

# Hikari the Light



February 2022

**Amida Buddha of compassion is a great torch in the long night of ignorance; / Do not sorrow that your eyes of wisdom are dark.**

— Shinran Shonin (1173-1263)

**During the new year**, I am sure, you have received some or many new year's cards from your friends and acquaintances. One of the new year's cards I received this year was a bit unique and surprising. It was from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. In the card, three names were written. I have some friends in that religious organization, but I did not know any of the three names in the new year's card at all.

In the front of the card, there is a beautiful colorful picture of Mary holding an infant baby Jesus. On the other side It says "Dear Rev. Izumi" which is me. The sentence which is printed under my name drew my attention. It was a quotation from the Book of John in the New Testament: "I am the light of the world: He that follows me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life."

Here "I", of course, means God who is light. The idea is that one who follows God shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life. Because God is almighty. It is simple and clear.

I remember my teacher once told us: "Christianity is the religion of submission to God and Buddhism is the teaching of awakening, to awaken who we are." There is no concept of God almighty capable of performing miracles in Jodo Shinshu.

In Jodo Shinshu, as in the opening quote by Shinran, Amida is the light of compassion. Those who are awoken to the compassion of Amida are able to see clearly that they are always, from the

beginning to the end of their life, walking in the darkness of blind passions or *bonno*. We walk with blind passions (darkness) whether we like it or not, whether we are sad or not. Truth is that countless blind passions are attached with us. And because of our blind passions by which we suffer, Amida's great compassion is always and constantly working for us, embracing us and never abandoning us.

You all know about Hellen Keller (June 27, 1880-June 1, 1968) who suffered with a triple handicap in her life. She once said: Rather than walking in the light by myself, I like to walk in the darkness with my good friend who knows me well. Of course, we do not have a triple handicap, but we have all kinds of blind passions in and with our life.

With blind passions we are not able to attain Buddha's world filled with light of wisdom. For those of us who have no wisdom to see life clearly, Buddha's wisdom manifests itself in compassion for our blind passions and accept us as we are.

Rather than walking in the light by myself, I walk in the darkness which I feel sad, with Amida Buddha who truly knows who I am.

In *gassho*,

Yasuo Izumi, Minister  
Buddhist Temple of Southern Alberta

二月になりました。「ひかり」の読者の皆様、お元気でしょうか。コロナ感染症が今でも各地で発生しています。日本でも5万人の方々が、そのために苦しんでいるそうです。お互い注意しましょう。

さて、新年のお参り(修正会)で、「一休さんと門松」のお話をしたところ、「門松の絵」を描いて下さい、と頼まれました。そう言えば、カナダで門松を見ることはないでしょう。一休さんの話とは、お正月の門松を見て「めでたくもあり、めでたくもなし」と言ったという話です。というのも、お正月になると皆等しく、一つ歳を取るからです。つまり、お互い「死」にまた一歩近づいた、ということなのです。

八代目の蓮如上人は、「若い時、み教えを聞け」と言っておられます。歳を取れば、足は不自由にもなり、耳も聞こえなくなる、というわけです。折角、人間に生まれたのですから、儲かった、損した、泣いた、笑っただけの人生では空しい、と先人は言っておられます。さあ、み教えに耳を傾け、本当に豊かで、実のりある人生を送らせて頂きましょう。

合掌 泉康雄



# UPDATE from the Board of Directors

I hope this edition of the Hikari finds all to be healthy. It is great to be out of the deep freeze. It is so nice to be able to go for regular walks and enjoy nature without worrying about wearing so many layers. There also seems to be some good news on the COVID front as it is predicted that we are now at the peak of the 5th wave and numbers will be coming down. It is still estimated that up to 30% of Alberta's population will have contracted the Omicron variant. The board of directors are hopeful we may have in-person services on a regular basis soon.

