

Hikari the Light



February 2024

This is a modified version of the Dharma talk given for the December 2023 Shotsuki service.

“Even a good person attains birth in the Pure Land, so it goes without saying that an evil person will.”

This is a writing taken out of the third chapter of the Tannisho. The Tannisho was written by a disciple of Shinran Shonin named Yuiembo. He recorded several of Shinran Shonin’s dharma messages to clarify his principal teachings. If people want to read a brief book about Jodo Shinshu’s teachings, the Tannisho is probably the best. It contains most of Shinran Shonin’s most radical or revolutionary ideas. I like Taitetsu Unno’s translation as it is said to be the best English version of the writings. It also contains commentaries on most chapters so we can more easily understand why Shinran made these comments. Several copies are available in our library.

The statement that Amida’s compassion is targeted toward evil people more than good people was one of the radical ideas proposed by Shinran Shonin. The usual way of thinking is that we should do good things in our lives, obey the religious authorities, follow the rules of society, donate generously to others, and be kind and compassionate. If we do these things, we should surely be rewarded by being born into the Pure Land as we deserve it. At the time of Shinran, it was felt that Amida’s Compassionate powers were so great that even the evil person could go to the Pure Land, though they might not deserve it. Shinran rejected this notion. He understood that Amida’s compassion is targeted at all beings. To liberate all who are suffering regardless of if they are good or bad. Often, those in our society are marginalized and suffering the most. The poor or homeless, those with mental health issues, and those with problems with addictions. These are the people we may think of as being karmically evil or threats, and we often try to avoid or shun them in society. But it is precisely those who are suffering that are the target of Amida Buddha’s compassionate vow.

To illustrate this, I want to tell you about a story that occurred to me a few years ago. This happened at a restaurant downtown called the Dumpling House. This instance occurred when this restaurant was still open. I loved to go to this place as it served some of the best Chinese dumplings you could get in Lethbridge. It was run by a young lady (Linda), along with her parents, who had just finished her degree at the U of L. It was located a block South of Galt Gardens. I remember being there with a couple of colleagues for lunch. It was a freezing day with lots of snow. We had just arrived and noticed around 12 other people ahead of us. As just three people ran the place, we expected a little wait for service.

As we patiently waited, a man entered the restaurant and sat at the first table by the door. The entire restaurant went quiet when this man came in. The first thing everybody noticed was the smell.

As the front door shut, you could sense the foul odor coming from this man. He was likely homeless, and I guessed he had not had a shower or bath for many days, if not weeks. He was face down at the first table. I remember the group at our table quickly discussing whether to stay or go to another place to eat lunch. As we were pondering this, the young lady running the restaurant approached the man.

My first thought was, “Good, she is going to ask him to leave.” Instead, she gently shook the man and asked him if he was OK and needed help. Although he was apparently inebriated, he woke up enough to say he was OK but just needed to warm up. I was taken aback a little. I thought, “Yes, I guess it is a good thing to make sure he is OK before you send him back out into the cold.” Much to my surprise, the young lady told him he could stay to warm up, take his time, and get rest. I thought how unkind my initial thoughts were and how this young lady showed compassion for this man. After a few minutes, this lady continued her work in the restaurant, serving food to a couple of the tables who were there before us. After about 10 minutes, however, she came out of the kitchen with a hot soup for the homeless man. At first, I was a little annoyed. She was serving this man food even though he had not ordered anything. He was also getting food before us!! We were the paying customers, and she was serving him before getting us our meal. After these brief negative thoughts, however, I recognized the compassion shown by this young lady. I remember thinking this is precisely what Shinran meant when he talked about Amida’s compassion being directed towards those who are evil. I didn’t think this man was evil, but he was suffering more than anybody else in that restaurant. All of us in the restaurant were warm, had nice winter jackets, and likely all had good breakfasts that morning. None of us were starving. Some were eating a nice meal or drinking hot tea.

