



December 2017

The warmth of Amida Buddha



For the last couple of days in the Lethbridge area, we had very strong and gusty winds through day and night. Occasionally, perhaps, the wind was 50 or 60 km an hour. It was a southwest wind. Unfortunately, the sleeping quarters of our house face towards the west. The wind was so strong that the windows often made quite a noisy rattling sound at night. Albertans experience from time to time this kind of wind. The wind is called Chinook and they get used to it. Chinook is the wind blowing down the over Rocky Mountains into the southern Alberta prairies. It is warm and dry. In winter, snow and ice gradually melt away through the night. In the morning we see the icy roads turn to very clean roads. Snow on roofs and ground disappear. All icicles hanging from the eaves are gone. We see green grass in the middle of winter. No wonder Chinook means "snow eater" in a native language. It literally eats up all snow and ice overnight.

When we think about it, snow and ice do not have the power to eat up themselves. They are not able to melt themselves. Only by the working of warm winds do they gradually melt away. Snow and ice are, in this sense, totally helpless and powerless.

Master Shinran (1173-1263) was unfairly treated and exiled by jealous monks in his time to the severe snow country of Northern Japan for five years without enough food to eat. He must have had untold difficulties and found himself in a state of despair and loneliness. Like snow and ice which are not able to melt themselves, he was helpless and powerless. Fortunately, however, before his exile to the snow country, he had already met his master, Honen (1133 -1212). Through him, Shinran had already encountered the warmth of Amida Buddha, the Buddha of infinite wisdom and boundless compassion. He wrote:

*Through the benefit of
the unhindered light,
We realize shinjin, the warmth of
Amida, of vast, majestic virtues,
And the ice of our blind
passions necessarily melts,
Immediately becoming water of
enlightenment.*

Here in his poem, Master Shnran uses "we." He encourages us to realize the warmth of Amida to let us know that snow and ice of our blind passions are not obstacle to enlightenment. Rather these blind passions are spiritual treasures to transform our life into the water of enlightenment, the realm which is truly bright, broad and extensive.

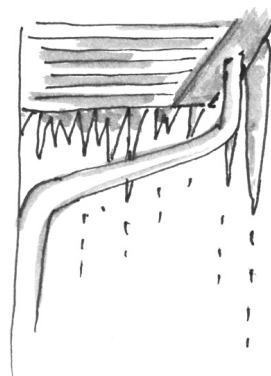
In gassho,
Yasuo Izumi, Minister
Buddhist Temple of Southern Alberta

年末

お寺のキッチンで、3. 4人の女性の方々とお茶を頂いている時のことです。「もう年の暮れですね」と一人の方。「そうですね。早いものですね。除夜の鐘を聞いたら、もうお正月ですね。それから新年会、報恩講があつて。毎年のことですが。。。」ともう一人の女性。まことに過ぎてみれば、一年もアツという間です。「年月は人を待たず」の昔のことわざを思い出します。年の初めには、一年の計画をあれこれと思ったものですが、振り返れば、思っただけで過ぎてしまったようにも感じます。

日本の本に、「忘年会」より「刻年会」にしたらどうか、とありました。過ぎ去った年を忘れずに、嫌なことも、つらいことも、しっかり心に刻んで、来る年のための栄養とすべきだと いわれるのです。なるほどと思いましたが、実行となると難しいようです。しかし実行出来ても、出来なくても、この不完全な私を忘れずに見ていて下さる、知っていて下さる、そして聞いていて下さる大きな、温かい仏様の心に遇わせていただけたことは嬉しいことです。世の中も不穏なことがいろいろ起こりますが、聴聞させていただき、出来ることは精一杯させていただきます、と思います。

合掌 泉康雄



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403.327.1260 • www.theBTSA.com

BTSA Notes

As the year of the rooster slowly draws to a close (at the end of December on our calendar; in February in the Chinese zodiac system) we look towards 2018 which is the year of the dog.

But, before that happens, the Bodhi Day Bake and Craft sale will be held on Dec. 2. Members and friends have been busy through much of November preparing for this major event. It seems to be a draw for the general public as the long, waiting line attests to its popularity.

