

Hikari the Light



December 2023

This is a revised version of the dharma message given on Oct. 29, 2023 by Roland sensei. This was the last service for Izumi sensei as the head minister of the BTSA.

To encounter a true teacher

It is difficult even among difficult things:

***There is no cause for endlessly turning in transmigration
Greater than the hindrance of doubt.***

This is Shinran Shonin's *wasan* about his teacher, master Honen. Shinran left the Tendai monastery on Mount Hiei after 20 years of practice. He felt he was not getting close to enlightenment due to the hindrance from his ego. At this critical point, he met up with Honen Shonin, who was teaching about the Pure Land path and the Nembutsu teachings. From that point forward, Shinran considered Honen to be his teacher.

Today, I want to reflect on what makes a good minister. The term for this position in Japanese is *Kyoshi*. What does *Kyoshi* mean?

Kyoshi means teacher and master. So, receiving *Kyoshi* certification means being responsible for teaching, introducing, and spreading the Buddha Dharma. The primary role of a *Kyoshi* minister is to be a teacher of the Dharma.

Some of the qualities that are important for a minister are hardworking, enthusiastic, willingness to persevere, and wisdom and compassion. As today is Izumi sensei's last day of service, I want to look at these qualities and discuss how he has exemplified these qualities.

Hardworking and enthusiastic. These are characteristics that draw people to Sensei. He always seems to have lots of energy. He greets people with a friendly smile. He is approachable. I know of a few ministers who act as if they are superior or above the regular members of the congregation. Their approach is, "I am the teacher, and you are the student!" They are difficult to approach if you have an issue or concern. Izumi sensei always seems to be one of us and not above us. Sometimes, it is easy to forget that he is the Sensei.

In terms of hard work, I was unaware of all of the small things he has been doing behind the scenes that few people realize he does. A small example is his work to get the Hikari newsletter out to people. He writes several of the articles, gets the Hikari printed, and brings it to the temple for it to be mailed. He contacts the mailing people and ensures copies at the temple for visitors to take home. While this does not seem like much, if you add up all of the small things in addition to looking after services, writing dharma talks, etc, it adds up to a lot.

Another quality that Sensei exemplifies is perseverance. This is obvious in his 53 years of service as a minister in Canada. Not

many people can say they worked in a single occupation for over 50 years. He has worked through difficult situations such as COVID with the online-only services. I think about how hard it must have been to listen to our instructions about going on to Zoom to run a service (when to mute or unmute, when to turn his camera to speaker or gallery view, etc.). He has worked with some helpful people and some problematic and stubborn people. In such a public position, being consistently open and fair is not easy. I think Sensei had a pretty good balance in dealing with our Sangha.

Two words always in Izumi sensei's dharma talks are wisdom and compassion. Compassion - He is worried about the welfare of the congregation. An example is when I had issues with my kidney stone early this year. He kept asking how I was and if he could do some of my duties. Another example of his compassion is the number of families he has helped through the difficult time when a loved one passes away. I am not sure of the number of funerals he has conducted, but even with a rough estimate, he has likely conducted over 600 to 700 funeral services in his 53 years! That does not include memorial services, interment services, etc. He has comforted and helped over 700 families during their most difficult struggles. I have found it a real privilege to be with the families during this challenging time and hear the stories about their family members. I am sure he appreciates all of the trust he has received from these Sangha members, but many people will remember the support he has given them.

The final characteristic I want to talk about is wisdom. A minister must understand the Dharma (wisdom). If you read Sensei's writings in this Hikari dharma message or his "My Guiding Light" series, he has a deep understanding of Shinran Shonin's writings and his teachings. During the two years my father was in Lethbridge, he would often comment on how much he appreciated Izumi sensei's dharma talks. He thought Sensei had a deep understanding of the Dharma and would usually want to discuss the content of his discussions after Sunday services. Another quality that goes along with wisdom is the constant pursuit of knowledge. Izumi sensei is always studying or listening to lectures online. He always seems to be wanting to further his understanding of the Dharma.

We should be grateful for all of his years of dedication and teachings. We hope to continue seeing him regularly and benefit from his wisdom and compassion

Dr. Roland Ikuta, Minister

UPDATE from the Board of Directors

Greetings from the Board.

There will be a Youth Tour to Japan this summer. Participation is limited to five Canadians. If you are interested or someone you know is interested, contact Roland Sensei for more information.

Toronto's minister, Ouchi Sensei, has resigned. Roland sensei may be asked to cover some of the ministerial duties for the Toronto area.

Roland sensei will be away January 10 -30. He will prepare recorded dharma talks for services and Gubenco sensei from Calgary will cover any funeral services.

Anthony Richardson has resigned from the BTSA Board. We are sad to see him go and grateful for all his time and effort in keeping the Temple building and equipment operational. Anthony has agreed to sit as a member of the Temple Maintenance Subcommittee. Three other individuals will be asked to serve on this subcommittee.