My group had driven from just three blocks away to the restaurant so we would not have to walk in the cold. This young lady who ran the restaurant understood who needed her compassion and kindness the most. She recognized that even though he would likely not pay for his meal, he needed the restaurant’s warmth and the soup’s nourishment more than anybody else there at that time. This is the same idea as Amida’s compassion. They created the Pure Land precisely to help all of us who are suffering. Because we cannot achieve enlightenment on our own, they made it possible for all of us to be there. Amida’s compassion is directed to all of those who are suffering and specifically directed to those who are suffering the most.

Dr. Roland Ikuta, Minister

UPDATE

from the Board of Directors

Greetings from the Board! Hope you are doing well.

David Major consulted with Alberta Broom regarding the cleaning products at the Temple, as well as cleaning protocols. Many cleaning products were obsolete, leaking or toxic, and these were taken by David to the hazardous waste site. Retail cleaning products are not allowed in commercial kitchens, as per Alberta Health and Safety so members are asked not to bring disinfectants or cleaning products to Temple.

Three Temple-use documents (*Guidelines for Temple Use*, *Temple Use Agreement*, and *Temple Coordinator and Temple Use Duties*) were finalized and approved. Use of the Temple is restricted to Temple members.

The BTSA Casino is scheduled for May 14 and 15, 2024. If you are able to volunteer, please contact Sachi Scharf.

The February Shotsuki Memorial Service will be held on February 4, 2024, and will include recognition of Nirvana Day and Pet Appreciation. For livestream, the YouTube link is below:

<https://youtube.com/live/N08gONzk62M?feature=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

CHAIR/AV SCHEDULE February & March 2024

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

Feb 04
NIRVANA DAY, SHOTSUKI
PET APPRECIATION
Wayne Tsukishima
Andrew Ichikawa, AV

Feb 11
Sheila Oishi
Kynan Gordon, AV

Feb 18
Seiji Hilgersom
David Major, AV

Feb 25
David Major
Brenda Ikuta, AV

Mar 03
SHOTSUKI
Maya Ichikawa
TBD

Mar 10
John Dubbelboer
Andrew Ichikawa, AV

Mar 17
Wayne Tsukishima
Brenda Ikuta, AV

Mar 25
Val Boras
Kynan Ono, AV

Mar 31
Harry Sugimoto
Kynan Ono, AV

Nirvana Day with Pet Appreciation Service

The service will be held on Sunday, Feb. 4 at 10:30 am. Shakyamuni Buddha peacefully passed away on Feb. 15 at the age of 80 years old in northern India. This day is called a complete Nirvana. It is said that when the Buddha died all kinds of animals came to bid farewell. **Please bring a picture of your current pets or ones of those who have passed away.** They will be displayed up by the Naijin



Ho-onko Service & New Year's Party

This year's Ho-onko service and 2024 celebrations fell on January 7th. Below are images of the afternoon's service, food prep and meal, and BINGO to end. A huge thank you to Toban 4 for a busy month of January.



photos: Maya Ichikawa, Alan Tanaka

SAVE THESE DATES for the Chow Mein Supper Event!

Dear Chow Mein Enthusiasts,

We are thrilled to announce the upcoming Chow Mein Supper scheduled for Sunday, October 20th. Mark your calendars for a weekend filled with preparation, camaraderie, and, of course, delicious food!

EVENT SCHEDULE

- **Setup and Preparation Days:**
Friday, October 18th, and Saturday, October 19th
- **Chow Mein Supper: Sunday, October 20th**

Details regarding this exciting event will be disclosed in the upcoming months. Be assured, it promises to be a delightful social gathering that you won't want to miss!

So, mark your calendars now for October 18th, 19th, and 20th. This fall join us in the celebration and make this Chow Mein Supper a memorable community event.

Stay tuned for more information, and we look forward to sharing this enjoyable experience with all the Chow Mein enthusiasts in our community!

In shared spirit,
Alan Tanaka

Day of Mindfulness at the Temple in March

Tuesday, March 19, 2024
9:30 am - 3:30 pm

Co-sponsored by the BTSA, Day of Mindfulness program will be led by Vickie Macarthur at the temple. It is a day of quiet contemplation (No talking or devices). There will be a registration fee which will partially pay for the use of the temple. For more information, please go to Vickie's web site at www.vickiemacarthur.com

We hope to see temple members participate.

