



We created Amida Buddha, didn't we?



In Canada, Christianity is the largest religion. In other words, many people in Canada have been brought up since childhood under Christian influence.

In Christianity it is said that God created human beings. Christianity is a God-centered teaching.

Jodo Shinshu is Amida Buddha-centered teaching. Because of this, many people say that Christianity and Jodo Shinshu are similar. But Jodo Shinshu does not say Amida Buddha created human beings. Jodo Shinshu is Amida Buddha-centered because Amida Buddha appeared to liberate human beings from blind passions that create their world of delusion and suffering. Perhaps, we can say that we who are full of blind passions created Amida Buddha. When we are awakened to Amida Buddha's Vow and compassion we are called a person of "shinjin" or "entrusting heart." Strictly speaking, "entrusting heart" is not so-called "faith" because the subject is not "I", but Amida. "Faith" in Christianity means "I have faith in God." In other words, "I" is the subject. In Jodo Shinshu, Amida Buddha who is working for us and tries to awaken us is the subject.

I said that Amida Buddha appeared to liberate human beings. In other words, Amida Buddha has a history, the history of cause and effect. God does not have such a history.

Sanbutsu-ge as well as *Jusei-ge* we often chant during Sunday Service show the

history of Amida Buddha. The sutras say the cause of Amida Buddha is Bodhisattva Dharmakara who became Amida Buddha after long unimaginable practices. Now, we are talking about an invisible Amida Buddha and invisible Bodhisattva. Shakyamuni Buddha was a visible person who was born in India. An invisible story makes it difficult to understand Jodo Shinshu. But Jodo Shinshu does not say, like Christianity, "You have to believe this and that." The stories in *Sanbutsu-ge* and *Jusei-ge* are symbolic. They are like fingers pointing at something beyond our comprehension and yet always supporting our changing and limited life.

These stories are not stories we have to believe but lessons we should learn from and be aware that they are leading us to the true and real life. The causal stage of Amida Buddha, Bodhisattva Dharmakara, is deeply concerned with our life that is mired and sunk in the muddy waters of blind passions. Bodhisattva Dharmakara vows that he will liberate all beings who are unable to cross over to the other shore of the Pure Land. His aspiration is: First, to bring sentient beings, you and me, from birth-and-death to the final attainment of emancipation. Second, to fulfill all beings who live in fear and to give great peace. For this, Bodhisattva Dharmakara said: "Even if I should be subjected to all kinds of suffering and torment, continuing practice undeterred, I would endure it and never have any regrets."

As a result, he became Amida Buddha, the eternal Buddha who benefits others with the compassionate call of *namo amida butsu*: "Please be born in the Pure Land of peace and serenity." These words always make us aware of our own life and at the same time lead us to the true, real and sincere life.

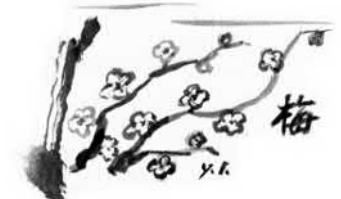
{落とし穴}

新しい年を迎えたと思っているうちに、もう2月です。今年は、あれもしよう、これもしようと思いつつ、うかうかと毎日が過ぎていきます。

先日、ある年配の方(私よりもっと年配)から大変に貴重な人生の「落とし穴」について聞かせていただきました。その方が仰るのには、人間は、歳に関係なく、いくつになっても注意しないとイケない「心」がある。まず、「慢心」の心(自分を偉いと思ってい気になること)、「邪心」の心(正しくない、よこしまな心)、「私心」の心(自分の利益だけをはかる心)そして「野心」の心(自分に不相応な望み、あるいは、他に害をしようとする心)の四つの「心」であると。「なるほどなあ」と感心しました。それらは確かに人生の落とし穴になります。しばらくうまく行っても長続きはしません。しかも、誰も、面と向かって「自分の心」を注意してくれる人はいません。

その方は感心している私をみて、もう一つ、字は違うけれど「保身」の心(自分の利益と身の安全を守る心)があったと付け加えました。

今から約850年にお生まれになった親鸞聖人は自己を深く見つめ、社会的地位や、名誉や、権力というものに近づくことなく、90年のご生涯をお念仏と共に生きられました。聖人が残して下さった「お念仏、ナモアミダブツ」のみ教えに、いよいよ耳を傾けようと、決意を新たにしました。合掌 泉康雄



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

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

Notice of Temple AGM on March 1st

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This notice is about the upcoming annual general meeting (AGM) for the BTSA on March 1 after the monthly memorial service. This is the official notification of the meeting which by the BTSA bylaws requires 30 days notice.

