

Hikari the Light



July & August 2023

Amida's Vow is to save and liberate all sentient beings equally.



Junirai or twelve adorations was composed by Nagarjuna who lived in India around the second century. He was the one who proclaimed Mahayana teaching

to people in those days. In Jodo Shinshu, Nagarjuna is the first of seven great teachers. These seven great teachers took refuge in Amida Buddha of infinite wisdom and boundless compassion after abandoning various practice. Shinran Shonin followed these great teachers.

When we had Sunday School (nowadays it is called Dharma School), we regularly chanted Junirai with children. These children enjoyed chanting Junirai. They became adults who still like the Junirai. In Junirai, Nagarjuna emphasizes Amida Buddha's power of wisdom and compassion by which Amida crushes people's arrogance and ignorance and at the same time saves all beings in suffering. Therefore, we all bow to Amida.

Some time ago, I was asked a question about one of the passages in Junirai. The question was an important one. Rennyō (1415-1495), the 8th descendant of Shinran said: Asking questions is beneficial for both questioner and listener. So, having a question is always important.

If you open to the page 21 (in our gray booklet), we can find these words in the English translation: *In the Buddha-land there is not even a word for 'evil' / Nor are there any women or the fear of evil courses.*

In reference to this passage, I was asked "Are there any women in Buddha-land and Why? Is this not a kind of discrimination?" This was a question.

I remember I answered this question in this way, "On the surface, it seems like a discrimination, but we must understand the situation in those days in India. In India,

there was a strong idea that women could never be born in Buddha's realm and become a Buddha. Actually, not only in India, but also when Shinran Shonin was living more than 800 years ago, there was a strong opinion that women were not able to be born in the Buddha-land. I think this was a reflection of their cultural and traditional issue rather than discrimination. Since the movement of women's liberation did not exist in those days, these women just suffered and endured it.

Out of great wisdom and compassion, Amida Buddha made a special and unique Vow to transform women to men so that all women in those days would be born in Buddha-land. Therefore, there are no women but only men in Buddha-land. If those women who were in social oppression heard Amida's wisdom and compassion, they must have been overjoyed. Thus, they bowed to Amida.

Appreciating Amida's great compassion, Shinran Shonin wrote a poem: *So profound is Amida's great compassion! That, manifesting inconceivable Buddha-wisdom, The buddha established the Vow of transformation into men, / Thereby vowing to enable women to attain Buddhahood.*

Modern people who enjoy equality of men and women might laugh at Amida's Vow. But are they really enjoying the equality of men and women? Are there any discriminations in modern life? Rather, for many people, discrimination is an everyday reality, such as religious discrimination, gender and age discrimination and sexual discrimination and so on so forth. Many people suffer from it. I think these discriminations come from human arrogance, bias, or superiority complex or perhaps from selfishness.

However, fundamentally, I think, it is our own deep ignorance. For such people like us, Amida Buddha again Vowed: *It is a great torch in the long night of ignorance;*

Do not sorrow that your eyes of wisdom are dark. / It is a ship on the vast ocean of birth-and-death; Do not grieve that your obstructions of karmic evil are heavy.

In any time, and anywhere, beyond time and place, Amida's wisdom and compassion becomes one with our suffering and sorrow, and gives us peace, joy, and happiness.

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

皆様、お元気にお暮らしでしょうか。お伺い致します。

お盆の季節となりました。お盆の起源は、お釈迦様のお生まれになったインドに始まるといわれています。お盆の語源は、「ウランバーナ」と言われています。「ウランバーナ」が「うら盆」になり、「お盆」となった、と言われていています。さて、「ウランバーナ」とは、「逆さつりの苦しみ」と言われます。それは、つまり、物事がそのままに見えないということ、智慧がないということでしょう。

お盆には、亡き人々の法名が並びます。生きておられた方々が、今は亡き人として、拜まれています。そして、私たちも、やがて拜まれることになるのです。つまり、同じように、亡くなっていくのです。ところが、そのことが中々わかりません。「自分は大丈夫」と、思ってしまうのです。「健康で、長生き」が、世の中の考えです。ところが、私たちは、間違いなく亡くなるのです。それが、見えないのですね。ですから、「命の行方」、(昔の方々は、後生の一大事と言われました)ということには無頓着なのです。仏教は、生死の解決が、目的であります。しかも、その解決は智慧のない私たちにはできません。できなければ、苦しみの世界を繰り返すことになるのです。そのことを知って、仏様(阿彌陀さま)は「われにまかせよ」と呼び続けられています。お盆は、亡き人々をしのびながら、阿彌陀様の呼び声に目覚めるとき、ではないでしょうか。この呼び声に目覚めるとき、一人ひとりの心に、喜びが生まれるのです。ですから、お盆は「歓喜会」と言われています。

