 18		1pm Tonari Gumi 20	2:30pm Correctional Centre Visit* 21			
No Service 25						New Year Eve Bell Ringing at Nikka Yuko Garden (Joya -no-Kane) 31

JANUARY 2017: TOBAN 2

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
10:30am Shusho-e (New Year Day Service)* 1		4:30pm Minyo Dance 3				10:30am Explore Buddhism* 7
10:30am Regular Service* 8		1pm Tonari Gumi 4:30pm Minyo Dance 10	1:30pm Karaoke Club 2:30pm Correctional Centre visit* 7pm Board Mtg* 11			10:30am Explore Buddhism* 14
10:30am Hoonko/Monthly Memorial Service/ New Year's Party* 15		1pm Tonari Gumi 7pm Taiko 17	8:30am Explore Shin Buddhism* 1:30pm Karaoke 18	8:30am Explore Shin Buddhism* 19		10:30am Explore Buddhism* 21
10:30am Regular Service* 22		1pm Tonari Gumi 4:30pm Minyo Dance 7pm Taiko 24	8:30am Explore Shin Buddhism* 1:30pm Karaoke 2:30pm Correctional Centre visit* 25	8:30am Explore Shin Buddhism* 26		10:30am Explore Buddhism* 28
10:30am Regular Service* 29		1pm Tonari Gumi 4:30pm Minyo Dance 7pm Taiko 31				