Agenda items include a brief presentation by Kevin Sassa of the Bank of Montreal (BMO) about temple investments, membership donations for 2020, and the possibility of installing solar panels on the temple.

New board members are sought as several current members' terms expire. If any member has an interest in sitting on the BTSA board or would like to participate in helping to run the temple please contact Roland Ikuta at 403-317-0078 or rolikuti@shaw.ca.

Pet Appreciation & Nirvana Day Feb 9



Celebrate your pet—alive or deceased—at BTSA's annual Pet Appreciation and Nirvana Day service Feb. 9 at 10:30 a.m. Bring photos of the pets to be displayed on the platform used for homyo cards during shotsuki service. It's a chance to express gratitude to pets who give much pleasure and companionship, asking for little in return.

Observation of the companion Nirvana Day commemorates the death of the historic Buddha who is reputed to have died about 2,500 years ago on Feb.15 of the modern calendar. Jodo Shinshu compassion for all sentient beings, which includes animals, strengthens the link between the two commemorations.

Traditional Buddhist lore has it that among the many mourners at Shakyamuni's death in Kushinagar, India, were wild and domestic animals.



CHAIR SCHEDULE February & March 2020

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

Feb 02
John Dubbelboer

Feb 09
Jeff Haines

Feb 16
Val Boras

Feb 23
Akira Ichikawa

Mar 01
Sheila Oishi

Mar 08
Bob Muskovich

Mar 15
Harry Sugimoto

Mar 22
Andrew Ichikawa

Mar 29
Rachelle Muskovich

New Year's Service

A small group of appreciative members and Dharma friends began 2020 with a brief new year's service at the temple, followed by a tasty traditional Japanese treat—ozoni (mochi in broth)—prepared by Lilly and Sheila Oishi. Thank you Lilly and Sheila.

Izumi sensei gave a dharma talk welcoming the new year to an audience of about 20 persons. The temple observed the annual new year's party after the Ho-onko service on January 12. (See Page 3).



FOOD BANK

The BTSA Food Bank box is slowly getting filled as the months go on. The temple will be collecting any and all donations—including monetary contributions—through mid-February, 2020, and will welcome further donations to that time. At the end, the estimated cost of the donated goods will be matched by a BTSA cheque before all the items and the cheque are turned over to the Lethbridge Food Bank. Highly-desired donation items are listed on the box and below. Thanks to all who help in this appeal.



Most Wanted Items

Non-Perishable Food Items

- Canned fruit/vegetables
- Meat/salmon/tuna (canned)
- Soup (cans & mixes)
- Canned pasta/stew
- Spaghetti sauce
- Unsweetened juices
- Baby food in jars
- Boxed cereal
- Infant cereal
- Baby formula
- Pork & beans (canned)
- Peanut butter
- Jam
- Macaroni & cheese
- Hamburger Helper

Non-Food items

- Financial contributions
- Grocery gift cards

Ho-onko/New Year's Party

BTSA observed Ho-onko Jan. 12, remembering the death of Shinran who founded Jodo Shinshu more than 750 years ago in Japan. The solemn occasion was followed by a supper capped by Bingo to celebrate joyously the new year and decade. The contrasting quiet Ho-onko service and the upbeat reception characterized Jodo Shinshu's all-embracing concept of life itself.

Thanks to all responsible for the observance: Izumi sensei, board members, Toban 2, Bingo organizers and all members and Dharma friends who attended despite the frigid winter Sunday and flu season.

Ho-onko is one of the three major events in the Jodo Shinshu calendar year, along with Hanamatsuri (the birth of the historic Buddha) in April, and Obon (memorializing deceased family members and friends) in July.

photos: John Dubbelboer, Andrew Ichikawa



Ho-onko & Shotsuki



Kampani to 2020



Food Preparation



Supper crowd



Wrap-up with Bingo

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 Jan. 18 – 37

Ho-onko Donations January 2020

Dorene (Keiko) Gordon
 Jeff Haines
 Shirley Higa
 Neil Hinatsu
 Tomi Hisaoka
 Akira & Lorita Ichikawa
 Hiroshi Kitagawa
 Yutaka & Chiyomi Matsuno
 Gary E & Beverly S McIlroy
 Joe & Marion Mori
 Jim & Joan Nakagawa
 Shig & Katie Nakagawa
 Teiji Nakamura
 May Nishikawa
 Sway & Toshiko Nishimura
 Reyko Nishiyama
 Ken Ohno & Nancy Eng
 Setsuko Ohno
 Heidi Oishi
 Lilly Oishi