合掌 泉康雄

UPDATE

from the Board of Directors

Hope you are all enjoying the nice weather. Here is a brief summary from the board meeting of June 14, 2023:

Preparation for Bon Odori is well underway, headed up by Kynan Ono. Odori practices have been attended by approximately 50 dancers each week. The food vendors are being finalized and unfortunately there are no restaurants that can be present due to staff shortages. More information can be found on the opposite page. Yagura set-up will start at 4:00 PM. We need at least 5-7 people to help with the setup.

The BC Buddhist Federation Convention is scheduled for September 22 - 24, 2023. The Board will consider the feasibility of hiring a bus, if there is interest from about forty members. A Sign Up Genius will be launched to gauge interest.

It has been reported a couple of occasions in the past month, that the outside door near the kitchen was left ajar. This is just a reminder to give the door an extra pull check when you are last to exit any exterior door. Izumi Sensei has written a new booklet and 300 copies will be available.

Five security cameras with motion sensor lights will be installed at the five entrances to the Temple. The security cameras will be monitored 24/7 with cloud storage.

If you have any comments or concerns about events at the temple, don't hesitate to get in touch with Kynan Ono, one of the board members, or Izumi Sensei or Roland sensei.

Please find below the YouTube live stream link to the BTSA Obon Service on Sunday, July 16 at 2:30 pm.

<https://youtube.com/live/zbsru-Mk0A?feature=share>

CHAIR/AV SCHEDULE

July

(No regular services in August)

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

July 02

Andrew Ichikawa
Brenda Ikuta, AV

July 09

NO SERVICE

July 16

OBON SERVICE @ 2:30 pm
Kynan Ono
Robbie Scharf

OBON 2023 SCHEDULE

Bon Odori Practice

Mondays 6:30-8 pm
May 15 - July 10

July 2 (Sunday) Service

11 am @ Brooks Cemetery
Obon Service @ Heritage Inn

July 9 (Sunday) Service

10 am @ Magrath Cemetery
11 am @ Temple Hill Cemetery
1:30 pm @ Taber Cemetery

July 15 (Saturday) Bon Odori

7 pm @ Buddhist Temple of Southern Alberta

July 16 (Sunday) Service

1 pm @ Mountain View Cemetery
2:30 @ BTSA for Obon/Monthly Memorial Service
(July & August)

BUDDHIST TEMPLE OF SOUTHERN ALBERTA

DANCE FESTIVAL

お盆 **BON ODORI** 2023

Saturday, July 15 • 7pm
470 40 ST. S. LETHBRIDGE

IN THE EVENT OF
POOR WEATHER CONDITIONS,
ACTIVITIES WILL BE MOVED INDOORS

BON ODORI PRACTICE EVERYBODY WELCOME

- 2023 Bon Odori Dance Festival is scheduled for July 15th
- Remaining practices July 3 & 10, Mondays, 7 - 8 p.m.
- A full schedule of dances and learning activities available on the temple website: thebtsa.com
- Meet in the multi-purpose room of the temple
- Refreshments will be provided each week.
- Everyone of all ages are welcome, no experience or registration is required
- Bring happi coats, round fans (uchiwa), folding fans (senshu), towels (tenegui) if you have them.
- If you would like more information contact Brenda Ikuta 403-317-0078, brenda.ikuta63@gmail.com



During the final odori practice on July 10, the sno-cone machine will be set-up for anyone interested in learning how it works. The temple plans to sell sno-cones at the festival, so youth over the age of 10 are welcome to help.

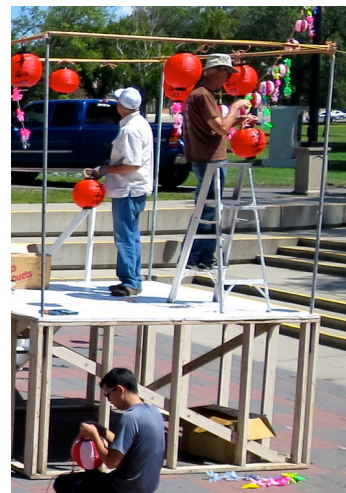
BON ODORI SETUP

We are in need of around 5-6 capable volunteers to help set up the Yagura, Chairs, tent, and tables for our Bon Odori on July 15th. We will be meeting in the parking lot at 2 PM. Bring a drill if you have one.

