

# Hikari the Light

July & August 2021



## Amida Buddha is light, and that light is the form taken by wisdom.

**The COVID-19 pandemic** finally appears to be ending after one and half years. We hear almost two million people died worldwide because of this pandemic. We have mixed feelings of relief and sadness. The COVID-19 pandemic may be over but who knows whether another kind of pandemic may appear and give us fear and uncertainty. In order to live this life to the fullest we need the light of wisdom which works the darkness of human ignorance.

Buddha's wisdom and compassion are like wings of a bird or wheels of a bicycle. Two always go together. Without wisdom, true compassion does not appear. Or without compassion true wisdom does not function. Or we can say wisdom is static and compassion is active. Compassion appears from wisdom of oneness, non-discrimination and non-judgment.

Compassion and love are not exactly the same because compassion does not change to hate. But love becomes hate depending on the circumstances. Since compassion is expressed by wisdom of oneness, there is no hatred and no discrimination. The Buddha is the one who has two virtues of wisdom and compassion by which all sentient beings are embraced without judgment.

Amida Buddha is not a person but light, eternal light of wisdom that is always embracing us and letting us know our own darkness and ignorance of self-centeredness. The light works for our darkness-ignorance. Amida's light is for our ignorance, blind passions. If we have no ignorance there is no room for Amida. Furthermore, Amida Buddha has 12

kinds of lights which appear in the *Shoshinge*. One of the lights is called Unhindered Light.

It is called "unhindered" because this Light is not disturbed by any evil karma. In Christianity, "evil" means opposition to God or against God's will. In Buddhism, however, Evil karma or karmic evil simply means our daily actions based on our blind passions. We all have many blind passions. We hear phrases like "108 blind passions." Among these many blind passions, greed, anger and foolishness are called the three poisons because these poisons not only kill ourselves but others as well. Greed means we desire more than we need. When our greed is not satisfied as we desire more, we get upset and angry. In other words, "greed and anger" do not create good and favorable results for us. Since we are not able to see the result or the future of our actions--karma--we are indeed foolish beings.

These three poisons we have mean that we are sick in the eyes of the Buddha of wisdom. This kind of sick person, you and I, cannot be cured by medical doctors or psychologists. However, only Amida Buddha of unhindered light is not obstructed by our human karmic evil and blind passions and thereby cure our sickness.

You remember the second verse of Shinshu Shuka which says: *Towa-no-yamiyori suku - wareshi*, which literally means "I have been liberated from the eternal darkness." This is an expression of our joy.

Usually, our aspiration is to be able to eat good foods, to enjoy every day watching favorite movies, to gain more money and to be praised by someone and so on. We have been deeply mired in the world of blind passions. And yet, Amida's call, *namo amida butsu* of wisdom, nurtures us and fulfills the aspiration - birth in the Pure Land - in our heart and mind every day.

In *gassho*,

Yasuo Izumi, Minister  
Buddhist Temple of Southern Alberta

「お盆がやってきました」

皆様、如何お過ごしでしょうか。世界で200万人という死者を出したコロナ感染症も、アルバータ州では終わりに近づいたようです。いろいろな意味で再出発という感じがします

さて、お盆の季節となりました。未だ州政府の規制はありますが、お墓参りと共にお盆のお参りを営みます。ブルックスを最初に、マグラス、レイモンド、テーバー、レスブリッジと例年のごとく勤めさせていただきますので、皆様には是非、お参りを頂きたいと思えます。(別紙に予定表があります) 日頃の慌ただしい生活から少し離れて、亡き人たちを偲ばせていただく大切な時です。

さて、お念仏、ナモアミダブツは、仏様の大きな願いが込められた私たちへの「呼び声」であります。この「呼び声」を聞かせて頂きましょう。限りあるわたしたちの命に、無量寿という限りのない命が働いて下さいます。死んでいく命に、死なない命を頂くのです。ある方が「死ぬる身を、死なぬ身にしてもらい」と喜んで、お念仏されています。独り来て、独り帰る私たちを、「そうはさせぬ」と阿弥陀様のお慈悲が働くのです。無常の人生を、「煩惱に明け暮れるだけでは、人間に生まれた甲斐がない」と、仏様はいつでも、どこでも働いて下さるのです。お盆には、亡き人を偲び、自分の命を見つめ、静かにお念仏申しませう。