At the January board of directors meeting we decided to continue to have Shotsuki service live-streamed on our YouTube Channel and limit in person attendance. We apologize for the lack of audio during the broadcast, Hoonko service in January and hope to have the AV problems sorted out for the February 6th Shotsuki service. If you would like to attend in-person please click on the link below:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0A45A9A723A2FE3-february>

You can view the service live or recorded on the temple YouTube channel. Click on the link below for this service or go the BTSA website and click on the yellow banner:

<https://youtu.be/ODqhRRs3cG4>

We will also have Nirvana Day and Pet Appreciation service on Feb 20th. If you would like to attend in-person please click on the link below:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0A45A9A723A2FE3-nirvana>

The live or recorded service can be viewed on the temple YouTube channel. Click on the link below for this service or go the BTSA website and click on the yellow banner:

<https://youtu.be/mYaXI2D3wAg>

The Temple has also purchased KN94 masks for temple members. These are high quality masks that were rated the best at limiting viral spread by a recent market survey. Thanks to Val Boras who found a direct connection to the distributor in Korea. These masks will be available for use at the temple. In addition any members who wish to purchase up to 30 masks for personal use can pick them up at the temple on an honor system. The purchase price was \$1.20 US per mask but the temple will make them available for \$1.00 Canadian per mask. The masks used at the temple to attend functions will be available for free. Please email me [rolikuta@shaw.ca](mailto:rolikuta@shaw.ca) if you would like to purchase some. We are arranging a self-serve system of pick up. The information and dates that the masks will be available will be distributed via email shortly

Finally the administrative year for the temple board of directors ends with the AGM to be held in March. We may have the AGM via zoom and hopefully in-person. If there are any temple members who would be willing to serve on the board of directors please contact Roland or one of the current board members. Please consider this to be an official notice for the coming AGM to be held on March 6th after our Shotsuki service.

Further details and zoom links will be distributed via email and in the March *Hikari*.

## REGULAR EVENTS

**Minyo Dance** Mondays, 6:30 pm

Contact Pat Sassa 403.329.3105 or sas7@telus.net

**Exploring Buddhism** Saturdays, 10:30am

Contact bobmuskovich@gmail.com or Rev. Izumi

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Condolences** The BTSA expresses heartfelt sympathy to those who have lost loved ones:

**Setsuko Kikuchi** (93) December 26, 2021

**Kimiko Ohno** (94) December 30, 2021

**Scott Mitsuru Tanaka** (46) January 11, 2021

**Please note Rev. Izumi's new address and phone number:**

1038 Lakeview Dr. So.

new home #: 403-380-2981

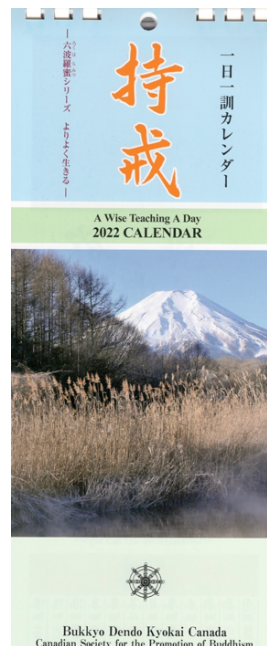
Lethbridge, AB

same cell #: 403-382-7024

T1K 3E8

**Please contact Donna Dubbelboer [jdubbelboer@shaw.ca](mailto:jdubbelboer@shaw.ca) as soon as possible if you have interest in attending the 2023 JSBTC Tour and Convention** (see pg.7)

## BDK Calendars Available at Temple



The 2022 calendar from Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai is available for members interested in a copy. Please pick one up when you happen to drop in on Sensei, during the Feb. 6 shotsuki hoyo, or whenever you stop at the temple.

## 2022 Membership Reminder

Membership fee for 2022 remains \$100. Please remit your renewal to the temple by making out any cheques to the BTSA or payment online at [thebtsa.ca](http://thebtsa.ca). Membership forms can be completed online or printed. Thank you.

## BTSA New Year's Service



January 1, 2022, morning broke bright and cold, with a warm BTSA welcome at its New Year's Day service. Yasuo Izumi sensei conducted the brief year-opening get-together, noting a "great feeling" doing so "before Amida Buddha again." Pandemic restrictions limited attendance and the usual celebration.