BON ODORI FESTIVAL FOOD

Unfortunately we do not have any restaurants that can come to our Obon festival this year. Most say it is due to shortage of staff. We will have sushi (Futomaki and Inari at \$6 per box) available in limited supplies from Lighthouse sold by members of the BTSA, and special flavored ice cream from Milk Man. We have also contacted Edo of Japan and they are able to make Yakisoba meals for us. You would have a choice of either chicken or beef with the Yakisoba. We would like to pre-order these meals so we do not purchase too many that go unsold. Please contact Brenda (403-317-0078) or use the sign-up genius form as listed below. Please indicate how many boxes of sushi or meals you would like reserved and if you want chicken or beef. **We will have some extra but if you want to ensure you have a meal available during the festival please reserve them for you and your family. To pay for the meals at the festival please bring cash.** Each meal will cost \$15. Half size or kid's meal may be an option. Thanks for your understanding.

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



DANA

The way of the Bodhisattva. *May I be a medicine for the sick and weary, nursing them until their afflictions are gone forever? I would be a protector of the helpless, a guide for travelers and their means for crossing a stream, a lamp for those who need a lamp, a bed for those who need a bed, and a slave for those who need a slave. May all find happiness through my actions and let no one suffer because of me. Whether they love or hate me, may those feelings be a source of their fulfillment? Those who mock, accuse or wrong me; may they all attain enlightenment.*



This passage is taken from The teachings of the Buddha. It talks about various ways that we can give. It highlights how important giving is for those on the Buddhist path.

The first Paramita is Dana or selfless giving. When we recite the six paramitas, we read, “I shall be kind and helpful to others. “ Why is selfless giving so tricky?

I would like to reflect on my recent attempt to give to a person in need and how it failed. This happened when I was up in Edmonton for a recent health intervention. I was staying in an Airbnb close to the hospital and Kingsway Garden Mall. During the week, I would go back and forth along the same 10-block route. On the corner of the intersection of Kingsway Avenue and 111th Ave, I noticed a man who would be panhandling on this same corner. He would stand on the meridian at the stop light of this bustling intersection. When the traffic beside him stopped for a red light, he ran over to the cars waiting for the light to turn, and knocked on the windows. He would ask for change or whatever the people would be willing to give him. I noticed over the few days he was always at his spot. Most people would ignore him or tell him to leave, but one or two would open their windows and hand him some change. He would usually get to 3-4 vehicles before the light would turn green, and he would have to hustle back to the meridian. After noticing him for several days, I came to this stop light and was the first car in line. He knocked on the car window next to me first, and the lady inside ignored him. She would not open her window and signaled him to go away. At that moment, I noticed a \$10 bill sitting on my dash. We got some of the change from stopping at a drive-through a few days earlier on our drive up to Edmonton. I had not managed to put it into my wallet yet. I rolled down my window, called over the man, and stuck the bill out. He quickly grabbed the bill and stuffed it into his pocket. He winked at me, said, “Thanks, buddy,” and promptly ran to the car behind me. The lady beside me, who had ignored him, shook her head as if to say, “ Why are you encouraging him? Or Why are you bothering when he will probably use the money for drugs or alcohol.” When this interaction occurred, I was somewhat unsatisfied and annoyed. First, I was unhappy

that the lady next to me seemed disturbed by my actions. She was disapproving and annoyed rather than her being impressed and in awe of my generous efforts. I was also unhappy because the man who received my \$10 did not appreciate my generous gift. He grabbed it and seemed more interested in getting to the next car than stopping to express his great indebtedness to me. Third, he did not notice that I had given him a relatively large amount. I would think 80% of people would ignore him or tell him to go away, and the few that would provide him with money would likely give him 1-2 dollars. I had given him a whole \$10, and he didn’t even pay attention to the generous amount. Ultimately, I was not impressed and thought, “I won’t be doing that again.”