Sheila Oishi
 Tak & Jan Okamura
 Roy & Pat Sassa
 Sachi Scharf
 Bob & Eiko Shigehiro
 Joe & Mary Shigehiro
 Tom & Mitsuko Shigehiro
 Tomiko Shono
 Emily Stitt
 Harry Sugimoto
 Kazuko Sugimoto
 Robert & Judy Takaguchi
 Fugi Takeda
 Barbara Takeda
 Tomiko Takeyasu
 Eichi & Betty Tanaka
 Glen & Pamela Tanaka
 Betty Taniguchi
 Bill & June Terakita
 Raymond & Sue Thibodeau
 Clifford Thomas
 Shizuo (Suzi) & Dorothy Tomita
 Joe & Sumiko Tomiyama
 Kaz & Marjory Tomomitsu
 Tak & Yoko Tsujita
Total - \$3,355.00

Shotsuki Donations January 2020

Joyce Adachi
 John & Donna Dubbelboer
 Judy Fukushima
 Nadine Hamabata
 Shirley Higa
 Tomi Hisaoka
 Lily Kaga
 Hiroshi Kitagawa
 John & Jean Miyanaga
 Mark & Tamara Miyanaga
 Robert & Toshiya Miyanaga
 Shig & Katie Nakagawa
 May Nishikawa
 Sway & Toshiko Nishimura
 Reyko Nishiyama
 Ken Ohno & Nancy Eng
 Arlene Oishi & Jeff Coffman
 Tod & Hollis Pickerell
 Ayumi Sawada
 Yoshiko Sawada
 Bob & Eiko Shigehiro
 Joe & Mary Shigehiro
 Shan Shigehiro & Craig McMahon

Tom & Mitsuko Shigehiro
 Harry Sugimoto
 Kazuko Sugimoto
 Robert & Judy Takaguchi
 Bill & June Terakita
 Bill Teshima
 Shizuo (Suzi) & Dorothy Tomitu
 Jim, Marion & Shannon Tomiyama
 Joe & Sumiko Tomiyama
 Kaz & Marjory Tomomitsu
 Sumie Tsukishima
Total - \$ 1,705

Other Donations January 2020

Roy Adachi
 John & Rita Aoki
 Malcolm & Mary Clewes
 Dorene (Keiko) Gordon
 Dhan Kumar Gurung
 Lois Hattori
 Shinako (Sheila) Higa
 Tomi Hisaoka
 Nellie Hori
 Rumiko Ibuki
 Toshimi & Marian Ibuki
 Akira & Lorita Ichikawa
 Tosh Iwamoto
 Rev Yasuo & Sachi Izumi
 Mike Kado
 John & (Estate) Alice Kanashiro
 Hiroshi Kitagawa
 Ann Konno
 Allan & (Estate) Lillian Levens
 Ruth Liska
 Ken & Carolyn MacDonald
 Deborah Morgan
 Marianne Nagata
 Sway & Toshiko Nishimura
 Setsuko Ohno
 Heidi Oishi
 Lilly Oishi
 Tak & Jan Okamura
 Setsuko Okuma
 Larry & Louise Sakamoto
 Tobie Sakamoto
 Gordon & Joy Saruwatari
 Roy & Pat Sassa
 Joe & Mary Shigehiro
 Tomiko Shono
 Kazuko Sugimoto
 Robert & Judy Takaguchi
 Eichi & Betty Tanaka
 Glen & Pamela Tanaka
 Keith & Jane Tanaka
 Ken & Midori Tanaka
 Fugi Takeda
 Dr, Frances Tatebe & Ralph Arnold
 Bill & June Terakita
 Roger & Evelyn Teshima
 Clifford Thomas
 Jim, Marion & Shannon Tomiyama
 Joe & Sumiko Tomiyama
 Kaz & Marjory Tomomitsu
 Mas & Carol Tomomitsu
 Tak & Yoko Tsujita
 Ron & Amy Yakimchuk
 Dick & Sue Yamamoto
 Ken & Hiroko Yoshihara
Total - \$8,440
Bazaar & Bake Sale - \$40
Grand Total - \$13,540

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

2019 Tax Receipts: Tax receipts for 2019 will be mailed out by the end of February 2020, in compliance with Canadian Revenue Agency requirements. Thank you for your generous donations throughout the past year.