Sensei's New Year's dharma message is reprinted here:

"Although we are not able to see Amida Buddha with our naked eyes, compassionate Amida is always embracing us. *Namo amida butsu.*"

Good morning and Happy New Year everyone.

While we have been suffering pandemic last year, a new variant called Omicron appeared. We must continue to be careful and take care of ourselves this year.

At any rate, we are able to welcome new year, 2022. I think it is a great feeling to welcome a new year before Amida Buddha again.

In Japan, we traditionally say that the new year will add up one year older. For young people, it is exciting. But for older people, not necessarily so.

So, there is a poem: "*Kadomatsu* is another milestone of journey to the other world, is it happy or not happy." The poem was written by a well-known Zen monk, Ikkyu (1395-1481). *Kadomatsu* is a decorative pine tree celebrating the new year. Many people in Japan set it up in front of their house entrance. *Kadomatsu* symbolizes a new year. This means everyone gets one year older.



KADOMATSU

Everything has two side in this world. One side, people celebrate the new year. But, on the other side, they are getting one year older, meaning they are approaching death. This is not a sarcastic expression. Zen monk Ikkyu sees the world realistically so that he warns people saying, they are getting older every year, nay, every day. Therefore, listen to Buddha's teaching Now. This is Ikkyu's message to everyone.

I noted above that in Japan, the new year will add one more year to your age. This traditional Japanese way of counting of counting is called *kazoe*, counting by year or calendar year. When you use *kazoe*, however, a strange thing happens. Say, you are born Dec. 31, 2021. The following day which is next year--Jan. 1, 2022--you will already be two years old. Actually, you are only two days old. But because *kazoe* is counting by year, you are two years old.

Another counting tradition is called *man*, meaning completing year which is a western way of counting. If you are born on Dec. 31, you will become one year old on Dec. 31 the following year. *Kazoe* is a traditional way in Japan. So, many people in Japan still use both ways to count their age.

Some years ago, I met a boy from Japan. I asked him "How old are you?" I was really surprised by his reply. He said "I am eight years old by *kazoe*, calender years but 7 years old by *man*, completed years." He must be a clever boy. I just say, "Aah so. Oh, I see."

Well, whether it is *kazoe*, counting the year or *man*, complete year, as Ikkyu says we are getting older.

So, we, the follower of Jodo Shinshu, must listen to the teaching of Amida who made a vow that whenever, wherever we die we are in the compassionate hand of Amida. So, no worry, no *shinpai*. Happy and joyous new year to you.



Warm, welcoming najjin



Sensei's message



Photographer was the fifth

# BTSA Moments to Recall

Following are a few photographs from a BTSA event 10 years ago as part of an occasional Hikari feature

## Mein-Making - Jan. 28, 2012



Flattening the dough



Preparing the dough for the noodle cutter



Making noodles in the cutter



Deep frying raw noodles



Cooling and Sorting



Bagging the mein noodles



Much-deserved and well-earned tea break

# BTSA Solar Panel Update

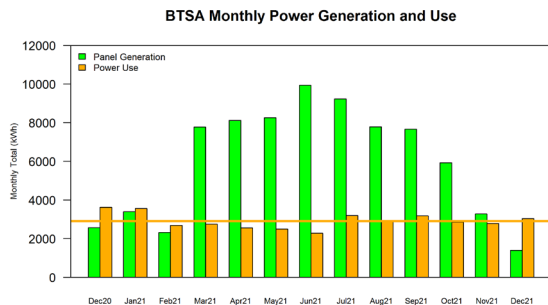
Some of you are wondering how the solar panels have performed. We now have a full calendar year that shows they have performed as well or better than hoped. It must be noted that there are three lucky events that have helped as well.

First, we were able to cash in on a good price because Alberta Cooperative Energy is able to provide micro-generation sites a better price when the panels produce more than is drawn from the grid. So instead of 6 ¢/kWh the price jumped up to 26.7 ¢/kWh.