Dinner & Movie Fundraiser

Saturday, February 17, 2024 at 5 pm

Join the NCS Ikigomi for an upcoming Dinner + Movie fundraiser. It will feature a delicious menu, including "catsu" curry with pork and tofu options, as well as sunomono salad and tsukemono. A showing of the film *The Cat Returns* by Studio Ghibli will follow.

This event is open to all families and individuals in the community. Donations are appreciated at the door but not required to attend. There are limited spots, so a SignUp Genius link will be circulating soon via email to RSVP.

THANK YOU **TOBAN 4** FOR YOUR SERVICE IN JANUARY!
NEXT UP FOR FEBRUARY: **TOBAN 2**



Soup Kitchen 2024

The Temple will be hosting four Soup Kitchens this year:

Tuesday, April 23, 10:00-1:30

Friday, May 24, 10:00-1:30

Friday, July 5, 10:00-1:30

Sunday, August 18, 9:00-12:00

If you are interested in volunteering please contact Emily Stitt, emistitt@hotmail.com, 403-380-6683.

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 spiritoyoga@shaw.ca

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Condolences

Mrs. Tsuyako (Chuck) Tajiri (99), January 24, 2024

The BTSA will be hosting two Casinos in 2024:

Tuesday, May 14, 2024 and Wednesday, May 15, 2024.

We will need 18 volunteers to work afternoon shifts, 1:00 - 8:00 pm and 8:00 pm - 4:00 am

Please contact:

Emily Stitt, 403-380-6683, emistitt@hotmail.com

New Year's Day 2024

The Temple had a brief New Year's Day service, followed by servings of delicious Ozoni (mochi soup). A small group of Oishi relatives, led by Sheila, prepared and served the treat to a grateful group of members.



What is the Nembutsu?

The Nembutsu is to recite Namu Amida Butsu. There is one translation that I do not like, which is "Hail to Amida Buddha." DT Suzuki wrote a better translation: "I take refuge in the Buddha Amida." Another translation is, "I entrust myself to the Buddha of Infinite Light and Life." We recite the Nembutsu as part of our services and daily for many from our older generation and in Japan.

The Nembutsu is called "Neimfo" in Chinese. If you go to the original Sanskrit, it is pronounced – "Namo Amitabhaya Buddhaya."

All Pure Land Buddhists have a version of the Nembutsu, but it differs by country.

In Mandarin, it is pronounced "Namo Emitufo."

In Korean it is "Namu Amita Bul"

In Vietnamese, it is Namu Adida Phat."

In Japanese, there were several versions of the Nembutsu – Namu Fukashigiko Nyorai. 南無不可思議光如来
This is the version used during Shinran Shonin's time. It is translated as "I take refuge in the Buddha of Inconceivable Light!"

Another version popularized by Rennyo Shonin was "Ki myō jin jip-pō mu ge kō nyo rai. 歸命尽十方無碍光如来
"I take refuge in the Tathagata of Unobstructed Light Suffusing the Ten Directions."

Why do Pure Land Buddhists recite the Nembutsu? The reason comes from several Sutras or original teachings from

the historical Buddha. The Sutra many Pure Land Buddhist sects consider principle is the Larger Sukhavativuha sutra (Bussetsu Muryōju Kyo), The Sutra of the Buddha of Immeasurable life. Of these Vows, the 18th or Primal Vow is considered the most important for Jodo Shinshu Buddhists. It states:

If, when I (i.e., Dharmakara) attain Buddhahood, sentient beings in the lands of the ten quarters who sincerely and joyfully entrust themselves to me, desire to be born in my land, and call my Name even ten times, should not be born there, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment.

