

Hikari the Light



March 2014

Memories

Recently, we observed the 2nd Annual Pet Memorial Service.

Buddha's teachings do not exclude animals from human life. We know, for example, that the book "Jataka Tales" describes the former lives of the historical Buddha by illustrating the behaviors and characters of many kinds of animals and birds. We know these living beings often act as good teachers and good friends to us humans and show something important in our life, such as warm friendship, gentleness, patience, courage, honesty... Yes, animals do not lie or manipulate like humans. They live in the moment to the fullest, behaving nobly.

Buddha's teachings focus on all sentient beings who must be liberated to the realm of Nirvana. The Japanese kanji character, sentient beings, literally means "life with sharing the blood" which suggests that we, humans, animals, birds and tiny insects are all equally connected and interrelated. We live our lives together. In the eyes of the Buddha, there is no discrimination between humans and other living beings. All life is precious and important.

Master Shinran says: "All beings have been fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, in the timeless process of birth-and-death." In his writing, he also calls all living beings not "you and I" but "we" and says that "Everywhere the Buddha casts light immeasurable, boundless and unhindered and the multitudes of beings all receive this radiance."

I am sure that many of you have experienced the sad and painful parting from your own pets. Where have they gone? Were they born in the world of the Buddha? My wife and I lost our female

dog, a black lab, in the winter of 2007. She was a very friendly dog and our best friend and companion. We lived together for 13 years. Honestly, I am not really a dog lover nor an animal lover. When she was still alive I used to play with her, cuddle her and loved her only when she was in a happy mood, behaving nicely and listening well to me. When she died, however, I was sad. She was our friend, my friend, for a long time. Cuddling her lifeless body, tears ran down my cheeks. It was a strange experience. Her body was cremated. When her ashes came back to our house in a tiny urn, I wondered if she was born in the realm of the Buddha.

Well, it is said that all sentient beings except humans, are unable to appreciate Buddha's light or listen to the teaching. This means that they are not able to be born in the realm of the Buddha.

Had our dog just died and become ashes? Was that all? I wondered. How are animals able to be born in Buddha's world? Buddhist teaching says that they will eventually be born in Buddha's world because they are in Buddha's radiance. But they have to be reborn as human first. That's what the teaching says.

Then, the following poem written by Master Shinran came to my mind: "Our friends of the past who are buddhas, entering the garden of the world of delusion, they assume various forms to guide others."

I suddenly understood. She came to me in the form of a dog to guide me from the very beginning. She was not only my good friend but also my good teacher, encouraging me to live this life to the fullest. She came to me to show the reality and bitterness of parting from someone we love. I did not need to ask where she had gone or if she had returned to Buddha's world or not. It was not a question any longer because she was, and still is, a good friend and a good teacher in my everyday life, here and now. Indeed, she left wonderful memories for us that are

still lingering in our hearts. Understanding this, I appreciated the opportunity that we were able to live together even for a short number of years. I think this is the way for Buddhists to see all sentient beings, human, animals, birds and even tiny insects of the past and present.

Namo Amida Butsu.

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

お風呂

カナダでは一般にシャワーを使うようですが、私はシャワーよりお風呂が好きです。体全体をお風呂の中に浸けているとゆったりとした安らぎが生まれます。シャワーは忙しく、時間のない時には便利ですが、安らぎという点ではお風呂にかないません。この安らぎは、お風呂に入ると（特に日本風呂）、体全体が支えられている、という感じから来るのでしょうか。あるとき私はふと思いました。仏様を頼りとする（身を任せる）とは、お風呂に入るようなことかな、と。仏様の世界を、お風呂にたとえるのも変なことですが、シャワーでは、このようなたとえも生まれません。お風呂に入って身を任せるとき、お念仏まで声になって出てくるではありませんか。私たちが称えるお念仏は、仏様の世界に身を任せるところに自然に生まれてくる感謝のお念仏です。自分の欲を満たすためのものでなく、人に聞かせるためのものでありません。自分の利益ばかりを計算しているところから生まれるお念仏は、自力念仏とよばれ、親鸞聖人が教えて下さっているものではありません。ゆったりとした安らぎの世界を知らされ、そこから生まれるお念仏は自然です。仏様の智慧と慈悲の中に、わが身の人生全体（生の依るところ、死の帰するところ）をゆだねるところに生まれてくるお念仏、それを聖人は、他力念仏と教えてくださいました。み仏の心に、いよいよ耳を傾けましょう。合掌 開教使 泉康雄