There are website improvements. Click on this link <https://www.thebtsa.com/> and it will take you to the homepage. At the bottom of the homepage, you will see "Talk to a Minister" and you will be able to connect with Roland Sensei by phone or email. By clicking on the link <https://www.thebtsa.com/booking> you are able to book the Temple for your next meeting or activity. Thank you to Sylvia Oishi who volunteered to take on the duties of the Temple's Booking Manager.

With respect to fundraising, Sachi Scharf will take over from Roland Ikuta as the Temple's Casino Chairperson. Our next casino will be on May 14 and 15, 2024.

The December Shotsuki Memorial Service will be held on Dec. 3, 2023. For livestream, the YouTube link is below:

<https://youtube.com/live/e0-QxzxXyiAfeature=share>

BUDDHIST TEMPLE OF SOUTHERN ALBERTA

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403.327.1260 btsaboard@gmail.com

BTSA Minister
Rev. Dr. Roland Ikuta

Minister Hours
Wednesdays 9 AM – 5 PM
Thursdays 12 PM – 5 PM
Fridays 9 AM – 5 PM
Saturdays 9 AM – 2 PM
Sundays 9 AM – 2 PM

revroland@shaw.ca
Cell 403.360.8400
Home 403.317.0078

www.thebtsa.com

REGULAR EVENTS

Minyo Dance Mondays @ 6:30 - 8pm

January 8 - February 26, 2024

Contact Brenda Ikuta

brenda.ikuta63@gmail.com 403.317.0078

Study Class Saturdays @ 10:30am

Everyone welcome with no fee. Study about the teaching of the Nembutsu. Confirm date availability before coming.

Contact bobmuskovich@gmail.com

Meditation Wednesdays @ 9:30am

in-person and online

To register contact Vickie Macarther
spirituality@shaw.ca

CHAIR/AV SCHEDULE December 2023 & January 2024

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

Dec 03
SHOTSUKI
Andrew Ichikawa
Kynan Ono, AV

Dec 10
BODHI DAY
David Major
Brenda Ikuta, AV

Jan 01
NEW YEAR'S SERVICE
Sheila Oishi
Andrew Ichikawa, AV

Jan 07
HO-ONKO & SHOTSUKI @ 2 PM
Bob Muskovich
Andrew Ichikawa, AV

Jan 14
Kynan Ono
AV TBA

Jan 21
Harry Sugimoto
Brenda Ikuta, AV

Jan 28
Val Boras
Bob Muskovich, AV

TOBAN UPDATE

Toban 3 is happy that Alan Tanaka agreed to join the toban leadership

Temple Clean-up on November 26 had an added focus of tidying the storage rooms and unifying where inventory was kept.

Tobans are continuing to implement ideas gleaned from the Train Food Safety online course. Looking forward to some great food events in the future!

Thank you to **Toban 1** (Ikigomi group) for an excellent start and providing for the month of November.

2024 Rotation		May	Toban 4
Jan	Toban 4	June	Toban 2
Feb	Toban 2	July	Toban 1
March	Toban 1	Sept	Toban 3
April	Toban 3	Oct	Toban 4

Rev. Yasuo Izumi RETIREMENT LUNCH

Sunday, November 19th marked the final service Izumi sensei participated in as minister at the BTSA. A lunch was prepared by toban volunteers, with a large turn-out of well-wishers seeing Izumi Sensei off into retirement.



Japanese Tea Ceremony



Have you ever been curious about 'Japanese tea ceremony'? Sheila Oishi and her sister, Joyce, would like to invite you to share a bowl of matcha tea and sweets on Wednesday, Dec 27th.

Joyce is a student in the Urasenke tradition of chado (Japanese tea ceremony) and enjoys introducing others to a world in which savoring tea and sweets is linked to centuries of art. Joyce will also comment on how this tea tradition presents opportunities to be present in the moment. We will create a modified "tearoom" at temple to gather. Bowls of tea will be prepared using a traditional brazier (kama) and kettle (furo) and Sheila will have a homemade sweet to round out the tasting.

Gatherings are proposed for: 1) mid afternoon and 2) in the early evening. If you are interested in attending, please RSVP by December 13th via email to Sheila, o.sheila2011@gmail.com



photos: John Dubbelboer

Chow Mein Prep SATURDAY

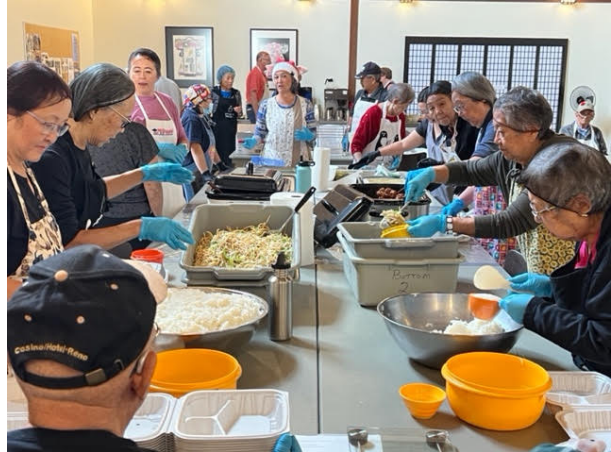


Gratitude for Chow Mein Supper Day :) A BTS Member's Reflection

There is nothing like the warmth you feel when you enter the Temple on Chow Mein Supper day - everyone is busy and happy, moving with common purpose and smiles on their faces. You see your family members and friends and meet new people. The volunteers working side by side are the elderly, children, and all ages in between. We are proud of our delicious end product and the many customers who wait eagerly to receive it each year. We are grateful for the dedication of the tireless leaders who orchestrate it. We marvel at the efficiency of our whole operation and at the end ... our Temple quickly made spotless as though it never happened!