合掌 泉康雄



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403.327.1260 • www.theBTSA.com

# UPDATE

## from the Board of Directors

After 16 long months, we finally see the end to this very difficult pandemic and restrictions. **With the province officially going into stage 3 of the Open for Summer plan, the board has decided we should proceed with plans for Obon.** The date is set for July 18th. We are worried about having a large indoor service, so we have decided to have the Obon service at Mountain View cemetery at 10:30 AM. This graveside service will take around 45 minutes. Please bring a mask and a lawn chair (if you would like to sit during the Graveside service). You may want to use a mask during the incense offering as people will be close together during this part of the service.

We will not have an indoor Obon service but will proceed to have a gathering for Bon Odori (dancing) at the temple at 2 PM. There will be no food at the Obon dance and no vendors. It will be outdoors in the East parking lot as long as the weather permits, and we will move into the multipurpose room if it is raining. The Bon Odori gathering will be primarily for members and their families, and we will not make public announcements about it.

We would like to know the number of people planning to attend the Obon dance. Please register via Brenda Ikuta (403-317-0078) or Valerie Boras (403-308-3311) or sign up via our Sign-up Genius form. The Sign-up Genius information is available in the Hikari or on our web page (thebtsa.com). The form also may be accessed by going to the following site:

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

In addition to the events on July 18th, there will be graveside services in Brooks on July 4th at 11 AM. On July 11th, there will be graveside services at Magrath Cemetery at 10 AM, at Raymond (Temple Hill) at 11 AM, and Taber at 1 PM. Registration for these graveside services is not required.

In preparation for Bon Odori, there will be dance practice sessions at the temple at 6:30 PM on Wednesday, June 30th, July 7th, and 14th. Everybody is welcome. As these practices will be outside, a mask is not required but would be needed if you want to use the washroom facilities in the temple. If anybody feels more comfortable wearing a mask even though these gatherings are outside, please feel free to use one.

The Obon graveside service and Obon dance will be our final temple activity for the rest of the summer. The board will be actively planning on restarting in-person Sunday services and other activities in September. Please visit the BTSA webpage or look for the information in the September edition of the Hikari.

If you have any questions about Obon or what is happening at the temple, please do not hesitate to contact Roland Ikuta (403-317-0078) or send him an email at [Rolikuta@shaw.ca](mailto:Rolikuta@shaw.ca)



## FOR CHILDREN

There once were two brothers, Taro, who was eight years old, and Jiro, who was five. They got along well with each other.

One warm day, Mom spread out a big white sheet in the backyard for Jiro. So, Jiro happily started to create a miniature Tokyo Tower out of LEGO. There were many LEGOs on the white sheet. Did you know that the real Tokyo Tower is 333 meters tall?! Jiro patiently put the LEGO together, one by one. It was still early morning. So, Jiro had a lot of time to finish. When he had built almost half of it, a flying ball suddenly hit it and crushed it! Taro was playing catch with his friend and the ball had accidentally hit the Tokyo Tower. “Sorry, Jiro.” Taro picked the ball up and ran back to his friend.

Jiro did not cry out loud. He was a strong boy. But he started sobbing. Tears came out. Jiro sobbed more. More tears came out. Jiro became tired because he had woken up early that morning so he lay down on the white sheet. Soon he fell asleep. In his sleep, a cat appeared and told Jiro, “Why don’t you tell Mom that Taro did a terrible thing? Mom will punish Taro.” After the cat left, a mouse came out from somewhere and said, “Call the police and tell them what Taro did.” Then, a tiger appeared and told Jiro, “Revenge! Fight with Taro. You will win. I will help you.” After they disappeared, a Buddha came to Jiro. Jiro told the Buddha with tears what happened to him and also told him what the cat, the mouse and the tiger said. The Buddha listened and nodded carefully to what Jiro said.