Only two Sunday services are scheduled for the month: the monthly memorial on Dec. 3, and Dec. 10 when we will be observing Bodhi Day. There are no regular services scheduled for the remaining Sundays, but New Year's Eve (which is a Sunday) will feature the 15th annual Joya-no-Kane.

Please note these dates:

- Dec. 31: Joya-no-Kane (year-end bell-ringing)
Nikka Yuko Garden, 11:30 p.m.
weather permitting (cancelled if below minus 15 celsius)
- Jan. 1: Izumi sensei will hold a new year's service at 10:30 a.m.
- Jan. 7: Regular Sunday service
- Jan. 14: Ho-onko and monthly memorial service, beginning at 2 p.m., followed by the New Year's Party.

BTSA again asks its members to help fill the food bank box in the multipurpose room during this annual solicitation. Check out the related item in this newsletter for details.

The JSBTC Dana Day requests are continuing through mid-month, after which time they will be forwarded to the national office.

BTSA also asks that all outstanding personal requisitions for payment be submitted as soon as possible and certainly before month's end to assist the treasurer to close the financial books for the year.

Throughout this year--as in preceding ones--our members and Dharma friends have given freely and generously of their support and energy, helping to keep BTSA a meaningful magnet for the community in southern Alberta. Thank you for all the generous contributions in providing the requisite sustenance that maintains BTSA; may they remain strong and continue to expand.



Kynan Gordon instructs several Dharma students in a youth taiko session which began during November. The class is held after Sunday service in the multipurpose room.

BODHI DAY

The commemoration of Sakyamuni Buddha's enlightenment will be observed Dec. 10--known as Bodhi Day--during BTSA's regular Sunday service. That Sunday is the closest to Dec. 8 when it's claimed that Sakyamuni achieved buddhahood under the bo tree in present-day India.



Tea and a special cake to commemorate the occasion will be served following the service. The service also completes the regular Sunday services for the year, with the temple being closed until the new year.

Please note that Izumi sensei will be conducting a new year's service at 10:30 a.m. on Jan. 1 to welcome 2018. He also will be holding the year-end ceremony known as Joya-no-Kane at the Nikko Yuko Garden on Dec. 31. Please see a related article elsewhere about the bell-ringing finale to 2017.

Translation 10

Goodness of self- power and Buddha's wisdom of Other Power

This is a continuation of translations of Kudensho (Note On Oral Transmission) begun in the September, 2016, Hikari. Kudensho is a Jodo Shinshu historic text believed to have been written by Kakunyo (1270-1351), a great-grandson of Shinran, and translated by Rev. Phillip Eidmann and Rev. Yasuo Izumi. (Please note Translation 9 was mislabelled in the October 2017 Hikari as Translation 8.)

Even though one cultivates and accumulates the wealth of Dharma by the ten thousand practices and various goodness, it cannot be the sustenance for improving one on the Buddha-Way.

The reason is that the six robbers¹ know and hear, and they intrude and take it away. The Nembutsu is not the good of practitioners nor is it their practices. It is not the good of the ordinary man's self-power. It is completely due to Wisdom of Amida Buddha; again, because, by the benefit of being protected and guarded by all Buddhas, the six robbers cannot intrude, it becomes the sustenance of emancipation and the right cause of the Fulfilled Land. You should know this.

¹The six sense organs: eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind

CHAIR SCHEDULE December 2017 & January 2018

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

Dec 03 SHOTSUKI
Chair: Roland Ikuta
Audio: John Dubbelboer

Dec 10
Chair: Katie Nakagawa
Audio: Brenda Ikuta

Dec 17 & 24 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: TBA
Audio: Akira Ichikawa

Jan 07
Chair: Ross Jacobs
Audio: Sway Nishimura

Jan 14 HO-ONKO & SHOTSUKI
Chair: Roland Ikuta
Audio: Ross Jacobs

Jan 21
Chair: Robert Takaguchi
Audio: Tak Okamura

Jan 28
Chair: Kynan Gordon
Audio: John Dubbelboer

2017 Appeal for Foodstuff

The empty Food Bank donation box invites all to help fill it as the annual BTSA appeal begins again. As in the past, donations are sought throughout January, 2018, and will be turned over--along with a matching BTSA cheque--this time to the Lethbridge Food Bank.



