



June 2020

## What can we really rely on?

**The Monthly Memorial Service** is another opportunity to remember our loved ones. We think of them, knowing that the great compassion of Amida Buddha is constantly working amid the changing nature of human life. Putting our palms together in gassho quietly, we appreciate that Amida's immeasurable life is always supporting our life, embracing us, and never leaves us.

Over the past several months our daily lives have been quite difficult, inconvenient and sometimes painful.

One early morning, someone phoned me saying that his wife was dying at the hospital bed. In such a case, before the pandemic, I would immediately go to the hospital, perform the last rite service for the dying person and give comforting words to the family. Since the caller was well aware that it was impossible to do so under the present circumstance he asked me for the last rite service over the phone. I agreed. When I was able to hear that the phone was placed on his dying wife, I called her name and talked to her for a while. The next day the husband informed me that she passed away peacefully.

It is indeed a difficult and sad time right now, that many people die alone and their beloved families are not able to gather together or even talk to or touch dying loved ones. It is really sad. In this kind of situation what can we truly rely on? The worldly matters such as wealth, social position, family ties that we usually rely on, have no value. We must find something which never changes, something that is beyond this world and yet gently embraces us.

I had another experience recently. My

friend's wife suddenly passed away. A few days later, my friend shared his experience of the moment his wife passed away. He said, "You know, I am not really religious but this time the word 'namo amida butsu' bubbled out naturally in my heart of loneliness and sadness. I do not know why. Did Amida's call finally break through my hard ego?"

I think that Amida's great compassionate Vow is working to liberate us from the world of suffering and embracing all of us equally whether religious or not. "Namo amida butsu," Amida's compassionate call, is always and constantly moving in the hearts and minds of all of us and becomes one with us who are deeply mired in the world of delusion and suffering.....

Shinran Shonin wrote: "When we reflect on the establishment of the (Amida's) Vow, / We find that Tathagata (Amida Buddha), without abandoning sentient beings in pain and affliction, / Has taken the directing of virtue to them as foremost, / Thus fulfilling the mind of great compassion."

When we touch Amida's heart and mind and appreciate it we naturally entrust ourselves in Amida Buddha, bow in reverence and recite "I rely on Amida Buddha, Immeasurable Life." We recite "namo amida butsu" naturally. Our predecessors have lived this sort of life despite a difficult life of poverty and discrimination reciting "namo amida butsu." The call must have given them courage and strength to live no matter what happened to them. Our life is called "the ocean which is difficult to cross" because many things do not go as we like.

There is an old poem written by a pious Buddhist woman. Though it is old, for those who are in sadness and sorrow it is always new. "I recite 'namo amida busu' and I hear it in my ears but it is a compassionate call of Amida Buddha, Immeasurable Life, calling me to return to His home." Listening to Buddha's call we are directed to be born

in the realm of peace and serenity and become a Buddha, the Buddha of infinite wisdom and boundless compassion. How wonderful it is!

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

「生きる力」

中国から起こったコロナウイルス感染症が、世界中に拡まっています。今では、30万をはるかに超える方々が、尊い命を失っていかれました。昔ならともかく、科学や医学が発達した現在では考えられないことが起こっています。その中で、医療関係の方々が昼夜を問わず働いて下さっています。ありがたいことであります。私達、一般のものには感染が拡がらないように、お互い間隔を取って生活するのがせいぜいです。

不安な日々の中で、五怖(五つの恐れ)という仏教語を思い出しました。人間には常に五つの恐れがあるということです。その中の三つを挙げましょう。まず、生活苦のことです。この度の感染症は多くの人から仕事を奪いました。「毎日、生活ができるだろうか」という恐れ、不安です。次に、「これ以上、悪いことがおこるのではないか」という恐れ。そして「今度は、自分が死ぬのではないか」という恐れ、不安です。特に、世界的な感染症のために、私たちはこれらの不安、恐れを持ち始めるのではないのでしょうか。しかし、そのような時にこそ、私たちを根底から支えて下さる大いなる力、「限りない命と限りない光」の阿弥陀如来に心を寄せなければならぬのでしょうか。不安や恐れは、生きている限りあるものかもしれませんが、如来に心を寄せる時、どのような状態にあっても、生きる力がめぐるものでありましょ。聞法させていただきます。 合掌 泉康雄

# Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Statement on COVID-19 Pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic has spread throughout the world and shows little sign of ending. Here in Japan, we have entered a new stage with the announcement of the state of emergency. First, I wish to express our sincerest condolences to those in Japan and the rest of the world, who have passed on due to Covid-19 pandemic. And to those who have become ill, we send our best wishes for a speedy recovery. Moreover, we express our deepest admiration and gratitude to all the doctors, nurses and medical staff for their heroic effort to treat and save the patients, even at the high risk of danger to themselves.

