

# Hikari the Light



March 2021

**Those who reach the Pure Land of happiness return to this world of defilements. Where, like the Buddha Shakyamuni they benefit sentient beings without limit. — Shinran's poem**

I hope you and your family members are doing well despite the COVID 19 pandemic which has lasted for one year and still continues. Buddha said everything changes and nothing remains unchanged. This means that the long-lasting pandemic will be over one day. We need patience until then. I think that Buddha's teachings always give us hope and expectation amid our hardships and difficulties.

I would like to introduce a Buddhist woman who went through hardship and difficulties and yet left great works behind. Her name was Takeko Kujo who was born in Kyoto, 1887, as a daughter of the 21st Moshu, Koson Ohtani of Nishi Hongwanji.

She is the one who composed the lyrics of *Seiya*, (*Splendor of an Evening Sky*), a beautiful Buddhist song which attests to her entrusting heart to Amida Buddha. We often sing this song during Sunday services. I personally love this song. It says: "Numerous Buddhas are filling in the universe and they are embracing us day and night." This is for followers of Mahayana. In Mahayana lore we appreciate that there are countless Buddhas around us although we are not able to see them because of our base passions. Furthermore, we enjoy and appreciate that those Buddhas--more than all the countless grains of sands of the Ganges River--are praising great wisdom and compassion of Amida Buddha, and are always and constantly concerned about the life of all sentient beings all the time.

When Takeko was 36 years old, a big earthquake hit Tokyo and its surroundings. Takeko who was living in Tokyo then volunteered to help victims, young and old, men and women day and night. Around that time, her book *Muyuuge* (*Flower Without Sorrow*) became a best seller in Japan. Using royalties from the sale of her book, she established a facility to house victims and orphans. The facility later became Ashoka Hospital which remains in Tokyo to this day.

She wrote the following poem. The English translation goes like this: "Drawn by the power of Great Thing, Ah how unsteady are my steps." The power of Great Thing obviously means the compassionate working of Amida Buddha. Although we are weak beings with base passions and easily stumble over unexpected difficulties, Amida Buddha of wisdom and compassion is embracing us to guide us to the realm of Buddhahood.

Takeko lived 43 years. During her rather short life, she established the Buddhist women's group throughout Japan and, later, Kyoto Women's college.

During Takeko's last moments, her second brother visited at her bedside. He gave a dharma talk for her. His words still remain. He said: "This parting on this earth is a sort of turning point to be born in the Pure Land. Please make sure to rely on Amida's great compassion and be born in the Pure Land. When you are born there please return to this world of defilements to teach us about the truth of the great compassion of Amida Buddha." To his words, Takeko responded frailly but firmly: "Yes, I will return again." These were her last words.

In gassho,

Yasuo Izumi, Minister  
Buddhist Temple of Southern Alberta

ただお任せ

最近、左眼の白内障(キヤタラクト)の手術を受けました。勿論、初めての経験です。予備知識は、すでに手術をしている何人かの方から聞いてはいました。二日前から目薬を何度か左眼にいい、当日も看護婦さんが数度目薬を使いました。そして手術台へ。局部麻酔がどのように行われたのか、いつの間にか左の目のそばの皮が切られ、そこからレンズが左眼の上にかぶせられていくのが感じられます。私は全くの「お任せ」です。「信頼」とか「恐れ」とかというような「自分の思い」はありません。「ただお任せ」です。

手術は15分から20分くらいと聞いていましたが、時間の流れは全く分かりません。水が流れるような音が絶え間なく聞こえていました。「はい、終わりました」の医師の力強い声に、反射的に「有難うございました」と言っていました。看護婦さんに腕を取られながら、待合室で待つワイフのところまで連れてきてもらいました。最初から最後まで看護婦さんの、てきぱきした、それでいて親切な言葉と行動。医師の洗練された技術の力と経験。それによって、私の方も「全くお任せ」ということにされてしまったのでしょうか。

ところで、歎異抄という書物の中にある「ただ念仏」という言葉の解釈が、いろいろと言われます。「ただ念仏」とは、「智慧と慈悲を完成された阿弥陀仏」の大きな働きに遇って、こちらの「思い」がとられ、初めて生まれてくる「感謝のお念仏」のことであるということ、この度の手術を通して教えられたことでした。合掌 泉康雄

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## NOTICE FOR UPCOMING AGM FOR BTSA

This is a formal notice to all members of the Buddhist Temple of Southern Alberta that we will hold the AGM for 2021 on April 4th, 2021. The time will be around 3:30PM after the April Shotsuki and Hanamatsuri service.