The box is located in the temple multipurpose room, along with a wish list which is reprinted here:



The list is designated as "Christmas Hope", but the requests for the various foodstuff are welcomed through out campaign.

Dr. Jeff Wilson's talk



The acknowledged founder of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism as refugee was the topic of a public talk given by Dr. Jeff Wilson on Nov. 4 at BTSA.

Dr. Wilson, professor of Religious Studies and East Asian Studies at Renison University College, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, ON, depicted founder Shinran as a 12th century refugee in Japan that influenced the sect considered the most populous in that country today.

Dr. Wilson described how the historical Shinran suffered in his forced exile arising from differences with the predominantly aristocratic sects of Buddhism, and how in his oppression led him to associate with the commoners or "marginalized people" who also suffered for no reason other than their low social status.

In drawing parallels to modern-day refugee concerns, Dr. Wilson noted the recurrent images of welcome, safety, security and peace are customary in Shinran's writings. Moreover, these images emphasize the equality of all, with the Pure Land as the metaphoric setting wherein this is achieved.

Dr. Wilson also noted that Rennyō, the eighth patriarch of what is the current Hongwanji, was persecuted by monks belonging to more traditional sects and shared Shinran's views about seeking refuge.

Dr. Wilson who also has received tokudo ordination gave the dharma message during the November monthly memorial service the following day.

BUDDHIST Q & A

Q. What does Bodhi Day mean?

A. Bodhi Day is the day to celebrate the enlightenment or awakening of Prince Siddhartha Gautama who was later called Shakyamuni Buddha. According to the Mahayana lore he discovered true and real life under the pipal tree on Dec. 8th nearly 2600 years ago in India. The tree was later called the Bodhi tree, tree of enlightenment or awakening. With his enlightenment, he realized the universal law of co-existence and co-arising in the stream of change. We also call this the law of oneness and naturalness.

Amida Buddha in whom we take refuge is called compassionate means, working for spiritual liberation for us, ordinarily people, who turn our backs to true and real life and constantly create the life of delusion and dissatisfaction. To celebrate Prince Siddhartha's enlightenment, therefore, is to appreciate the great virtue of Amida's compassion expressed in Namo Amida Butsu.

2017 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 to Nov. 24 - 214

Shotsuki Donations

November 2017

Dorene Gordon
Jim & Atsuko Hagihara
Neil Hinatsu
Dave & Val Kunimoto
David & Elizabeth Machida
Hideko Matsune
May Nishikawa
Sway & Toshiko Nishimura
Tak & Jan Okamura
Roy & Pat Sassa
Ayumi Sawada
Yoshiko Sawada
Craig & Sachi Scharf
Tom & Fumi Shimozawa
Emily Stitt
Harry Sugimoto
Kazuko Sugimoto
Robert & Judy Takaguchi
Fuji Takeda
Blaine Takeda
K. Gay Takeda
Shigeko Tanaka

Shizuo & Dorothy Tomita
Joe & Sumiko Tomiyama
Wayne & Amy Tsukishima

Total - \$885

Other Donations

November 2017

Tomoko Greenshields
Robert B. & Margaret Hughes
Rumiko Ibuki
Akira & Lorita Ichikawa
Rev Yasuo & Sachi Izumi
Raymond & Sachiko Moriyama
Shig & Katie Nakagawa
Sway & Toshiko Nishimura
Mitsuko Oga
Heidi Oishi
Jagjit S. (Jack) & Jeet Panesar
Roy & Pat Sassa
Florence Senda
Glen & Pamela Tanaka
Joe & Sumiko Tomiyama
Tak & Yoko Tsujita
Ron & Kathryn Yoshida

Total - \$1,540

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.

JSBTC Dana Day Donations



BTSA will be accepting donations for the Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temples of Canada Dana Day solicitation through mid-December. The official date was Oct. 11.