Second, once we started looking at the building electricity use, we determined that the large HVAC units only need to be on when there is a large crowd in the Hondo. That probably cut our power use in half.

Third, because panel price has gone down in recent years and panel efficiency has gone up, our installer put in more panels so that they saturate the inverters before sun energy is maximum. The maximum energy occurs at solar noon on June 21.

The graph below shows the monthly totals for 2021. The green bars in the graph are the generation of the panels and the orange bars are the use. So you can see that the green bars, what we generated, are almost always higher than the use.



The panels have had a big positive impact on our utility bill. Compared with 2018, our electric cost was \$6262 for 80,280 kWh plus \$10,383 for distribution and transmission for a total bill of \$16,645. Compare that with 2021 when we had a credit of \$4,905, a difference of \$21,550!

In 2021 we sent 63,780 kWh into the power grid while we drew 25,140 kWh. The cost of electricity was \$4,445 and the credit was \$15,381. Distribution and transmission costs were \$5,946. The result for our annual electricity bill was a credit of \$4,905.

Relative to point two above, our total electric use in 2021 was 37,992 kWh, essentially half of what it was in 2018. So our success in reducing the electricity bill in 2021 was due to (a) solar panels and (b) improved efficiency.

Also good news is that our initial pitch for the panels included the statement that expected pay-back of the original investment would be 10 years. At the current rate it will be 5.5 years, almost half what we expected.

In summary, solar panels are a good “generating asset” as well as a good investment. Perhaps more important is that they help our Dharma achieve the goal of becoming an Eco-Sangha.

David Major

## Awakening to the Climate Change Crisis: a Buddhist Perspective

Join Ray Nakano on Saturday,  
February 5th, 2022 at 2 pm  
in a conversation about our  
Climate Crisis and what we can do  
about it as Buddhists. [Register by clicking here.](#)



The link for registering for the presentation is:

<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/awakening-to-the-climate-crisis-a-buddhist-perspective-registration-226429596017>

# January Shotsuki & Ho-onko Service

BTSA's monthly Shotsuki and Ho-On-Ko service Jan. 9 was streamed on YouTube, but, unfortunately, a problem with the sound rendered the entire service and sensei's message muted.

His dharma talk is reprinted here for members to read.

Good morning and Happy New Year everyone. Welcome to the January monthly memorial service, another opportunity to remember and think of our deceased loved ones and good friends before Amida Buddha. When we think of them and recite *namo amida butsu* they are always with us. In *namo amida butsu* we are able to talk with each other. *Namo amida butsu* is not a magical formula but it is a compassionate call of Amida, the one of infinite wisdom and compassion. *Namo amida butsu* gives us such a world where we are able to meet and talk with those who have gone before us.

January memorial service includes memorial service for Shinran Shonin who died January 16, 1263. He lived 90 long years. In his time there were great Buddhist monks such as Honen, Eisai, Dogen and Nichiren. Among these great monks, only Shinran proclaimed, "I, Shinran has no disciples." By saying this, Shinran accepted everyone, aristocrats, samurai, farmers, men and women equally without discrimination. He said, "We are all children of Amida Buddha."

The memorial service for Shinran is called *Ho-On-Ko* which is so important for Jodo Shinshu followers that at our mother temple, Hongwanji, in Kyoto services are held seven days and seven nights, thinking of the virtue of Shinran and expressing their sincere gratitude to him.

I wrote here in Japanese *kanji*, *Ho-On- Ko*. *Ho* means to repay or to recognize. It also means to respond. The last character *Ko* means gathering of people. *Ho* is an important concept meaning indebtedness of gratitude. In the original Sanskrit, *On* is *katannyu* which means to know whatever you have been done by others. We owe gratitude to, at least, four categories:

First, we owe our gratitude to Buddha's light of wisdom and compassion which give us spiritual nourishment.

Second, we owe our gratitude to all living beings including our pet. My wife and I have a dog called Taro. Taro always comes to the door when I leave for work and when I come home from work. We always shake hands. So, I express my gratitude to one of the living beings. We eat meats and vegetables every day to sustain our lives. In other words, we take other's lives for which we express our gratitude.