It will be held via Zoom or you can also call in via phone. The agenda is included in this issue of the Hikari along with other reports for the AGM. We will show the financial review engagement during the meeting.

The link and phone number for the AGM is listed below.

**Topic: April Shotsuki and AGM**  
**Time: Apr 4, 2021 02:00 PM MST**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81990066901?pwd=Q050OWQwRkhYRkM0cnRtM28yK25QZz09>

Meeting ID: 819 9006 6901 • Passcode: 469501

Phone number: **1-587-328-1099** (you will need to enter in the above ID number and pass code when prompted.)

## UPDATE from the Board of Directors

This is a brief report due to the many other notices about our AGM in this Hikari.

The main item to report is our planned AGM for April 4th after our Hanamatsuri and Shotsuki service. We traditionally hold our AGM in March but due to the need for further planning and to be sure most members get a notice via the Hikari, it will be delayed by one month. We hope to be able to present all the usual reports and items to review during our zoom meeting. If you do not use Zoom but would still like to participate there is also a call in number. Please see the notice and other material in this edition of the Hikari.

For services in March there will be the Shotsuki service on March 7th and a regular service on March 21st. The Zoom invitations are listed below. These services will be recorded and available on our YouTube channel the following day.

**Topic: March Shotsuki service Zoom Meeting**  
**Time: Mar 7, 2021 10:30 AM MST**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87204368463?pwd=SVljUUZsYWlUdTBpQ2luWVN3aTlscz09>

Meeting ID: 872 0436 8463  
Passcode: 875601

**Topic: March regular service**  
**Time: Mar 21, 2021 10:30 AM MST**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83213428220?pwd=OGorZWtQbEtBdGdVbk5lTDBlZFEZz09>

## AGM Chair Report for 2020-21

It is hard to imagine what has happened to us in 2020! Our last AGM had occurred just before the start of the Pandemic. I don't think any of us could have guessed that we would experience such a challenging year.

Despite the limitations, many of the members continue to support the temple and its activities. I want to express my deep appreciation for all who remain active in our virtual activities and maintain the temple.

With COVID 19, we had an initial shut down of all in-person activities from March 2020 until June. With the lifting of some restrictions, we could have limited attendance at a few Shotsuki (June, Sept., and Oct.) services and for Obon. We ran four Obon services during the weekend of July 18 and 19 to accommodate around 180 people who were mostly observing their *Hatsubon* (first Obon service for a family member who passed away). These services were also broadcast on our YouTube channel, and over 400 people viewed the service in this format. With the further restrictions due to the second wave, the Shotsuki services are now live on Zoom and shown on our YouTube Channel. Thanks to Andrew Ichikawa, Arjan Gill, Rachelle Muskovich, Brenda Ikuta, and others for making these services available and for doing much of the technical work. Thank you also to Izumi Sensei, who has adapted to these various formats. He has been extremely accommodating during the Pandemic.

Other activities that continue despite the Pandemic are the weekly *Explore Buddhism* classes coordinated by Robert Muskovich and Izumi Sensei. There are around 8-12 people who get together weekly to discuss various topics related to Jodo Shinshu and general Buddhism. These sessions

occur on Saturday mornings at 10:30 am. If others would like to join, please contact Bob Muskovich at [bobmuskovich@gmail.com](mailto:bobmuskovich@gmail.com)

Due to the Pandemic, we have been holding twice-monthly Sangha get together via zoom. This is a chance to see each other and to have visits much as we would typically have after services in the multi-purpose room. If you would like to get the zoom invitation for this meeting, please send an email. (rolikuta@shaw.ca)

There have been ongoing upgrades to our temple. The most significant change is the installation of the solar panels. Also, we have added snow guards to our roof and have upgraded the lights in our parking lot. Please see David Major's eco-Sangha report for more details.