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403.327.1260 • www.theBTSA.com

BTSA NOTES

The lion's roar emblematic of the month of March supposedly begins to abate as the spring equinox nears and we commemorate ohigan at our March 16 service. Not always so for Alberta, where record snowfalls have been recorded after that date, but nonetheless a harbinger of warmer times.

Ohigan is a time when night and day are about equal in duration, not too hot or too cold, a balanced time of non-extremes informed by the Six Paramitas that are the gateway to the "other shore" (enlightenment) in Buddhadharma.

The idea of non-extremes or equanimity is a core value in BTSA's mission statement, as it tries to balance its internal concerns with its community commitments in an attitude of gratitude.

Accordingly, we'll be preparing for the spring chow mein supper with a mein-making session on March 22. The supper, this spring on April 26, has become a regular part of the larger community, not only as a fund-raiser but also as a way to remind others of our presence.

Some of this outreach was apparent during the second pet memorial/Nirvana Day service on Feb. 9 when several guests joined regular members to honor pets that give so much comfort and unconditional love to their owners.

Toban 4 prepared lunch at the Lethbridge Soup Kitchen on Feb. 5, keeping with the temple's external links. Food parcels amassed since November were turned over to the Lethbridge Food Bank late in the month, along with a matching cheque of \$400, the estimated value of the collected goods.

The board voted to send a cheque for \$6,000 to the World Buddhist Women's Convention to the organizing committee. The board agreed in September, 2013, to set aside the amount for a sponsorship at the event set for May 2015. It also gave approval to renew the contract with A-One Janitorial service for a year, subject to various stipulations.

The February meeting also made preparations for the annual general meeting scheduled for March 2. Reports of the AGM will be printed in the April issue of the Hikari.

Looking forward to April, yet another public event will be a movie night open to the larger community. This will actually be a "movie morning" with the rental of a theatre at the Movie Mill. The featured film is "The Burmese Harp", a prize-winning Japanese film released in 1956. Showtime is 10:15 a.m.

NOTE: Keep in mind that daylight saving time begins on March 9 at 2 a.m. Remember to turn your clocks ahead one hour and get to the temple on time that morning. Finally, let's hope the month goes out like the proverbial lamb as April begins, just in time for Hanamatsuri.

Akira Ichikawa

CHAIR SCHEDULE March & April 2014

Mar 02 SHOTSUKI
Chair: Val Boras
Audio: John Dubbelboer

Mar 09
Chair: Sway Nishimura
Audio: Akira Ichikawa

Mar 16 OHIGAN
Chair: John Dubbelboer
Audio: Sway Nishimura

Mar 23
Chair: Florence Senda
Audio: Brenda Ikuta

Mar 30
Chair: Deanna Jones
Audio: Tak Okamura

**Apr 04 HANAMATSURI/
SHOTSUKI SERVICE @ 2 PM**
Chair: Joyce Shigehiro
Audio: John Dubbelboer

Apr 13
Chair: Katie Nakagawa
Audio: Sway Nishimura

Apr 20
Chair: Kynan Gordon
Audio: Akira Ichikawa

Apr 27
Chair: Pat Sassa
Audio: Brenda Ikuta

MC designates: if you are unable to chair on your assigned date or have made other arrangements on your own, please inform Sway Nishimura. Thank you.



BTSA held its second annual pet memorial service on Feb. 9, combined with the Nirvana Day service. Izumi Sensei's dharma message linked the historic Buddha's death with the love expressed by animals who mourned Siddhartha's passing. Objects on the homo stand placed in the najjin included photographs as well as urns containing ashes of deceased pets.

BUDDHIST Q & A

Q. Does Jodo Shinshu talk about punishment?

A. The Buddha of boundless compassion called Amida Buddha is not a judge or controller but works for us to awaken us to our misdeeds such as lying, manipulation, gossiping and spreading rumors. Our elders taught us with skillful means that our misdeeds will come back to us sooner or later without fail. So let's stay away from any kinds of misdeeds. The Buddha never punishes us but wishes us to be happy. Y.I.