During this crisis, people around the world are confronting the enormous set of challenges by working together through mutual cooperation and encouragement. However, it has been pointed out that one of the causes for the spread of the disease lies in the actions of asymptomatic people who are unaware that they have contracted the virus. We must, therefore, understand its dangers and the correct response to the virus and act accordingly. We are requesting everyone to show genuine concern for one another so as not to allow the spread of any kind of discrimination and prejudice. Let us act properly based on our careful consideration of the implications of our action.

The Buddha taught us that ignorance and afflictions are the cause of our suffering. And Shinran Shonin revealed to us of the truth of our self-centeredness that lurks at our core through the words, “we foolish ordinary beings possessed of afflictions”. Given these truths, isn’t it important that we share in the joys and pain precisely because we are in such a difficult time? In Buddhism, we value the teaching of “Interdependence”, which points to the reality that “all things exist by being connected through the workings of causes and conditions” and are, therefore, “without any fixed substantial entity”.

The spread of Covid-19 is due to the person-to-person contact. Consequently, we no longer feel relief but, instead, anxiety about our “human connectedness”, which was originally something that was highly cherished. Therefore, we must not come to regard our “human connectedness” negatively as something of great danger. Precisely because we are now facing this worldwide pandemic, we must become even more cognizant of the original meaning and the importance of our “human connectedness.”

What is crucially important at this time is for us to be guided by the Buddha’s wisdom and to work cooperatively together within the workings of Buddha’s great compassion. In so doing, we can reaffirm the importance of being alive and to bring an end to the spread of this disease. It is not the governmental announcement of the state of emergency that will defeat this Coronavirus crisis. Instead, it is the thorough and appropriate actions of each one of us, in cooperation with many others, which will determine whether or not we can bring the current crisis to its end.

Precisely because my very existence is made possible within the connectedness with the people of the world, we shall be able to rejoice with them when we eventually overcome this difficulty together. Within our respective personal circumstances, we are encouraged to think about what we can do to combat this crisis without diminishing the Lamp of Dharma and our tradition. And we shall cooperate and pool our resources as we receive the mind of Nembutsu that reaches us from Amida Buddha, promising to “liberate us just as we are”. So, let us do our part to the best of our abilities in order to regain our society, in which everyone can live with a peace of mind.



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April 14, 2020

Chiko Iwagami  
Governor General,  
Jodo Shinshu Hongwanjiha

# BTSA Board Notes

Here is a summary of the BTSA Board meeting held May 13, 2020 via Zoom:

**1. Resumption of Temple activities** is a priority; however, no “in person” activities will be scheduled until at least mid June. This is when phase 2 of the provincial re-launch strategy is expected to proceed.

**2. The Church Picnic** will be virtual this year, using the Zoom meeting format and the innovative ideas of Roland and Brenda Ikuta. There will be a pot luck viewing as participants show their food items through their computer/iPad video cameras. What’s a picnic without BINGO and prizes? Roland and Brenda have also figured out a way to make this work through Zoom. To participate:

- Download the Zoom app (free)
- Send Roland an email rolikuta@shaw.ca so he can email an invitation to you with the Zoom link for the picnic

**3. Obon service** will likely not be an “in person” event; nevertheless, there will be some type of Obon celebration. More information will be forthcoming.

**4. Please renew your BTSA membership** for 2020, if you haven’t already done so. You can find the Membership Form on the last page of the Hikari. Please mail your completed membership for and remittance to the BTSA Treasurer, 470 – 40 St S, Lethbridge, Alberta T1J 3Z5.

**5. Please consider donating** to the Temple, if you are able. Our major fundraising activities could not take place due to COVID restrictions but our expenses continue (payroll and utilities).