Finally, the Buddha gently stroked Jiro’s head. ‘You are a strong boy. Be patient and smile, okay?’

Jiro opened his eyes. Jiro was not sobbing anymore but smiling. He sat up and began to happily build the Tokyo Tower again.  
(Y. Izumi)

# Sensei at Muslim Vigil

“Hatred is not overcome by hatred but only by love,” Izumi sensei said June 14 at a vigil at the Lethbridge Muslim centre to memorialize the London ON family of four intentionally killed by a driver of a pickup truck June 6. A fifth family member--a young boy--was injured, hospitalized and eventually released.

Under a blazing sun with temperatures soaring into the 30s, sensei was among a number of invited speakers that included Mayor Chris Spearman, the police chief, education leaders, politicians, and representatives from various religious denominations. An estimated crowd of about 100 gathered in the centre’s parking lot off 13th Street & 2nd Avenue North where the vigil was held.

Here is sensei’s short message:

*“On behalf of the Buddhist Temple of Southern Alberta and its members, we extend our deepest condolences and sympathy to all members of the Muslim community. We share your pain, sadness and sorrow.*

*Human technology may be highly developed but our ignorance, hatred and discrimination seem to have deepened.*

*Hatred does not cease by hatred but only by love. Only by love and compassion will it cease. This is an ancient and eternal law.*

*To respond to the tragic and senseless event where four sacred and precious lives were snuffed out and a fifth--a child--was seriously harmed, we evermore must try to create a peaceful and happy life in this world despite the overwhelming challenges.”*



photos: Akira Ichikawa



Final session June 19 of the current Explore Buddhism group on the front of the veranda of the temple.

photo: Brenda Oishi

## Explore Buddhism Discussion Group

Bob Muscovich who coordinates this project reports: “There will not be any Explore Buddhism sessions for July and August, but we will begin on Saturday, September 11, 1030 a.m. to 12 noon and continuing every Saturday afterwards.

Interested in learning about Jodo Shinshu Buddhism? The sessions are an open and free discussion in a relaxed atmosphere. Whether you are new to Buddhism or a long-time practitioner, you are welcome to join us for our weekly sessions. They will be held in-person, in the Temple Boardroom.

## June Shotsuki Service

The Buddhist principle of *shoji*, written with kanji characters combining life (生) and death (死), indicating they are two sides of one coin was the focus of Yasuo Izumi sensei's dharma talk at the June 6 shotsuki service which was streamed on YouTube.

Sensei noted that dualistic thinking, the idea of gain and loss, useful and not useful, presents us with life's struggles and suffering that require the wisdom of the Buddha to offset.

"You meet a Buddha in your life, there is no birth and no death," Sensei related, citing a Buddhist saying. "Perhaps, in a Jodo Shinshu way, it can be rephrased: if you hear the nembutsu, Amida's call, there is no birth and death," he added. "The nembutsu is a power for us to live beyond birth and death, thereby teaching us that not only life but also death is good and sacred or even something to be welcomed."

However, this view is not likely to be found in common sense thinking where death is considered something to be avoided. Izumi sensei explained that Shinran's view of death differed from that of ordinary people based upon a phrase in a sutra that an urgent matter--like death--does not reach ordinary people whose common sense arises from self-reliance and belief without hearing Amida's call. Sensei added it is often said that the teaching of Jodo Shinshu is beyond ordinary common sense; in other words, despite appreciation of the power of Amida's working it is difficult to understand that power in the frame of common sense.

"Listening to Amida's compassion means our ego-self is constantly crushed so that we are thrown in the world which is beyond birth and death," sensei continued. "We are able to be born in the world in which we are grasped and never abandoned by Amida, infinite wisdom and boundless compassion."