Toban 4 helped at the Soup Kitchen on Feb. 5. From left to right: Wayne Tsukishima, Eietsu Chiba, Mark Tsukishima, Jean Oga, Dave Kunimoto, Jack Nagai, Heidi Oishi, Stan Peters, Betty Taniguchi, Tak Tsujita, Keiko Tsukishima, Kaz Takaguchi, Judy Fukushima, Jan Okamura (partially hidden), Noriko Oga, George Tokuda and Sam Taniguchi.



DEVELOPMENT Committee

We are looking for one or two more temple members to be involved with the former membership/religious committee. We have now renamed it the development committee. This committee meets 4-5 times per year for 3 hours. It is this committee that have come up with innovative ideas such as Movie Night at the Temple, Speakers Series, Transportation for seniors from Taber, etc. It is an informally run group that is basically an opportunity for people to brain storm new ideas to attract or retain members for our temple. The group has a lot of fun discussions at the meetings.

If anybody is interested in joining the committee please contact Roland Ikuta at 403-317-0078 or send him an email at rolikuta@shaw.ca

AudioVISUAL

New member Ross Jacobs helped reconfigure our AV system so it is now much simpler to use. We are now able to run things with minimal need for an update. If anybody would like to help with running the AV system during services please let Roland Ikuta know and he can take you through a simple tutorial. The system now works so that the FM hearing system works with all of our devices including the DVD for movies, the CD for the Gathas as well as the microphones from Sensei and the Chairperson.

Thanks to Ross's expertise in sorting out our system.

TOBAN UPDATE

Contact lorita.ichikawa@gmail.com or 403.327.1668

Toban 4 is up for March and it already looks like a busy month

Toban 2014 Schedule

Apr. Toban 3	
May Toban 4	June Toban 2
July Toban 4	Aug. Toban 3
Sept. Toban 2	Oct. Toban 4
Nov. Toban 3	Dec. Toban 2

Appreciation to **Toban 3** for February tea and cleaning. With so many members helping out, Pat will continue to provide support while reducing responsibility.

Soup Kitchen

Thanks to Toban 4 for providing lunch on February 5 at the Soup Kitchen.

Upcoming dates:

Wed., Mar. 19 - Toban 2

Tues., Apr. 22 - Toban 3

Reminder: Please reserve room use for all events with Fudge Takeda 403.394.9789 ktakeda@telusplanet.net before marking reservation in the foyer calendar. This will prevent double-booking that has occurred recently.

2014 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.: _____

Cellphone No.: _____

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

Notes

*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 of membership does not include membership in the Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temples of Canada.

LET'S EXPAND THE CIRCLE OF THE DHARMA!

2014 Buddhist Memorial Service

仏教徒の年忌法要

Year of Death/Anniversary Memorial (死亡年)

2013	First annual memorial1 year from death
2012	3rd2 full years from death
2008	7th6 full years from death
2002	13th12 full years from death
1998	17th16 full years from death
1990	25th24 full years from death
1982	33rd32 full years from death
1965	50th49 full years from death

On the first or near the first Sunday of every month, the BTSA observes a monthly memorial service in memory of those people whose date of death (meinichi-命日) falls in that month. Please bring a Homyo of your loved one.

Memberships to Feb 20, 2014: 87

Ho-onko Donations

February 2014

Eietsu Chiba
 Ken & Amy Kurio
 Katoye Maruno
 Roy & Minnie Nakatsuru
 Setsuko Okuma
 Fumi Ota
 Jagjit S. (Jack) Panesar
 Tadanori & Chieko Sakaguchi
 Takaaki & Hajime Shigemi
 Miyo Sunada
 Toshiko Tanaka

Total - \$625

Other Donations

January 2014

George & Catherine Fujita
 Tomoe Hironaka
 Rumiko Ibuki
 Tosh & Tsuyako Iwamoto
 Ken or Amy Kurio
 Wayne & Rhonda Kwan
 Katoye Maruno
 Nikkei Cultural Society
 Mitsuko Oga
 Lilly Oishi