The AV committee is now more active than ever trying to put out Buddhist content during the Pandemic. We continue to benefit from the great work of Arjan Gill, who is helping coordinate many of these virtual activities. Please look at the report from the AV committee for further details.

In the past year, we have lost several dedicated Sangha members. We had 16 public funerals and a few other private funerals between March and Oct 2020. These were held in person, via Zoom, or via our YouTube live channel. We express our condolences to all who lost a loved one during this challenging year. The usual gathering that helps us through the grieving process has been significantly altered during the Pandemic. This has been a challenging process for many families. We will miss the many members of our Sangha who have passed away this past year.

Plans for the BTSA remain uncertain due to the Pandemic. It is expected that in-person gatherings will not be allowed at least until April 2021. Once public health restrictions are modified to permit public gatherings, the board of directors will make further announcements.

Please stay safe and healthy during the next few months. If you have any concerns about the temple or any other issues, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Roland Ikuta

## Minister's Report AGM 2021

The year 2020 started with New Year Service called *Shu-Sho-E*. Twenty-four members and friends gathered together to celebrate the new year in front of Amida Buddha. The continued *Explore Buddhism* session was held on January 4. On January 8, I went to the Lethbridge Correctional Centre during my regular visit there to see and talk with some inmates.

During February I attended the Interfaith Panel discussion at the Church of the Latter Day Saints. The annual Ho-onko and Monthly Memorial Service together with New Year Party were held. I continued the monthly visitation of senior homes and Chinook Regional Hospital. Nirvana Day, together with the Pet Appreciation Service were observed. All programs were smoothly held like the previous year.

After the March Monthly Memorial Service and BTSA General Meeting on Mar. 1 and the Eshinni and Kakushinni's Memorial Service on Mar. 8, the Alberta Government declared the COVID-19 pandemic, and large gatherings of more than 250 people were cancelled. On Mar. 16, the Calgary mayor declared a provincial emergency due to the covid -19 pandemic. The BTSA stopped all activities. A minister was not able to conduct any funeral service in-person. Zoom meetings began.

Hanamatsuri was cancelled, and the annual picnic was done via Zoom. During May, *Dharma: My Guiding Light #14* was published. The JSBTC Living Dharma Centre purchased 200 copies.

The annual Obon Memorial Service was held, divided into four gatherings; 50 people at each service on July 18 and 19, morning service and afternoon service.

On Sept. 11, I was honored to officiate at the ground-breaking ceremony for the Nikka Yuko Bunka Centre with the presence of the Japanese consul and Lethbridge Mayor Chris Spearman. During the same month Nishi Hongwanji presented me with a Commendation of Appreciation for 50 years of ministry in Canada.

The telephone conversation with the inmates of Grande Cache was instituted.

In November, due to the increasing number of COVID-19 cases in Lethbridge, BTSA suspended further all in-person activities. Funeral service was only conducted at individuals' homes or funeral homes. Virtual Explore Buddhism sessions were set every Saturday via Zoom. On Dec. 19, Rev. Henry Adams' talk sponsored by JSBTC was held through Zoom. On Dec. 31, the 17th annual *Joya-no-Kane* (Year End Bell Ringing) was cancelled because of the pandemic.

The year 2020 was not an easy year for everyone to cope with, with the unprecedented events affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. It was also a sad time for those who lost their loved ones. During the year we lost 24 members and friends. We extend our sympathies to the bereaved families.

Our newsletter Hikari continued being published every month (July and August being a combined issue) and our board has continually contacted the general memberships by phone and Zoom as much as possible. I felt our temple was more than ever united through Zoom, podcasts, YouTube, our website and the internet.