This encounter made me realize how wrong I was in my thinking on that occasion. I was giving the \$10 with lots of expectations and conditions attached. I wanted to feel good for my generous act. I wanted the man to be genuinely grateful and overcome with joy with my gift. I wanted the people around me to notice I had given to this poor man and praise me for my compassion. I had given with so many conditions attached that it was my expectations that ruined the act. It was not the actions of the man or the lady that was stopped beside me that caused my unhappy reflection but my distorted expectations. It was indeed a case of me suffering from my Karma. My distorted way of giving returned to haunt me and caused my unhappiness. In reflecting on this episode, I realize now how my act of giving was all wrong. It made me realize that there are so many ways in which we give that are distorted by our expectations and attachments. This way of giving is the opposite of true Dana.

In contrast to my poor attempt at giving is the story about the selfless Hare from the Jataka tales.

The Tale of the Selfless Hare

Long ago, there was a hare. The forest was rich with fruits and bordered by a river of pure water. The Buddha, disguised as a wandering ascetic or Brahman, visited this forest. The people of that time considered the giving of alms to the holy wanderers to be a sacred duty. The Hare had three friends--a monkey, a jackal, and an otter--who looked to the wise Hare as their leader. He taught them the importance of keeping moral laws, observing holy days, and giving alms. Whenever a sacred day approached, the Hare advised his friends that if someone asked them for food, they would give freely and generously from the food they had gathered for themselves. That day, the four friends separated to find food. The otter found seven redfish on a riverbank; the jackal found a lizard and a vessel of curdled milk someone had abandoned; the monkey gathered mangoes from the trees.

The Buddha went to the otter first and said, “Friend, I am hungry. I need food before I can perform my priestly duties. Can you help me?” but the otter being selfish, refused to give the ascetic any of his fish. Then the Brahman went to the jackal and said, “Friend, I am hungry. I need food before I can perform my priestly duties. Can you help me?” And the jackal offered the Brahman the curdled milk but kept the lizard meat for his meal. Then the Brahman approached the monkey and said, “Friend, I am hungry. I need food before I can perform my priestly duties. Can you help me?” And the monkey offered the Brahman the unripe mangoes he had and kept the two juiciest sweet Mangos for himself. Then the Brahman went to the Hare and asked for food, but the Hare had no food but the lush grass growing in the forest. So the Hare told the Brahman to build a fire, and when the

fire was burning, he said, "I have nothing to give you to eat but myself!" Then, the Hare threw himself into the fire. The Buddha, still disguised as the Brahman, was astonished and deeply moved. He caused the fire to go out instantly so that the Hare was not burned and then revealed his true form to the selfless little Hare. "Dear hare," he said, "Your virtue will be remembered through the ages." And then Buddha painted the wise Hare's likeness on the moon's pale face for all to see.

This is a story about true selfless giving. The Hare was willing to sacrifice his own life to help this stranger. He had no regard for his own life, conditions, or attachments to his act of giving. Is it possible for any of us to give selflessly like this Hare? Whenever we give, we will always have a degree of attachment or condition to our giving. As I have tried to emphasize before, our encounters with the dharma should help us to be the best version of ourselves that we can be. In the instance of my selfish act of giving, I have had an opportunity to think about why my attempt to give was so misguided. By encountering the teachings, it has allowed me to reflect and to try to be better the next time I am faced with the opportunity to give. Reflecting on our limitations, we must realize that it is almost impossible to give without attachments. We are limited and egocentric beings. Shinran Shonin felt that this is precisely why we must rely on the primal vow to gain birth in the Pure Land. We cannot rely on our power and pure acts as we will always have some attachments. Despite these flaws and our blind passions, Amida accepts us into the Pure Land. Somomama or just as we are.

Dr. Roland Ikuta, Minister
Buddhist Temple of Southern Alberta

TOBAN Update

Temple clean-up was on June 25. We had just under 20 people who showed up to help get the temple and grounds ready for Obon season. Pizza seems most tasty after a work party! We appreciate all the hard work and dedication from the many individuals, seen and unseen, who contribute to the temple and sangha on an ongoing basis.



photos: John Dubbelboer

Karinto and remaining chow mein noodles will all be sold at Bon Odori Festival, July 15. This is considered a fundraising activity for the temple. Sales will be open from 6:30 p.m.:

Chow mein - \$7.50 / bag, limit of 4/family
Karinto large bag - \$8/bag, limit of 2/family
Karinto small bag - \$5/bag, limit of 2/family



TOBAN ROTATIONS AFTER OBON

August – none assigned
September – Toban 4
October – Toban 2
November – Toban 3
December – Toban 4
January – Toban 2
February – Toban 3
March – Toban 4
April – Toban 2
May – Toban 3
June – Toban 4
July – Toban 2



Joe Shigehiro, Mary Shigehiro, Don Friesen, Debbie Friesen, Margaret Tanaka, Emily Stitt, Mary Schwertner, Chiyomi Matsuno, David Major.