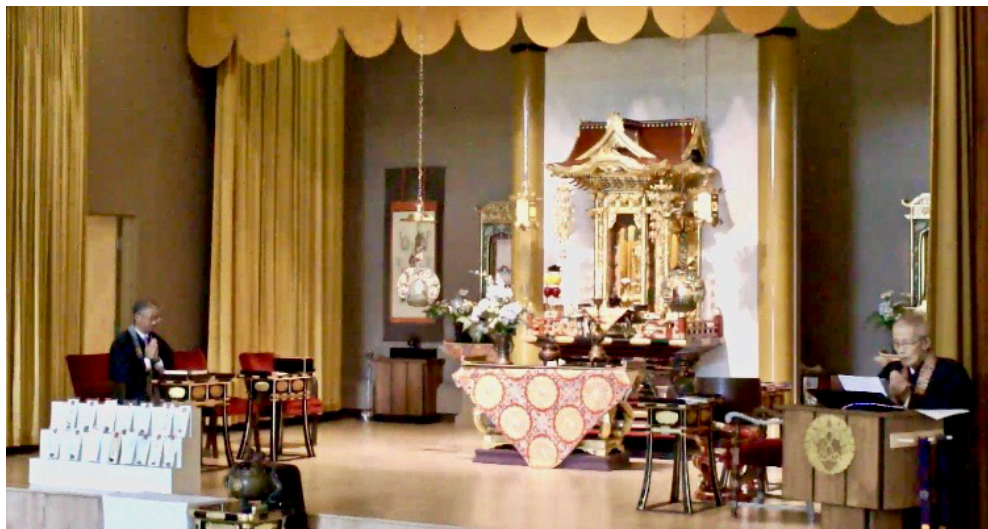
In closing his talk, sensei introduced someone he considered "an amazing nembutsu follower named Saichi who was not educated but who deeply listened to Amida's compassionate vow throughout his life. Saichi wrote: 'In my ordinary life, I have already resolved the moment of death and finished my funeral, namo amida butsu'."



Kynan Gordon, MC



Sensei & *shoji* calligraphy



Naijin with June homyo display; Roland Ikuta and sensei on naijin

Note: This article is published at the request of Linda Kawamoto Reid, research archivist, Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre (NNMCC), Burnaby, BC

## Japanese Canadian Health and Wellness Fund

The Province of BC has provided Nikkei Seniors Health Care and Housing Society (Nikkei Seniors) with \$2 million as part of its commitment to honour seniors who lived through the traumatic uprooting and displacement of almost 22,000 Japanese Canadians during the Second World War. The Province of BC is acknowledging the role they played in the historical wrongs committed against the Japanese Canadian community during the period between 1942 and April 1, 1949. The grant came out of the efforts of the National Association of Japanese Canadians' (NAJC) BC Redress initiative.

Nikkei Seniors has designated the \$2 million for the Japanese Canadian Survivors Health & Wellness Fund (Fund). At its core, the fund is primarily targeted at seniors who were directly impacted – uprooted and displaced - by the BC Government during this period. By extension, seniors whose families left BC during the war but were born out of province from 1942-1949 are part of this demographic. Nikkei Seniors will also strive to include impacted seniors who were not displaced yet lived in BC and suffered through this era and its aftermath. The Fund will be distributed in Canada.

### Purpose

The purpose of the Fund is to provide grants to enhance programs, activities, and services that will directly benefit the health and wellness of these living survivors.

The Fund intends to involve community-based participation to ensure the fund meets priority needs. For this reason, outreach in local communities to find organizations, small groups, and individuals is needed. This information will also help when the application process is ready in order to reach as many people as possible.

### How to Get Involved

We are asking you to get involved by helping us locate organizations and small groups that provide programs, activities, and services to this survivor population. In addition, reaching individual survivors is very important. If you have not already been identified or contacted, please feel free to reach out to the Project Office below. And please help to spread the word about the Fund.