Once collected, a single cheque for the total amount will be sent to the JSBTC headquarters in Steveston, B.C. Donors will be credited in next year's tax receipt by BTSA for their donations. We ask that cheques be made out to BTSA with a memo indicating they are for JSBTC Dana Day.

The donations will support the national organization's continuing propagation of Jodo Shinshu in Canada.



REGULAR EVENTS

Tonari Gumi Tuesdays @ 1pm
Resumes January 9

The Lethbridge Karaoke Club Wednesdays @ 1:30pm
Our last karaoke session for 2017 will be on Dec 13 and will resume on Jan 10/18. New starting time in 2018 will be 1pm.
Contact Nao 403.327.7357

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

Minyo Dance
No dates for December. 2018 schedule TBA.
Contact Pat Sassa for info: sas7@telus.net

ANNOUNCEMENTS

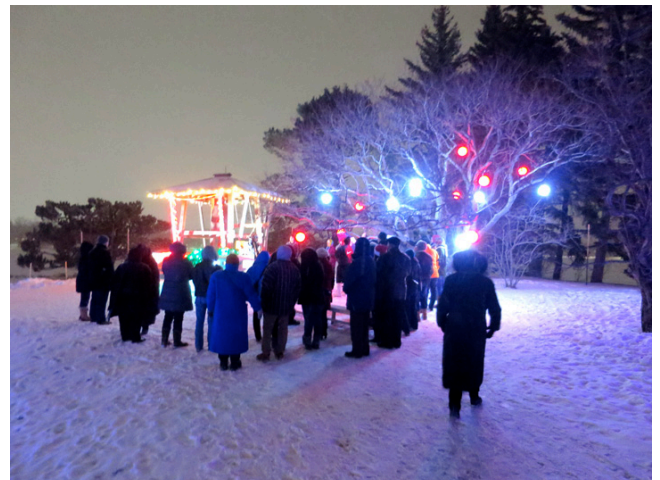
The Yoga classes commencing January 9, 2018 have one opening in each class. Contact Lorita if you have not yet registered.

Joya no Kane

The annual year-end Buddhist bell-ringing ceremony, known as Joya-no-Kane--will be held on new year's eve again this year at the Nikka Yuko Garden bell tower site. Co-sponsored by the BTSA and the Garden, the public is welcome to be a part of the ceremony which begins around 11:30 p.m. There is no admission fee to the grounds for the event. However, it will be cancelled if the temperature falls below -15 C degrees.

For the Garden, the bell-ringing has become part of its Winter Light Festival which, this year, began Dec. 1.

While the standard Buddhist ceremony in Japan has the bell tolled 108 times, the number at the Garden may vary with the turnout. Each attendant will have an opportunity to strike the bell once. The number 108 is said to represent the number of earthly desires responsible for human suffering, and that each toll of the bell expunges one desire after another. By doing so, it's said that an individual will be purified as the new year begins.



2016 photo show the brightly-lit bell tower and environs.

Bodhi Day Bake and Craft Sale



Buddhist Temple of Southern Alberta
(470 40th Street South)
Saturday, December 2, 2017
1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Looking for something different?

Check out our much sought after specialty food items, crafts, and wonderful home baking for the holidays

Visit us at <http://thebtsa.com/> or our [Facebook](#) page

TOBAN UPDATE

Thanks to **Toban 3** for taking charge of November – because of the toban schedule rotation, **Toban 3** will be up again in January. **Toban 2** will cover December with two services scheduled. Shotsuki the monthly memorial is on December 3. The toban schedule is rotated differently yearly to assure that each toban does one of the three special services, held in January, April and July. Thanks to all the Toban groups and friends for making manju and other goodies for the December 2nd Bake Sale.

Contact 403.327.1668 or lorita.ichikawa@gmail.com

Making KARINTO

In preparation for the Bodhi Bake and Craft sale, members gathered Nov. 11 to make karinto--a Japanese snack similar to kakimochi--to offer at the sale. Look over the brief photo-essay showing the process. Photos by Yoko Tsujita.