Total - \$3,490

Shotsuki Donations

February 2014

J & E Cozac
 Ken & April Fleury
 Yoshio Fujimoto
 Randy Higa
 Shinako (Sheila) Higa
 Shirley Higa
 Susumu & Teruko Ikuta
 Ayako Imahashi
 Molly H. Ito
 Ray & Donna Journoud
 Tom & Lily Kaga
 Eileen Kunimoto
 Allan & Lillian Leavens
 Yoko Nishimura
 Mitsuko Oga
 May Ohno
 Heidi Oishi
 Lilly Oishi
 Irene & Asaye Sakamoto
 Roy & Pat Sassa
 Craig & Sachi Scharf
 Joe & Mary Shigehiro
 Tomiko Sugimoto
 Guy & Joyce Sunada
 Marc & Beth Sunada
 Miyo Sunada
 Noris & Sachiko Taguchi
 Robert & Judy Takaguchi
 Brenda & Lester Tanner
 George Tokuda
 Joe & Sumiko Tomiyama

Total - \$1,430

We try to be as thorough as possible but occasionally make errors. Please inform us if your name has been omitted from or misspelled in the donation lists. Anyone wishing his/her name not be acknowledged in print, please let us know so it won't be published. Thank you.

REGULAR EVENTS

Southern Alberta Buddhist Choir

Contact: Katie Nakagawa 403. 327.4296 or katiinak@shaw.ca

Tonari Gumi

Tuesdays, 12-3pm

Taiko Class

Tuesdays, 6:30 pm (Youth) & 7 pm (Adults)

Contact: David Tanaka at 403.330.1548 or david@eyesquared.com

The Lethbridge Karaoke Club

Wednesdays, 1pm

PROGRAMS

Minyo Dance Practice

Sr. Minyo: Tuesdays, 4:30 to 6pm, Mar. 4, 11 & 18

Jr. Minyo: Sundays after service, Mar. 9 & 23

Contact: Pat Sassa

Women's Federation World Convention Craft Group

Meets the 3rd Sunday monthly after Tea

Contact: Totsy Nishimura 403.752.3435 or swayn@telusplanet.net

Gentle Yoga for Seniors

8 sessions, will run Thursdays from 10 to 11 am April 17 and May 8 – June 19.

Aiki Breathing to be announced.

Naikan Self-Reflection had 4 sessions in the new year

and will continue in April. The session will run most Saturdays 12:30 - 2pm

New participants welcome.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Condolences

The Buddhist Temple of Southern Alberta expresses heartfelt sympathy to those who have lost loved ones.

Chieko Louise Nishiyama (89) Feb 24, 2014

Heidi Hideko Nishi (92) Feb. 24, 2014

REMINDER: The JSBTC WF are still collecting used stamps to be used for UNICEF. Thank you!

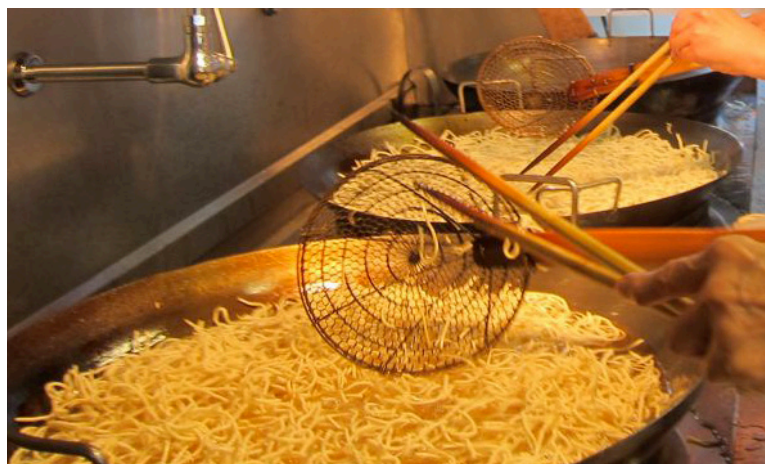
2014 Obon Schedule and Cemetery Visitations

To help prepare for the summer and to plan family reunions and get-togethers, please note the schedule for the coming Obon season.