Chow Mein Supper SUNDAY





photos: John Dubbelboer, Maya Ichikawa, Alan Tanaka, Lila Ho-Takeda

2024 Membership Form

ALSO AVAILABLE ONLINE AT THEBTA.COM

Full Membership
(\$100 for each member)

Student Membership*

Last Name: _____ First Names(s): _____

Last Name: _____ First Names(s): _____

Home Address: _____

City, Province, Postal Code: _____

Home#: _____ Cell#: _____

Email: _____

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 B.T.S.A. 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 22 – 139

Shotsuki Donations

November 2023

Anonymous
Nadine Hamabata
Neil Hinatsu
Dave & Val Kunimoto
Sway & Toshiko Nishimura
Ken Ohno & Nancy Eng
Sut & Neva Oishi
Tak & Jan Okamura
Chiyeko (Chec) Robinson
Roy & Pat Sassa
Joe & Mary Shigehiro
Tom & Mitsuko Shigehiro
Emily Stitt
Harry Sugimoto
Kazuko Takaguchi
Robert & Judy Takaguchi
Fugi Takeda
Alan & Margaret Tanaka
George Tokuda
Joe & Sumiko Tomiyama
Lori Yokoyama

Other Donations

November 2023

Anonymous
Richard & Valerie Boras
Chouji Kai
Elements Physical Therapy & Acupuncture Ltd
Fran Tatebe Professional Corporation
Judy Fukushima
Helen Hikita
Norris Hironaka
Esther Kanegawa
Irene Karia
Wayne & Rhonda Kwan
M.S. Maclean Livestock Co. Ltd.
Yutaka & Chiyomi Matsuno
Nakagama's Japanese Food & Giftware
Sonny & Kimiko Nakashima
Heidi Oishi
Roy & Pat Sassa
Fugi Takeda
Glen & Pamela Tanaka
Masaye Tanaka
Cathy Taniguchi
David Taniguchi
Jim, Marion and Shannon Tomiyama
Tak & Yoko Tsujita
Wesbridge Construction Ltd.

Funeral Donations

November 2023

Marjory Fekete
Judy Fukushima
Stanley & Audrey Kanegawa
Eleanor Katakami
Robert & Ruth Mukai
Mitsuko Oga
Heidi Oishi
Joe & Mary Shigehiro
Ward & Susan Takeda

Please inform us if your name has been omitted, misspelled, or if you wish for your name not to be published. Thank you.

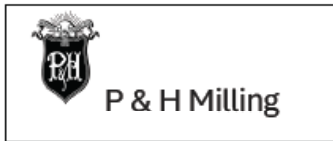




BUDDHIST TEMPLE OF SOUTHERN ALBERTA

THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS!

Sonny Nakashima

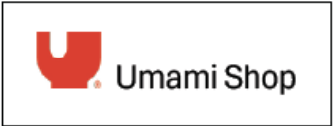


Elements Physical Therapy & Acupuncture Ltd.

M.S. Maclean Livestock



Norris Hironaka
Wayne Kwan
Tammy Maclean
Glen Tanaka
Joe Tomiyama Family



Nakagamas Japanese Food and Giftware

Thank you to the volunteers and customers for another successful Chow Mein Supper. A few new ideas were implemented from the learnings of the food handling course. Change and waiting can be challenging. Thanks for everyone's patience and support as we continually try to bring our best efforts to the table. All 2,130 tickets were sold at \$20 each. **The next Chow Mein Supper is tentatively set for Spring 2024.**





DECEMBER 2023: TOBAN 3

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
OFFICIAL BTSA ACTIVITY						10:30am Study Class
					1	2
10:30 am Shotsuki Memorial Service*			9:30am Meditation			10:30am Study Class*
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10:30 am Bodhi Day Service*			9:30am Meditation			10:30am Study Class*
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
No Service			9:30am Meditation			
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
31 24			TBA Japanese Tea Ceremony			
	25	26	27	28	29	30

JANUARY 2024: TOBAN 4

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	10:30 am New Year's Service		9:30am Meditation			10:30am Study Class*
	1	2	3	4	5	6
2 pm Ho-onko Shotsuki Memorial Service followed by meal*	6:30pm Minyo Dance		9:30am Meditation			10:30am Study Class*
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
10:30 am Regular Service*	6:30pm Minyo Dance		9:30am Meditation			10:30am Study Class*
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
10:30 am Regular Service*	6:30pm Minyo Dance		9:30am Meditation			10:30am Study Class*
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
10:30 am Regular Service*	6:30pm Minyo Dance					
28	29	30	31			