Shinran Shonin said that the entrusting of Amida's Compassion is the most important thing and that the Nembutsu flows out of us as a grateful response to this realization. It is like seeing a perfect rainbow. Amida's vow is like the rainbow; when we see it, "Wow" comes out of us as a natural reaction. We are saying it is amazing, inconceivable. Amida's vow is the rainbow, and the Nembutsu is our natural reaction to realizing the compassion of the Buddha.

I have met many seniors from the Jodo Shinshu tradition who spontaneously recited the Nembutsu. They say it without a real purpose and conscious thought. They say it when they are happy; they say it when they are sad. They mostly say it when they are grateful.

Let us recite the Nembutsu, being aware that all life is interconnected, and we are here only due to various causes and conditions.

Dr. Roland Ikuta, Minister

2024 Membership Form

ALSO AVAILABLE ONLINE AT THEB.TSA.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

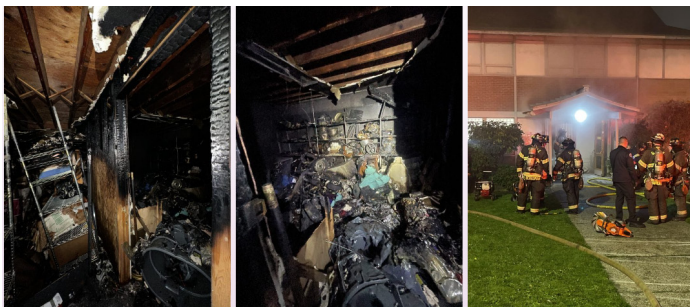
***Note:** Student membership is limited to persons 18 years or older who are currently registered in a recognized educational institution. It is free of charge with a valid student ID card. Student Members are not entitled to vote at general meetings or to hold office in the B.T.S.A. and this category does not include membership in the Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temples of Canada, the national organization.

LET'S EXPAND THE CIRCLE OF THE DHARMA!

SUPPORT FOR SEATTLE BETSUIN

This past December, an intruder broke into the Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple and set a fire that ended in significant fire and water damage in the basement, and smoke and moisture damage throughout the rest of the temple. Sadly, many original historical documents were lost.

Updates on restoration and opportunity to make a donation can be found at <https://www.seattlebetsuin.org/fire/>.



2024 Membership
to Jan. 24 – 41

Ho-onko January 2024

Anonymous
Eietsu Chiba
Judy Fukushima
Rumiko Ibuki
Kinuko Matsuno
Yutaka & Chiyomi Matsuno
Gary & Beverly McIlroy
Joe & Marion Mori
May Nishikawa
Sway & Toshiko Nishimura
Karen Nishiyama & Ron Wenger
Heidi Oishi
Sheila Oishi
Tak & Jan Okamura
Gordon & Joy Saruwatari
Roy & Pat Sassa
Sachi Scharf
Joe & Mary Shigehiro
Tom & Mitsuko Shigehiro
Emily Stitt

Sachiko Taguchi
Robert & Judy Takaguchi
Fugi Takeda
Eichi & Betty Tanaka
Clifford Thomas
Noel & Karen Thomas
George Tokuda
Jim, Marion & Shannon Tomiyama
Joe & Sumiko Tomiyama
Tak & Yoko Tsujita

Shotsuki Donations

December 2023

Darcee Richardson

January 2024

Anonymous
B.T.S.A. member
Ken & April Fleury
Judy Fukushima
Dorene (Keiko) Gordon
Hanako Nadine Hamabata
Neil Hinatsu
Gene and Hilda Horii
Terry Horii
Rumiko Ibuki
Andrew Ichikawa & Tahirih Rempel
Maya Ichikawa
Kenneth Ito
Hollis Miyanaga
Mark & Tamara Miyanaga
Jim & Joan Nakagawa
Sway & Toshiko Nishimura
Ken Ohno & Nancy Eng
Joe & Mary Shigehiro
Tom & Mitsuko Shigehiro
Masaye Tanaka
Sue Thibodeau
Joe & Sumiko Tomiyama
Tak & Yoko Tsujita
Doug Urano
Esther Urano
Janet Urano
Robert Urano

Other Donations

January 2024

Roy Adachi
CanadaHelps.Org
George & Catherine Fujita
Mike Kado
Randy Ohno
Mitsuko Oishi
Trent Takeyasu & Veronica Horn

Funeral Donations

January 2024

Lyal Sakamoto
Roy & Pat Sassa

Hanamatsuri & Obon

Gordon & Joy Saruwatari

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

LEARN ABOUT THE WOMEN'S FEDERATION

Have you ever wondered about the Women's Federation and what they do? The Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temples of Canada (JSBTC) Women's Federation, Women's Fed or simply the WF, began in 1976 and is now an active standing committee, under the JSBTC, made up of member temple representatives.