Watch for a schedule of bon odori practices at the temple, beginning in June.

July 6	11 am	Brooks Cemetery visitation (Obon service at Heritage Inn)
July 13	10 am 11 am	Magrath Cemetery visitation Temple Hill Cemetery visitation
July 19	6 pm	Bon Odori, Galt Gardens, Lethbridge
July 20	1 pm 2:30 pm	Mountain View Cemetery visitation BTSA Obon Service at the temple
July 26	1:30 pm	Taber Cemetery visitation & Obon gathering

(Please note, the Taber visitation is on a Saturday to accommodate sensei's travel schedule as guest Obon speaker in Concord and Oakland, CA. All other cemetery visitations are on Sundays.)



MEIN-MAKING is scheduled for March 22 at 8 a.m. We ask that members come out and help at this regularly-held event, this time in preparation for the spring chow mein supper on April 26. We can use all the help we can get. It's a good time to socialize as the golden noodles are being produced.

NAIKAN Self-Reflection Sessions

If you are looking for a quiet time to get away from the activity and rush of everyday life, you might be interested in our self-reflection sessions that will continue meeting in April. While some of our members have been introduced to Naikan at various workshops or at the sessions we did a few years ago, others have asked what we do. Naikan is a Japanese word which means “inside looking” or “introspection”. It is a structured method of self-reflection that helps us to understand ourselves, our relationships and the fundamental nature of human existence. Naikan was developed by Yoshimoto Ishin, a devout Jodo Shinshu Buddhist in Japan. Self-reflection affects many aspects of our life, not the least of which is the presence of gratitude.

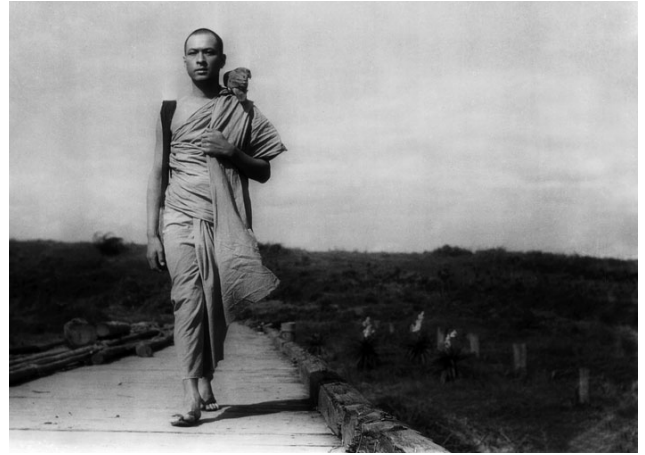
“Man need only divert his attention from searching for the solution to external questions and pose the one, true inner question of how he should lead his life, and all the external questions will be resolved in the best possible way.” Leo Tolstoy

The simplified approach we take at our sessions includes a brief meditation or reading and a few moments of silence to start and silent writing for most of the session with a brief chat at the end. Using materials provide through the Todo Institute, which has been offering Naikan programs and retreats since 1989, a structure is provided which uses our relationships as a mirror in which we can see ourselves. We reflect on what we have received from others, what we have given and what troubles we have caused. Essentially it is a silent journal workshop with no expectation of sharing our own writing. We will not be limited to strictly the Naikan method and other journal structures may be introduced, all in the spirit of self-reflection.

Maximum participants for the sessions is 12 and we do have a couple spots open. The group is open to members and friends and runs most Saturdays from 12:30 to 2 (depending on participant’s availability). There is no fee – any donations will sent to the Todo Institute for the generous use of their materials.

In gassho,
Lorita Ichikawa

Movie Night at the Temple



THE BURMESE HARP

1956, Directed by Kon Ichikawa

Japanese and Burmese with English subtitles

The next Movie night at the Temple is not going to be at the temple and it won't be at night!

On April 12th at 10:15 AM we will be showing the movie the Burmese Harp at the Movie Mill.

We invite all members to come and invite their friends. There will be no charge for the movie but donations will be accepted. Last year we showed the Little Buddha and had over 100 people attend. This year we are getting a larger theatre.