Third, our parents who gave us our life now on this earth.

And fourth, our teachers who teach knowledge and share life experience. I am called *sensei* in Canada. I have a funny story about the word *sensei* in Japan. Many years ago, I went to a drinking bar with friends. As soon as we opened the door the waitress called to us "Hi *sensei*." Nobody among us was a *sensei*. But it is how they welcome a guest whose name they do not know. They call *sensei* to anyone. As a result, so many *sensei* in the drinking bar. There is a poem, "I'm not one so foolish as to be called a *sensei*." This is a story in Japan.

Here, a great teacher to whom we owe gratitude is Shinran Shonin who brought us a teaching of the nembutsu, *namo amida butsu*, a call of

Amida by which we are able to be born in the Pure Land of peace and serenity. "Where is the Pure Land?" people ask. Well, the nembutsu, *namo amida butsu*, opens up the world of Pure Land, Amida's home.

In Jodo Shinshu, we express our gratitude to Amida Buddha, all living beings, our parents, and teachers. So, some people say Jodo Shinshu is the teaching of gratitude. It is not necessarily so.

When we examine deeply within ourselves, we realize that our sense of gratitude changes easily, depending on the conditions and circumstances around us. So, our sense of gratitude cannot be a cause to be born in Amida's home.

Jodo Shinshu Is the teaching of *shinjin*, entrusting heart to Amida.

Only entrusting heart given by Amida becomes the cause of the birth in Amida. Rennyō, the 8th descendant of Shinran clearly said *shinjin*, entrusting heart is foremost in Jodo Shinshu.

On *Ho-On-Ko* day we express our heartfelt gratitude to Shinran Shonin who introduced the compassionate vow of Amida by which Amida grasps us and never abandons us no matter what happens in this changing and limited life. We find true joy and courage to live in Amida's immovable (world) of wisdom and compassion.

Gassho: "Entrust yourself to Amida's Vow / Through the benefit of being grasped, never to be abandoned, / All who entrust themselves to the Vow / Attain the supreme enlightenment."



MC Andrew Ichikawa



Izumi sensei giving his dharma talk

# FOR CHILDREN

## An angry man

There once was a big man in a village. He was so upset that he was crying loudly and hitting everything, inside and outside his house, with a stick. His friend visited him and asked why he was so angry.

The big man said, "I have been doing good things all of my life. But someone has been saying something bad about me. That is why I am so angry. I must do something."

"Something? What?" asked the friend.

"Yes, I must do something to teach that guy a lesson. But I do not know what I should do. Do you know what I should do?"

"I do not know what you can do. Can you talk with that guy or just forget about it?"

"No!" said the angry man. "I must do something. Please think about it. You are much smarter than me."

"Well, I do not know how you can teach him a lesson. But I can take you to an old wise man in the next village."

So, he took the big man to the old wise man in the next village.

"Sir, my friend is so upset and wants to teach someone a lesson. Is there anything he can do?"

"Don't react to someone bad. That is not a good way. But I understand that you really want to show him how angry he made you feel, right?"

The big man nodded.

"There is something you can do," said the old wise man.

"Please tell me what," the angry man said.

"Well, you can ask the man who said bad things about you to sit for two hours without talking at all. Is that okay?"

"Yes, that guy should sit for two hours without talking."

"There is one condition to make him sit for two hours without talking."

"What is it? I'll do whatever the condition may be."

The condition is that you first have to sit one hour without talking. Is that okay?"

The angry man reluctantly agreed with the wise old man. The wise old man knew that the mind of the angry man will calm down and he will no longer care about the past event.

(Y. Izumi)



## Snowbound Buddha

Meanwhile, on new year's day, the statue of the Buddha in the temple garden in the rear of the building was snowbound. Even with snow up to its chest, the statue exemplifies the serenity so commonly associated with the Buddha.