REGULAR EVENTS

NCS Adult Taiko Tuesdays @ 7pm

Contact David Tanaka 403.330.1548, tanako.david@gmail.com

Minyo Dance I Tuesdays @ 4pm

Minyo Dance II (Beginners Level) Mondays @ 6pm

*See Announcements for further information about the season.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Condolences

Lillian Yukiko Leavens (77) passed away on January 5, 2020

Elsie Hanako Ablonczy (89) passed away on January 8, 2020

Yoga Winter 2020

The two Yoga classes offered in the winter led by Valerie Kunimoto will be 75 minutes each.

Gentle Restorative Yoga, 10:45 am -12:00 noon and **Gentle Beginning Yoga**, 9:15 - 10:30 am will continue on Wednesdays starting February 5 and going 8 weeks to April 1, excluding February 12 and one other date to be announced. Classes will end with a guided 25 minute Yoga Nidra relaxation/meditation. All participants should be comfortable moving from sitting on the floor to standing to supine positions. Donation will be \$50 for BTSa members and \$75 for non-members.

For further descriptive or other information and to register please contact valkunikimoto@outlook.com

Minyo Dancers wish to begin practice on March 30, 7-8pm to focus mainly on one dance which is the theme Minyo for the Tokyo Olympics. Regular Bon practice will start on June 1st. We hope to include this as one of the Bon dances. It would be great to have a show from the "guys" too!

TOBAN UPDATE

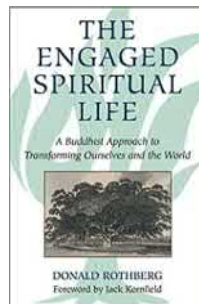
Toban 3 is up for February with Monthly Memorial (Shotsuki) on February 2 and Nirvana Day | Pet Appreciation on February 9. Bring a photo of your pet, past and/or present.

Thanks to **Toban 2** for activities in January, including the Ho-onko/ Shotsuki jService supper and New year's party January 12 .

Soup Kitchen dates are Friday March 20 (Toban 4), Thursday April 23 (Toban 2) Friday May 22 (Lily's crew), Monday June 22 (Please notify Lorita if there are any changes).

Remember: You don't have to join a toban to Volunteer nor be a BTSa member to help and join our activities. For further information please contact: lorita.ichikawa@gmail.com

Meditation at Temple



As noted in the January Hikari, a trial meditation program led by Roland Ikuta began Jan. 23. The plan is to hold sessions on the second and fourth Thursdays at 7 p.m. at the Temple: Feb. 13 and 27; Mar. 12 and 26; April 9 and 23; and May 14 and 28. There is no charge to participate. All interested persons are welcome to attend.

Each session includes silent meditation focusing on breathing (five minutes), walking meditation (20 minutes), and chanting meditation (15 minutes). Jodo Shinshu Buddhists do not practice meditation as a means to achieve enlightenment, but Roland emphasizes it is still a very good means to calm the mind and reduce stress.

He says the program will try to incorporate monthly exercises to lead an engaged spiritual life taken from the book by Donald Rothberg, entitled *The Engaged Spiritual Life: A Buddhist approach to Transforming Ourselves and the World*.



THE BUDDHIST TEMPLE OF SOUTHERN ALBERTA
CHILDREN & YOUTH



Ho-onko Sunday, the group decorated *sugegasa*-type hats, similar in shape to the one Shinran Shonin is often pictured wearing during his travels.

Frigid January

Two photos of the temple might imply how cold it got during the second week in January, but they can't convey the -30 celsius (weather forecasters said -45 to -50 wind-chilled) that was registered. The sun shone brightly in a light, cloudless blue sky, but that didn't suggest climate change couldn't be dismissed. More cold days were forecast after a brief warming period on the weekend. And, winter's far from over.



Dr. Roland Ikuta will be presenting the Buddhist view of death at the Lethbridge Interfaith Network forum **February 1st at 2 to 4 p.m. at the Church of Jesus Christ Latter-Day Saints, 4105 Forestry Av. S.** The session is entitled "Let's Talk About Death."

The Lethbridge Interfaith Network is a new organization whose aim is to encourage understanding among diverse community and world faiths and traditions.

Please look over the attached notice for the event. Further information and registration at eventbrite.ca.