In gassho,

Humbly submitted by Yasuo Izumi, minister

# Nirvana Day & Pet Appreciation Service

Jeff Haines, BTSA ministerial assistant, gave the following Dharma message during the Feb. 21 virtual service on Zoom.



This reading is from Shakyamuni's closing words in the Larger Sutra. The Buddha said to Maitreya: "If there is a person who, having heard the Name of Amida Buddha, dances with joy and says it even once, know that person receives the great benefit and, as such, is furnished with the unexcelled virtues."

I'd like to extend my greetings to everyone that has joined us today. I'd like to briefly introduce myself if you don't know who I am. My name is Jeff Haines I am a ministerial assistant at the temple and I live in Brooks. So these virtual services work well for me because I usually have to drive an hour and half to attend services or functions.

Today's service holds special meaning to not only Shin Buddhists but several branches of Buddhism. Today is Nirvana Day. It is celebrated by some on Feb. 8 and others on Feb. 15. This is the day that the earthly Shakyamuni Buddha passed away. It is thus seen as the day in which he achieved Parinirvana or complete Nirvana. Although he attained enlightenment and became a Buddha during his lifetime he was still subject to birth and death as a human being. So on this day although he died, his teachings, which embody the spirit of Buddhahood, are eternal and live on. We observe this day to reflect on his life and teachings.

Also, about 10 years ago Izumi Sensei added Pet Appreciation to this particular service as it is said that on the final day of Shakyamuni's life even the animals came to bid him farewell. I think it is a beautiful gesture on Izumi Sensei's part to include this as so many people in the world rely on the companionship of animals. Pets truly do demonstrate the great compassion and non-judgemental nature of a true Buddhist.

It can be difficult, at times, to hear the Name of Amida Buddha and dance with joy. With the COVID pandemic raging on these times we are living in are causing much suffering not only here but obviously throughout the world. The Buddha taught us this in the first noble truth that life was dukkha or consisted of suffering. We suffer from anxiety. We suffer from the anxiety of wishing this all to end. We suffer from the anxiety of wanting all to be back to normal. There is much reason to suffer from this terrible time in our lives. Dancing with joy seems to be the last thing I feel like doing.

Which leads us to the Buddha's second noble truth that there is a cause of this suffering. The Buddha taught that it lies in our own ignorance. The root cause of our current situation lies in the fact that viruses can jump from animal to humans. This undeniable fact though is not the cause of our suffering. The cause of our suffering as humans lies in how we react to such a reality. Our inability to accept many of the things that are necessary for us to do to overcome this pandemic. The restrictions required cause

suffering but also alleviate suffering right at the same time. We must stay away from each other to minimize the suffering of potentially getting the virus, but at the same time this causes suffering because we cannot see each other.

But the Buddha said there was a third noble truth. That of cessation of suffering, a path to eliminate our suffering or at least reduce it. As it is difficult for our ignorant selves to fully embrace the fourth truth of the Noble Eight Fold Path. But it is in this truth we can draw upon to continue to push through these difficult times.

I would like to draw your attention to Right Views and Right Thought as two of the paths that we can put to use as we move forward. Right Views focuses on attempting to keep ourselves free of prejudice, superstition and delusion. To see clearly the true nature of life. I believe this will be an important one moving forward as there is a lot of misinformation being pushed surrounding what should and shouldn't be done during Covid. It will be important that each and everyone of us continues to try and remind ourselves of Right View and overcome the potential delusion of misinformation. It will also be important that we address others' delusions and push them towards the Right View with great compassion and patience. It will be with our ability to maintain Right View that we will survive such a daunting pandemic.

The other path which will be of help is Right Thought. This path focuses on each of us turning away from the negative aspects of this world and directing our thoughts towards positive thoughts and actions. It would be obvious if I discussed how important it will be to focus on how we think properly in dealing with Covid and maybe staying positive despite it all. But in keeping with Pet Appreciation Day I would like to share how my family acquired a puppy shortly before the pandemic in Canada began and how it added joy to our lives. My family was returning from visiting family over the winter break and we were to pick up a Yorkshire Terrier from a breeder just south of Edmonton. Going through the process of training a puppy is never easy in the best of times, but shortly after arriving home our whole lives changed and we were largely in lock down. It was hard to turn away from the anxiety and stress of what was happening, but this little puppy, who turned out to be larger than he was supposed to be, gave great joy to my family. Being cute and playful he helped all of us find positive thoughts despite a very stressful and ever changing situation.