**JSBTC** JODO SHINSHU BUDDHIST TEMPLES OF CANADA

# JSBTC Japan Tour 2023

**Shinran Shonin 850th Birth Anniversary  
Jodoshinshu 800th Foundation Anniversary Kyosan Hoyo  
&  
17th World Buddhist Women's Convention**

**Year of 2023**

- May 07 Leave Canada for Japan
- May 08 Arrive in Japan, free at leisure
- May 09 Full day Kyoto and Otsu tour (TBD)
- May 10 Celebration memorial service at Nishi Hongwanji Temple
- May 11 WBW Convention at Kyoto ICC
- May 12 WBW Convention at Kyoto ICC

*"Life of Nembutsu enables us to appreciate every encounter"*

**KINTETSU INTERNATIONAL**

1450 Meyerside Dr, Suite 305, Mississauga, ON L5T 2N5  
Phone: 1-800-463-7723 Email: [outbound@kiecan.com](mailto:outbound@kiecan.com)  
website: [www.kiecan.com](http://www.kiecan.com) Tico Reg# 4245809

**Hikari**theLight

# 2022 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  
at January 23: **27**

### Ho-onko Donations

January 2022

Shinako (Sheila) Higa  
Tomi Hisaoka  
Rumiko Ibuki  
Akira Ichikawa  
Hiroshi Kitagawa  
May Nishikawa  
Sway and Toshiko Nishimura  
Setsuko Ohno  
Heidi Oishi  
Tak and Jan Okamura  
Roy and Pat Sassa  
Bob and Eiko Shigehiro  
Joe and Mary Shigehiro  
Tom and Mitsuko Shigehiro  
Joe and Sumiko Tomiyama

**Total - \$1,475.00**

### Shotsuki Hoyo Donations

January 2022

Judy Fukushima  
Neil Hinatsu  
Tomi Hisaoka  
HIroshi Kitagawa  
Melvyn Tanemura  
Joyce Miyashita  
May Nishikawa  
Sway and Toshiko Nishimura  
Ken Ohno and Nancy Eng  
Setsuko Ohno  
Bob and Eiko Shigehiro  
Joe and Mary Shigehiro  
Tom and Mitsuko Shigehiro  
Tomiko Shono

Emily Stitt  
Joe and Sumiko Tomiyama  
Ken and Hiroko Yoshihara

**Total \$2530.00**

### Other Donations

January 2022

Roy Adachi  
Richard and Valerie Boras  
CanadaHelps.Org  
Debora K Fujimoto  
Judy Fukushima  
Norris Hironaka  
Rev Yasuo and Sachi Izumi  
Mike Kado  
Hiroshi Kitagawa  
Kenneth and Amy Klatt  
Nikkei Cultural Society of Lethbridge & Area  
Mitsuru Ken and Midori Jane Tanaka

**Total - \$8,516**

### Funeral Donations

January 2022

Robert and Sandra Chomyc  
Judy Fukushima  
Jackie L Graham  
Ginny Guthrie  
Lois Hattori  
Rumiko Ibuki  
Akira Ichikawa  
Stanley and Audrey Kanegawa  
Alan Kishiuchi  
Darlene Kishiuchi  
Gordon Kishiuchi  
Teiji Nakamura  
Karen Nishiyama and Ron Wenger  
Mitsuko Oga  
Ken Ohno and Nancy Eng  
Setsuko Ohno  
Heidi Oishi  
Tak and Jan Okamura  
Roy and Pat Sassa  
Sachi Scharf  
Joe and Mary Shigehiro  
Noris and Sachiko Taguchi  
Fugi Takeda  
Melvyn Tanemura  
Bill and June Terakita  
Clifford Thomas  
Noel and Karen Thomas  
Tak and Yoko Tsujita  
Rick and Terri Yamagishi

**Total - \$2,175.00**

**Total Donations - \$14,696.00**

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.

## February In-Person Shotsuki Service

The BTSA board has decided to have an in-person shotsuki service on Feb. 6 as reported in Board Update on page 2.

If you would like to attend please click on the following link:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0A45A9A723A2FE3-february>