Japanese Canadian Survivors Health & Wellness Fund  
Eiko Eby, Project Manager  
Email: [eikoeby@nikkeishc.com](mailto:eikoeby@nikkeishc.com)  
250-797-6300  
Website: [jewellness.org](http://jewellness.org)

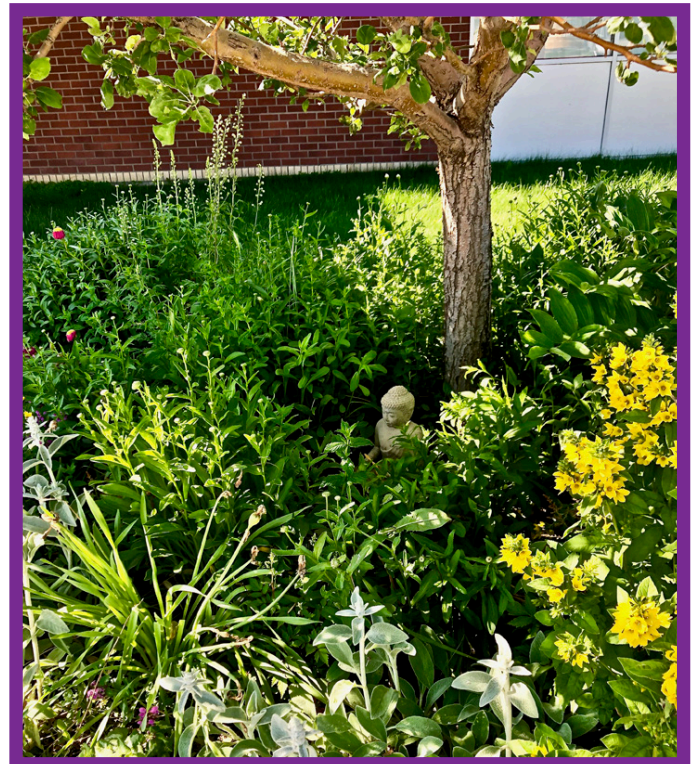
If you are able to provide information, please add as much information as possible such as 1. Name of organization, 2. Contact person, 3. Contact Information: address, email and telephone number, 4. Type of organization e.g. ad hoc/informal; formal such as those with constitution/bylaws, 5. Type of activity you do e.g. religious, recreational, health care, community services, social, 6. Estimate of size of group, 7. Estimate of the number of Japanese Canadian Survivors.



L to R - Susanne Tabata, BC Redress Project Director; Ruth Coles, President Nikkei Seniors Healthcare and Housing; Susumu Tabata; Cathy Makihara, Past Executive Director Nikkei Seniors Healthcare and Housing (Photo taken by John Endo Greenaway). Note: the photo has been cropped.

Not exactly Lumbini's Garden, but a delightful setting for our Buddha amidst the temple foliage in bloom. The Lethbridge setting promises to get more colorful as the summer moves forward as indicated by the yellow, red and purple blooms that surround the Buddha.

(Photo by Brenda Ikuta)



# Joint Celebration

## Of the 850th Anniversary of Shinran Shonin's Birth And 800th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Jodo Shinshu Teaching

Early notification of the 2023 joint celebration of the 850th anniversary of Shinran Shonin's birth and the 800th anniversary of the establishment of the Jodo Shinshu teaching has been received by Bishop Tatsuya Aoki who, in turn, distributed the information to JSBTC members.

Bishop Aoki noted: "Traditionally, overseas participants are combining the attendance to the service in conjunction with the World Women's Convention which is scheduled on May 11th and May 12th, 2023 in Kyoto."

In his note, Bishop Aoki said the Women's Federation of JSBTC and Rev. Y. Ouchi, the adviser, have been in touch with a Kintetsu Travel agent and possibly Japan Travel Bureau for a group trip to Kyoto.

The Bishop said he did not have information about the Women's Convention currently, but reported the first registration for the service (not WF convention) is from October to December, 2021, and the second registration is from February to March, 2023. Hongwanji will try to estimate as well as organize the seating capacity for 2023.