Soup Kitchen

The Temple hosted on Friday, June 23. If you wish to volunteer for meals on August 4th and 20th, please contact Emily, emistitt@hotmail.com, or 403-380-6683.

2023 Membership Form

ALSO AVAILABLE ONLINE AT THEBTSA.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 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 June 19 – 121

Shotsuki Donations

June 2023
 Dorene (Keiko) Gordon
 Neil Hinatsu
 Yutaka & Chiyomi Matsuno
 Karen Nishiyama & Ron Wenger
 Ken Ohno & Nancy Eng
 Heidi Oishi
 Tak & Jan Okamura
 Chiyeko (Chec) Robinson
 Emily Stitt
 Sachiko Taguchi
 Alan & Margaret Tanaka
 Lori Yokoyama

Elaine Joevenazzo
 Tosh & Kaz Kanashiro
 Michie Kawasaki
 Nitta Kayo
 George Kimura
 Rosemary Kitagawa
 Ronald & Lois Maloney
 Dan & Carol Merkle
 Robert & Toshiya Miyagawa
 Jim & Joan Nakagawa
 Tokiko Nishijima
 May Nishikawa
 Mitsuko Oga
 Setsuko Ohno
 Heidi Oishi
 Darrell & Jennifer Oshiro
 Jaylene Oshiro
 Carlee Oshiro-Fallis
 Roy & Pat Sassa
 Doug Sayoko
 Esther Sayoko
 Janet Sayoko
 Robert Sayoko
 Sachi Scharf
 Randy & Kelly Scoville
 Sumio & Shirley Setoguchi
 Tom & Mitsuko Shigehiro
 Dawn Sugimoto
 Harry Sugimoto
 June Sugimoto
 Tomiko Sugimoto
 Sachiko Taguchi
 Fugui Takeda

Ayako Taniguchi
 Gay & Robert Taylor
 Harold & Florence Tomiyama
 Jim, Marion and Shannon Tomiyama
 Tak & Yoko Tsujita
 Keith & Kathleen Kaoru Turnbull
 Brian & Susan Van Uden

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

Other Donations

June 2023
 Anonymous
 Richard & Valerie Boras
 CanadaHelps.org
 Rumiko Ibuki
 Rev Yasuo & Sachi Izumi
 Trent Takeyasu & Veronica Horn
 Alan & Margaret Tanaka
 Jim, Marion and Shannon Tomiyama
 Wanda Tomiyama

Funeral Donations

June 2023
 Sunao & Kaye Ayukawa
 Richard & Valerie Boras
 Judy Fukushima
 Sheila Ichino



BTSA Picnic

The temple picnic occurred on June 18th (Father's Day) with a chill in the air at Pavan Park. Fortunately members, friends and family stayed dry under the shelter as Kynan put in great efforts to keep a fire going. As always, there was a bountiful spread of tasty foods and a nice opportunity to visit with new and old friends.

Rev. Roland began with a brief service and talked about the lessons and modeling fathers can provide, giving pause to appreciate those present, and those who are no longer with us.



photos: John Dubbelboer, Alan Tanaka



JULY: TOBAN 3

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
10:30am Regular Service* 11am Brooks Cemetery Visit, Obon Service 2	7pm Odori Practice 3	7pm Taiko 4	5	7pm Meditation 6	7	1 10:30am Study Class* 8
No BTSa service 10am Magrath 11am Temple Hill 1:30pm Taber 9	7pm Odori Practice 10	7pm Taiko 11	12	7pm Meditation 13	14	7pm Bon Odori* 15
1pm Mountain View Cemetery 2:30pm Obon/Shotsuki Memorial Service* 16	17	18	19	20	21	22
No Service 23	24	25	26	27	28	29
No Service 30	31					

*OFFICIAL BTSa ACTIVITY

NO ASSIGNED TOBAN

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Sunday services at temple suspended until Sept. 11						
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		