Let's Talk About death

Sponsored by the Lethbridge Interfaith Network

The Lethbridge Interfaith Network is a new network in the city that aims to foster a more just and harmonious society through greater understanding of the diversity within various faiths, worldviews, and traditions in our own community and throughout the world. One of our main vehicles for accomplishing this purpose is hosting community forums on various topics of high social interest. A discussion, from a multi-faith perspective, might allow for this enriched understanding of different viewpoints. We propose to have a session on 'Death' wherein various faith-based representatives share their religion's perspectives, attitudes, beliefs and specific death rituals (if applicable) and time is allotted for questions and answers and general group discussion. *Refreshments will be served after.*

facebook.com/LethbridgeInterfaithNetwork/

Please register in advance by scanning QR or by searching "Let's Talk About Death" on eventbrite.ca

February 1, from 2-4 pm
4105 Forestry Ave. South

Joya No Kane

On a decade-ending new year's eve, that was cool but relieved by a slight chinook, about 85 participants gathered at the Nikka Yuko for the annual Joya-no-Kane event to toll the Garden bell to signal farewell to 2019 and to welcome 2020.

Izumi sensei, assisted by Kynan Gordon, performed a brief service before attendees were invited to release the striker to hit the bell. The Garden lit up for the winter lights festival was a gorgeous backdrop for Joya-no-Kane.

Buddhist tradition claims humans have 108 blind passions, and striking the bell as many times eliminates the blind passions. Sensei adds “more importantly, by listening to the sound of the bell which reverberate in the night sky, we reflect on the passing year with gratitude and think of the coming year with anticipation. Let's start a fresh new year, 2020.”



Winter Lights at Nikka Yuko



Participant releasing the striker



Izumi sensei and Kynan Gordon by Bell Tower

photos: John Dubbelboer, Akira Ichikawa



Temple, June 29, 2013, from south. AMA building being constructed to the north.



All recent photos, Dec. 26, 2019, the first toward south; the last two show the temple from the south in perspective.

Buddhism and Change

Jodo Shinshu emphasizes the inevitability of change and what, indeed, exemplifies this is how the landscape around the temple has undergone and continues to undergo this truth. Look over this pictorial essay—unsurprising to regular temple-goers—to see just how much has been transformed in the last half-decade.



FEBRUARY: TOBAN 3

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
*OFFICIAL BTSA ACTIVITY						
						10:30am Explore Buddhism* 1
10:30am Shotsuki Monthly Memorial Service* 2	6pm Minyo II 3	1pm Tonari Gumi 4pm Minyo I 7pm Taiko 4	9:15am & 10:45am Gentle Yoga 5			10:30am Explore Buddhism* 8
10:30am Nirvana Day & Pet Appreciation Service * 9	6pm Minyo II 10	1pm Tonari Gumi 4pm Minyo I 7pm Taiko 11	2pm LCC visit* 7pm Board Mtg* 12	7pm Meditation Program* 13		10:30am Explore Buddhism* 15
10:30am Regular Service* 16	6pm Minyo II 17	1pm Tonari Gumi 4pm Minyo I 7pm Taiko 18	9:15am & 10:45am Gentle Yoga 19			10:30am Explore Buddhism* 22
10:30am Regular Service* 23	6pm Minyo II 24	1pm Tonari Gumi 4pm Minyo I 7pm Taiko 25	9:15am & 10:45am Gentle Yoga 2pm LCC visit* 26	7pm Meditation Program* 27		10:30am Explore Buddhism* 29

MARCH: TOBAN 4

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
10:30am Shotsuki Monthly Memorial Service* 1			9:15am & 10:45am Gentle Yoga 4			10:30am Explore Buddhism* 7
10:30am Eshin-ni and Kakushin-ni Service* 8	6pm Minyo II 9	1pm Tonari Gumi 4pm Minyo I 7pm Taiko 10	9:15am & 10:45am Gentle Yoga 2pm LCC visit* 7pm Board Mtg* 11	7pm Meditation Program* 12		10:30am Explore Buddhism* 14
10:30am Spring Equinox Higan Service* 15	6pm Minyo II 16	1pm Tonari Gumi 4pm Minyo I 7pm Taiko 17	9:15am & 10:45am Gentle Yoga 18			10:30am Explore Buddhism* 21
10:30am Regular Service* 22	6pm Minyo II 23	1pm Tonari Gumi 4pm Minyo I 7pm Taiko 24	9:15am & 10:45am Gentle Yoga 2pm LCC visit* 25	7pm Meditation Program* 26		10:30am Explore Buddhism* 28
10:30am Regular Service* 29	6pm Minyo II 7pm Minyo 30	1pm Tonari Gumi 4pm Minyo I 7pm Taiko 31				