The committee endeavors to follow in the footsteps of prestigious Buddhist women such as Eshinni, Shinran Shonin's wife, Kakushinni, Shinran's daughter, and countless women who have dedicated their lives to the practice of the Jodo Shinshu teachings and the spreading of the dharma. They are an inspiration, and the WF honor and endeavour to follow their example.

Why is it important that the WF exist?

Although the WF is not active in every JSBTC temple, they offer opportunities for all temples to participate.

- Directs donations to national charities supporting social well-being.
- Offers financial assistance to the Canadian ministers and youth through available funding programs.
- Offer coordination across Canada regarding involvement in the World Buddhist Women's Conventions (WBWC).
- Coordinate activities across Canada such as the Minister's Appreciation Month.
- Provide presentations that are of interest to a national audience.
- Provide two WF Secretary Generals who represent Canada at international meetings.

Being part of WF

- Membership to the WF is \$15 per person. Your temple can collect from individuals in their temple, or the temple can pay their membership - by doing this your temple has a temple representative on the Women's Federation committee.
- Individuals do not have to go through a temple and can become a member as an individual with no voting privileges. A person does not need to be a Temple member to join the WF nor be female. The WF is open to all.
- The fee is used to support internal operations such as the Zoom account, offices expenses such as mailings, in addition to supporting travel for temple representatives to attend an annual committee meeting.



Eshinni



Kakushinni

- By being a WF member, individuals can participate in activities exclusive to WF members such as attending the WBW Convention (motion pending). The 18th WBWC will be in 2027 in Hawaii!
- The WF is a proud District of the World Buddhist Women's Association (BWA) which includes Japan Buddhist Women's Federation, Hawaii Federation of Buddhist Women's Association, South America Buddhist Women's Association, and Buddhist Churches of America.

WF Aspiration

- The WF strives to honor all Buddhist women and share the teachings of the Buddha. The wish is to be a vibrant and inclusive organization that promotes Jodo Shinshu Buddhism for all Canadians.

REMEMBERING Rosalynn Carter's Ties to Hawaii and Project Dana



Project Dana is an initiative connected to The Women's Federation. The full article can be found in the link below:

<https://www.civilbeat.org/2023/12/remembering-roosalynn-carters-ties-to-hawaii-and-project-dana/>



FEBRUARY: TOBAN 2

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
10:30 am Shotsuki Memorial, Nirvana Day, Pet Appreciation Service* 4	6:30pm Minyo Dance 5		9:30am Meditation 6			10:30am Study Class* 7
10:30 am Regular Service* 11	6:30pm Minyo Dance 12		9:30am Meditation 13			10:30am Study Class* 5pm NCS Ikigomi Dinner + Movie 14
10:30 am Regular Service* 18	6:30pm Minyo Dance 19		9:30am Meditation 20			10:30am Study Class* 21
10:30 am Regular Service* 25	6:30pm Minyo Dance 26		9:30am Meditation 27			28

MARCH: TOBAN 1

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						10:30am Study Class* 1
10:30 am Shotsuki Memorial Service 3			9:30am Meditation 4			10:30am Study Class* 5
10:30 am Regular Service* 10			9:30am Meditation 11			10:30am Study Class* 12
10:30 am Regular Service* 17		9:30am Day of Mindfulness 18	9:30am Meditation 19			10:30am Study Class* 20
10:30 am Regular Service* 24			9:30am Meditation 25			10:30am Study Class* 26