It is up to each of us to find those small joys in our lives which will help encourage Right Thoughts and also continue to see clearly that to push forward in stressful times will require each of us to hold Right Views. Each of us can turn to the Eight Fold Path for direction in our daily lives.

So if we return to the above quotation in the Larger Sutra. The Buddha said to Maitreya, "If there is a person who, having heard the Name of Amida Buddha, dances with joy and says it even once, know that person receives the great benefit and, as such, is furnished with the unexcelled virtues."

Shinran Shonin saw the great benefit of the wisdom of Shakyamuni Buddha's teachings. He knew it was not easy for us to see things clearly, but that through the realization of *shinjin* and reciting the Name of Amida Buddha with gratitude we could at least work towards great compassion for all.

I ask you now to join me in *gassho* with your hands together as one, as we recognize the great potential and compassion of Amida Buddha. While recognizing on Nirvana Day the wonderful teachings left to us from Shakyamuni Buddha.

Namo Amida Butsu

Jeff Haines

## Audiovisual Report AGM 2021

**The A/V Committee has met monthly by Zoom throughout 2020.**

**Members:** Roland Ikuta, Ross Jacobs, Kynan Gordon, Arjan Gill, John Dubbelboer, Bob Muskovich, Jeff Haines, Rachelle Muskovich, Izumi Sensei, Brenda Ikuta.

**Multimedia promotion of the temple:** A contract with Arjan Gill (Gill Productions) was approved at the March 2020 board meeting with a start date of April 2020. Itemization of the projects agreed upon included:

- 1. Social Media Re-brand:** Update all the social pages with new content and images that match the temple's brand identity.
- 2. Podcasts:** drive the production of a bi-weekly podcast which will dive into Jodo Shinshu related topics that can be discussed by people of all walks of life. Moderated by a variety of temple members.
- 3. Website Content Re-brand:** create custom content and images for the BTSA website.
- 4. Constant Content Capture and Creation for Social Media (photo and video):** capturing events throughout the year. Present for special events and turn that captured content into bite sized pieces that can be shared on temple social media.
- 5. Larger Video Project:** work with the AV committee to pursue at least two larger video projects throughout the year. For example: an introduction to the Buddhist Temple of Southern Alberta.
- 6. Live streaming of Sunday Service:** assist the temple with streamlining and beginning the live stream process for Sunday Service.

**Mid-contract evaluation was completed in October 2020 with satisfaction expressed from both the A/V Committee and BTSA Board. This evaluation acknowledged that the COVID-19 restrictions altered the initial focus and priorities of the contract. Gill Productions was relied upon for flexible and reliable consultation on how to best meet the needs of the sangha in a dramatically changing world. Sensei, temple leadership, members and the national and international sangha have all played a crucial role in**