2. Strips of dough are fed through a cutter.



1. Black sesame-laced dough block is sliced.



3. Tiny strips are deep-fried.



4. Finished karinto is bagged and weighed.

Manju-making

Throughout November, all toban groups took turns making a variety of manju for the Bodhi Bake and Craft sale. Some of the steps in making mushi manju were captured in photos. They will be packaged with other varieties and be available for purchase at the sale.



1. Rolling anko, the sweet bean paste center



2. Mixing dough for the cake portion



3. Covering the anko with hardened dough



4. Placed in steamers



5. Cooling the steamed manju



6. Finished manju ready for packaging



THE BUDDHIST TEMPLE OF SOUTHERN ALBERTA children & youth dharma classes

A big thank you to guest, Bonny Greenshields for sharing her yummy recipes and baking cookies with the dharma class. Bonny ran the Round Street Cafe for many years. Bonny is also grandma to Milo. The dharma class is always looking for guest presenters and instructors, and welcome suggestions.



Chocolate chip oatmeal: The dharma class will be selling bags of cookies at the upcoming Bake & Craft sale on Dec. 2. Milo, Dean and Duncan (right) packaging cookies. See you there!

FOR CHILDREN ONLY

Morning routine

Taro is an elementary school student. Every morning before school, he has a hard time getting up, so, his Mom needs to wake him. How about you? Are you like Taro?

Taro's Mom calls out, "Taro, your alarm clock is ringing. It's time to get up. You better hurry or you'll be late for school. If you're late your teacher will be worried about you."

But, Taro loves to sleep. In a sleepy voice, he replies to his mom, "I know, Mom. I turned off my alarm. I just wanna sleep a bit longer."

"Ok, Taro. I'll wake you again in 10 minutes," his mom answers and heads to the kitchen. Ten minutes later, his mom calls out, "Taro, it's been 10 minutes, time to get up."

Instead of getting up, Taro yells out angrily, "I know, Mom! I can get up by myself. Leave me alone." So, his Mom goes back to the kitchen. Five minutes pass. Ten minutes pass. Suddenly, Taro cries out, "Mom, why didn't you wake me up! Now I am going to be late for school!" Taro has to rush to school without eating breakfast to make it before the bell rings.

What do you think of Taro's morning routine? I hope you don't behave like Taro. (Y. I.)





DECEMBER: TOBAN 2

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
OFFICIAL BTSA ACTIVITY					12pm Spiritual Care meeting at CRH	1pm Bake & Craft Sale*
					1	2
10:30am Monthly Memorial Service* 2:30pm Memorial Service at CRH* 3		1pm Tonari Gumi 4	1:30pm Karaoke 5			10:30am Explore Buddhism* 9
10:30am Bodhi Day Service* 1:30pm Service at Garden View* 10		1pm Tonari Gumi 11	1:30pm Karaoke 2:30pm Correctional Centre visit* 7pm Board Mtg* 13			10:30am Explore Buddhism* 16
No Service 17						
No Service 24						
31	11:30pm JOYA NO KANE, Nikka Yuko Garden (weather permitting) 25	26	27	28	29	30

JANUARY 2018: TOBAN 3

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	10:30am New Year Service* 1				12pm Spiritual Care meeting at CRH* 5	10:30am Explore Buddhism* 6
10:30am Regular Service* 1:30pm Service at Garden View* 7		9:30am & 11am Yoga 1pm Tonari Gumi 8	1pm Karaoke 2:30pm Correctional Centre visit* 7pm Board Mtg* 10			10:30am Explore Buddhism* 13
2pm Hoonko/ Monthly Memorial Service New Year Party* 14		9:30am & 11am Yoga 1pm Tonari Gumi 15	1pm Karaoke 16			10:30am Explore Buddhism* 20
10:30am Regular Service* 1:30pm Service at Garden View* 21		9:30am & 11am Yoga 1pm Tonari Gumi 22	1pm Karaoke 2:30pm Correctional Centre visit* 24			10:30am Explore Buddhism* 27
10:30am Regular Service* 1:30pm Service at Garden View* 28		9:30am & 11am Yoga 1pm Tonari Gumi 29	1pm Karaoke 30			