He added he will consult with Rev. Grant Ikuta who led the tour in 2012 and Rev. Ouchi who will lead the tour in 2023 so that Canadian attendance can be coordinated. A ministers' meeting is scheduled in August, at which time he said he can coordinate and plan with the sensei about the celebration and Women's Convention.

Further information about the celebration and convention will be described in forthcoming newsletters as the time approaches the established dates.



The commemorative design features two crests that are embossed over a reddish-brown brocade background. The background pattern consists of pine needles woven within a ginkgo leaf-shaped silhouette. The two crests are comprised of the sagarifuji (hanging wisteria) and tsuru (crane) motifs.

### OBON SERVICE SCHEDULE

<b>July 4 (Sun)</b>	<b>11 am</b>	<b>Brooks Cemetery Service</b>
<b>July 11 (Sun)</b>	<b>10 am</b>	<b>Magrath Cemetery Service</b>
	<b>11 am</b>	<b>Temple Hill Cemetery Service</b>
	<b>1 pm</b>	<b>Taber Cemetery Service</b>
<b>July 18 (Sun)</b>	<b>10:30 am</b>	<b>Mt. View Cemetery BTSa Obon Service</b>
	<b>2 pm</b>	<b>Bon Odori (Registration required)</b>



Please see page 2 for further details



Join the first ever on-line YBICSE reunion!

- breakout rooms by year on Saturday
  - Special guest: Rev. Gene Sekiya (Hongwanji Int'l Cntr) on Sunday
- Dig out your YBICSE trip photos, grab a YBICSE buddy and use the link below to register for either or both days.

Registration deadline is July 17

(ALL TIMES PST)  
**JULY 24 10AM-2PM**  
+  
**JULY 25 5PM-6PM**



**SPECIAL  
GUEST:  
REV. GENE  
SEKIYA**

Open to:

- Past participants - All Years and All Districts (Event is predominantly English with some Portuguese)
- Leaders and Chaperones
- Future Participants (A great way to see what the trip is like!)

REGISTRATION:

[HTTPS://FORMS.GLE/UIXRZE1RNE37N7YY8](https://forms.gle/UIXRZE1RNE37N7YY8)

EMAIL JOANNE YUASA FOR INFO:  
YUASA.MAKOTO@GMAIL.COM



# 2021 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 June 22 – 119

### Donation Revenue

June, 2021

Buchanan Programme & Teresa Taguchi  
Orbis Investment Management Ltd.  
Teresa Taguchi, Taguchi and Oikawa Families

**Total - \$12,500**

### Ho-onko Donations

January 2021

Eietsu Chiba

### Hanamatsuri Donations

April 2021

Eietsu Chiba  
Judy Fukushima  
Tomiko Shono

**Total - \$220**

### Obon Donations

July 2021

Eietsu Chiba  
Emily Stitt

**Total - \$125**

### Shotsuki Donations

June 2021

Rumiko Ibuki  
Yutaka and Chiyomi Matsuno  
Ken Ohno and Nancy Eng  
Heidi Oishi  
Jeanne and Larry Ryan  
Emily Stitt  
Cathy Taniguchi  
David Taniguchi

**Total - \$685**

### Other Donations

June 2021

Trent Takeyasu and Veronica Horn  
Akira Ichikawa  
Rev. Yasuo and Sachi Izumi  
Kendy Sasaki-Ross  
Sachi Scharf

**Total - \$773.50**

### Funeral Donations

June 2021

Heidi Oishi  
Joe and Mary Shigehiro  
Noris and Sachiko Taguchi  
Jim, Marion and Shannon Tomiyama

**Total - \$195**

**Total Donations - \$14,498.50**

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.

## Father's Day Service

Yasuo Izumi sensei gave a Father's Day service June 20 commemorating the day. His dharma talk is pretty much the message in this Hikari. Screenshots of the service are attached here. The service, shown on the temple YouTube site, was emceed by Andrew Ichikawa.

Sensei did note that in the past BTSA held its annual picnic on this Sunday, but the pandemic cancelled that for this year.