An Imperial Army regiment surrenders to British forces in Burma at the close of WW II and finds harmony through song. A private, thought to be dead disguises himself as a Buddhist monk and stumbles upon spiritual enlightenment.

Magnificently shot in hushed black and white. Kon Ichikawa's *The Burmese Harp* is an eloquent meditation on beauty coexisting with death and remains one of Japanese cinema's most overwhelming antiwar statements, both tender and brutal in its grappling with Japan's wartime legacy.

This movie was re-released in 2007 and digitally restored. Many have considered it in their top 100 important foreign movies. (e.g. *Movie makers magazine*) and it was nominated for the best foreign film at the 1957 Academy awards. Please spread the word and have lots of friends and family attend. **If you have any questions contact Roland Ikuta at 403-317-0078 or send him an email at rolikuta@shaw.ca**

APRIL 26

Spring Chow Mein Supper

Just a reminder that everyone's help will be appreciated during the spring chow mein supper on April 26, one of our major fund-raisers. It's a lot of work, but a chance to get together and socialize as the ingredients are prepared (the day before) and the final product is cooked up and packed on the day of the event. As in the past, it'll be a drive-through, pick-up arrangement. Here are some photos from the fall supper in October; you can almost feel the bustle and the smell of the delicious meal. Please mark the date on the calendar and wait for further information.



Izumi sensei and Joe Tomiyama hold up food items donated by members to the Lethbridge Food Bank. An estimated \$400 worth of goods were donated since November and were turned over to the Food Bank during the last week of February, along with a matching cheque previously approved by the board. The annual drive is another of the temple's commitment to the larger society. It will be held again, beginning in November, 2014, to assist the ever-growing need in Lethbridge. Thanks to all members who made donations throughout the four-month period.



So, that's what goes on in the Dharma classroom! Projects and activities have been low-key for the kids in the first couple months of 2014. We look forward to spring which brings warmer weather and Hanamatsuri.



Schedule 光 March & April 2014

Monthly Shotsuki Memorial Service 祥月法要 (service in English)

Please bring Homyo (Buddhist Name) of your loved one. 法名をご持参ください。

MARCH: TOBAN 4

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
10:30am Shotsuki Service B TSA AGM 2	3	12pm Tonari Gumi 4:30pm Sr. Minyo 6:30/7pm Taiko 4	5	6	7	1 Wedding 8
10:30am Regular Service Jr. Minyo 9	10	12pm Tonari Gumi 4:30pm Sr. Minyo 6:30/7pm Taiko 11	1pm Karaoke 7pm B TSA Board Meeting 12	13	Visitation at Youth Correctional Centre 14	15
10:30am Spring Equinox Ohigan Service 16	17	12pm Tonari Gumi 4:30pm Sr. Minyo 6:30/7pm Taiko 18	1pm Karaoke 19	20	21	8am Mein-making 22
10:30am Eshinni and Kakushinni Memorial Service Jr. Minyo 23	24	12pm Tonari Gumi 6:30/7pm Taiko 25	1pm Karaoke 26	Buddhism and Japanese Culture at U of L 27	28	10am Introduction to Buddhism 29
10:30am Regular Service 30	31					

APRIL: TOBAN 3

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
10:30am Hanamatsuri and Shotsuki Service 6	7	12pm Tonari Gumi 6:30/7pm Taiko 8	1pm Karaoke 7pm B TSA Board Meeting 9	10	11	9am Dharma Study Introduction to Buddhism 12
10:30am Regular Service 13	14	12pm Tonari Gumi 4:30pm Sr. Minyo 6:30/7pm Taiko 15	1:30pm Karaoke 16	10am Gentle Yoga 17	18	19
10:30am Regular Service 20	21	12pm Tonari Gumi 6:30/7pm Taiko 22	1:30pm Karaoke JSBTC Ministers' meeting (Vancouver) 23	JSBTC Ministers' meeting 24	JSBTC Ministers' meeting 25	JSBTC AGM (Vancouver) 26
10:30am Regular Service JSBTC AGM (Vancouver) 27	28	12pm Tonari Gumi 4:30pm Sr. Minyo 6:30/7pm Taiko 29	1:30pm Karaoke 30			