## REGULAR (VIRTUAL) EVENTS

**Zoom meetings** Thursdays @ 7pm (8-16 people online)

**Explore Buddhism** classes online Saturdays @ 2pm

**Podcasts** every other week

**Monthly Shotsuki service** on YouTube

**Daily quotations from BDK** on BTSA facebook page

**How to cope with COVID as a Buddhist**

BTSA Facebook page and YouTube

Further further information contact Roland Ikuta

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Condolences

**Sam Kawade** (81) passed away on April 23,2020

**Shizuko Dell Takahashi** (103) passed away on May 3, 2020

**Betty Kaoru Tanigami** (99) passed away on May 11, 2020

## Virtual BTSA Picnic

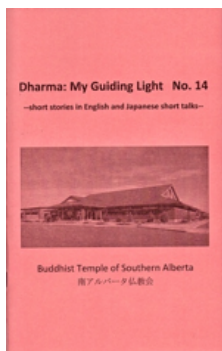
The annual real-time BTSA picnic for 2020 has been cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, a virtual picnic is planned. Please see the May board meeting recap elsewhere in this Hikari to see how it is going to be done.

Our regular picnic was scheduled for June 21 at the Rotary Park Picnic Shelter, but the city restriction on public assemblies limited to 15 persons has led to the cancellation.

Re-live some of the fun by viewing some scenes from last year’s get-together at the John Martin Recreation site in north Lethbridge.



## Sensei’s New Booklet



Izumi sensei has combined recently a number of his Dharma messages into a new collection, the 14th in his Dharma, My Guiding Light series of booklets, that is available for sale at the temple.

Those wishing to purchase a copy are asked to donate \$2.50 for a copy to help defray publication costs. Sensei will have them available by mail also for those who are unable to get to the temple. Please write to:

Buddhist Temple of Southern Alberta  
470 40th Street South  
Lethbridge, AB. T1J3Z5

Or email sensei at yasuo123@shaw.ca.

The booklet’s publication also was completed by the support of the temple.



## Obon 2020 Plans

BTSA's "in person" Obon this year appears to have fallen prey to COVID-19, but plans are in the works for an alternate variety. The BTSA board asks members to keep abreast of any word in the coming weeks. Please keep checking the temple website.



## "How the Stock Market works"

*The following is an anecdotal parable contributed by Izumi Sensei*

I once heard the following:

Once upon a time in a village, a man appeared and announced to the villagers that he would buy monkeys for \$10 each.

The villagers, seeing that there were many monkeys around, went out to the forest and started catching them. The man bought thousands at \$10 and as supply started to diminish, the villagers stopped their effort.

He further announced that he would now buy at \$20. This renewed the efforts of the villagers and they started catching monkeys again. Soon the supply diminished even further and people started going back to their farms.

The offer increased to \$25 each and the supply of monkeys became so little that it was an effort to even see a monkey, let alone catch it!

The man now announced that he would buy monkeys at \$50! However, since he had to go to the city on some business, his assistant would now buy on his behalf.

In the absence of the man, the assistant told the villagers:

"Look at all these monkeys in the big cage that the man has collected. I will sell them to you at \$35 and when the man returns from the city, you can sell them to him for \$50 each."

The villagers rounded up with all their savings and bought all the monkeys. Then they never saw the man nor his assistant, only monkeys everywhere!

Now you have a better understanding of how the stock market works. An excessive greed is always dangerous.

**Requests to BTSA Members** The BTSA board is asking members to renew their membership for 2020 if they have not done so already. The membership form may be found in the Hikari. Please mail your completed membership for and remittance to the BTSA Treasurer, 470 40th St. S., Lethbridge, Alberta T1J 3Z5.

On another note re: finances, the board request members to consider donating to the Temple, if able. Our major fundraising activities could not take place due to COVID restrictions but our expenses continue (payroll and utilities).



# Temple In Need of Lawn Care Help

The temple is looking to employ someone to do lawn maintenance starting June 8, 2020. It entails 1.5 - 2 hours of work @ \$50.00 per week. Interested applicants can contact Wayne Tsukishima for more details at [wktsuk@gmail.com](mailto:wktsuk@gmail.com) or (403) 320-9182.

The Board would like to extend their heartfelt gratitude to Joy, Gord and Mark Saruwatari for their dedication in maintaining the wonderful landscaping at the temple for the past 10 years.



2013

# Temple "Gardening Party"

Join a group of members interested in maintaining the flower garden and apple trees on the northside of the temple. For more information contact Brenda Ikuta at [brenda.ikuta63@gmail.com](mailto:brenda.ikuta63@gmail.com) or (403) 317-0078.



2018



2012



2009



2017



2012

# 2020 Membership Form

Full Membership (\$100 for each member)       Student Membership\*

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Names(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Names(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, Province, Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Check to receive The Hikari newsletter by email only.

Please send this form and your remittance to:  
Buddhist Temple of Southern Alberta Treasurer  
470 40th Street South  
Lethbridge, AB, T1J 3Z5

## \*Note

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

## LET'S EXPAND THE CIRCLE OF THE DHARMA!

### Membership to May 20 - 128

#### Hanamatsuri Donations May 2020

Shinako (Sheila) Higa  
Lily Kaga  
Yutaka & Chiyomi Matsuno  
Shig & Katie Nakagawa  
Sway & Toshiko Nishimura  
Mitsuko Oga  
Roy & Pat Sassa  
Bob & Eiko Shigehiro  
Tom & Mitsuko Shigehiro  
Tomiko Shono  
Kazuko Takaguchi  
Robert & Judy Takaguchi  
Glen & Pamela Tanaka  
Masaye Tanaka  
Clifford Thomas  
Tak & Yoko Tsujita

**Total - \$1,265**

#### Shotsuki Donations May 2020

Shinako (Sheila) Higa  
Tomi Hisaoka  
Lily Kaga  
Yutaka & Chiyomi Matsuno  
Jim Nakagawa  
Shig & Katie Nakagawa  
Sway & Toshiko Nishimura  
Mitsuko Oga  
Ken Ohno & Nancy Eng  
Setsuko Ohno  
Roy & Pat Sassa  
Harry Hajime Sugimoto  
Robert & Judy Takaguchi  
Eichi & Betty Tanaka  
Glen & Pamela Tanaka  
Masaye Tanaka  
Clifford Thomas

**Total - \$265**

### Other Donations

March 2020

Darren Aoki  
John & Rita Aoki  
Richard and Valerie Boras  
Malcolm & Mary Clewes  
Helen Hikita  
Tomi Hisaoka  
Nellie Horii  
Rumiko Ibuki  
Akira & Estate of Lorita Ichikawa  
Kazuya & Fusako Ichikawa  
Kyle Ichikawa  
Satoru & Grace Ichikawa  
Shinya & Jayne Ichikawa  
Teruko Ikuta  
Rev. Yasuo & Sachi Izumi  
Lily Kaga  
Sab & Kiyomi Kamitakahara  
Toshio & Kaz Kanashiro  
Sharon & Estate of Isamu Kawade  
Michie Kawasaki  
Richard & Edna Koyama  
Milnes & Noriko Kurashige  
Yutaka & Chiyomi Matsuno  
Joe & Marion Mori  
Ken & Vickie Nakagawa  
Jim Nakagawa  
Shig & Katie Nakagawa  
Lisa Nakamura  
Craig & Dana Nakashima  
May Nishikawa  
Sway & Toshiko Nishimura  
Karen Nishiyama & Ron Wenger  
Setsuko Ohno  
Jitsuya Oishi  
Sut & Neva Oishi  
Mako & Joann Okada  
Etsuko & Herb Osaki  
Morris & Joanne Pashkowich  
Patricia Potter  
Ken & Christine Rogers  
Helen M. Saito  
Sachi Scharf  
Nobuko & Mary Shono  
Noriko Sugimoto  
Robert & Judy Takaguchi  
Kenneth Brent and Lili-Ho Takeda  
Estate of Reiko Takeyasu  
Eichi & Betty Tanaka  
Glen & Pamela Tanaka  
Masaye Tanaka  
Betty Taniguchi  
Clifford Thomas  
Shizuo & Dorothy Tomita  
Kaz & Marjory Tomomitsu  
Tak & Yoko Tsujita  
Wesbridge Construction Ltd.  
Betty Hiroo Williamson  
Deanna & John Wolsey  
James & Eileen Yoshida

**Total - \$2,496.65**

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