**sharing and hearing the dharma in a myriad of new ways.**

### 2020 Activities and Current Projects:

- Services via Zoom:
  - Relied heavily upon this format at the beginning of the pandemic; many people in the temple, Sensei and funeral homes had a steep learning curve; connection disruptions were common.
  - Since the Christmas break, this is the format the temple has been using for Shotoski and regular services because it allows an element of interaction.
  - Building a bank of suitable audiovisual content is ongoing (e.g. kansho, music, lyrics, sutras, videos)
  - Links are made available through the Hikari newsletter and BTSA website.
- Increased temple WIFI bandwidth (July):
  - This upgrade allowed the ability to post live feed through platforms like YouTube and Facebook
  - Obon and a couple of funerals were done with livestreaming.
  - Thanks to Ross Jacobs who is currently the only A/V operator with this ability.
- Pre-recorded services uploaded to YouTube Channel:
  - This format was relied upon when safety precautions were most restrictive.
  - A number of services and a memorial service was provided in this format.
  - 4 temple members currently have the abilities to record/edit/upload.
  - See "Buddhist Temple of Southern Alberta YouTube channel [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmr9wf\\_4Rpwg4IT2JyevVg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmr9wf_4Rpwg4IT2JyevVg)
- Website reconstruction: <https://www.thebtsa.com>
  - Captured images in March prior to all activities being cancelled.
  - Upgraded to a higher level / capacity because it was slow to open.
  - Funeral section of the website: updated procedures/guidelines following pandemic restrictions; included oshoko demonstration for families.
  - Build Your Family Service webpage: project done in conjunction with Calgary Buddhist Temple and BTSA Dharma School leadership.
  - Added ability to pay online.
  - Banners now allow members to click on the links to go straight to services.
  - Analysis of website visits indicates an increase since the reconstruction.
- Facebook presence
  - Increasing bank of photos and video clips to attach to content and attract viewership.
  - Content has been reduced during the pandemic.
  - Current primary use is to link viewers to website content and online learning opportunities.
- Equipment:
  - Purchased additional laptop to help with livestreaming.
  - Two extra routers and a switch were donated to handle livestreaming, allow internet access for attendees and handle requirements of HVAC and solar panels.
  - Training people to operate the new system physically and online:

- o 7 volunteers with varying levels of comfort
- o Further training was stalled due to pandemic restrictions.
- o Building skills to operate temple A/V system for capturing and recording services, uploading recordings to YouTube, host/co-host Zoom sessions and the ability to livestream services.

#### 7. Content

- a. Branding: Maya Ichikawa and Arjan Gill coordinate efforts to unify the look of the temple online, in print, and through social media.
- b. Music – Andrew Ichikawa is assisting with ensuring adequate recordings are available of familiar and less familiar gathas (accompanied and unaccompanied).
- c. Video: Arjan has filmed 10 Coping with COVID-19 messages, oshoko demonstrations, 2 of Sensei's family service dharma talks
- d. Slideshows for service: Rachele Muskovich is assisting with standardizing these slides for easier and more consistent productions reflecting BTSA branding.
- e. Building a library of video and photos is ongoing

#### 8. Podcasts: <https://www.thebtsa.com/podcast>

- Season 1 had 10 episodes: temple members spoke on topics such as teachers, buddhist studies, COVID-19, crime and punishment, Obon, 50 years of being a minister in Canada, music and sports.
- Season 2 will continue to include interviews of temple members as well as guests from afar: acupuncture, reiki, grieving and loss, emergency medical response, neuroscience.

#### 9. Introduction Video

- This project had to be rethought numerous times because of the ongoing pandemic restrictions.
- Script is being done currently which requires minimal interactions in an indoor space yet still appropriate in non-pandemic times

#### 10. Social Connections

- Zoom Chat: members can meet and catch up with each other when they are not allowed to gather at the temple; Roland provides updates on temple activities; members can ask questions and provide feedback on temple operations; additionally they have opportunities to practice and feel more comfortable with life online.
- Temple Picnic via Zoom

#### 11. Collaborative efforts with Calgary Buddhist Temple:

Zoom Naikan Reflection; developing Dharma School Materials online.

#### 12. Application for Relaunch Grant

- Submitted in December 2020 covering the time period of April 2020 through April 2021.
- Claimed costs of revamping Arjan's contract to assist with pandemic response, upgrades for WIFI, website, and storage, and the purchase of a podcast subscription and an upgraded camera which will allow more people to participate comfortably in A/V operations.
- No word of approval to date.

## ECOSangha Report AGM 2021

This report documents our progress in 2020 toward becoming an ecoSangha. Thanks to the members of the BTSA and the board for their strong support over the past year and congratulations to all of you for taking a giant leap into the unknown. Please know that this has been and will continue to have been the right decision.

EcoSangha is the realization that we must be mindful we are part of Mother Earth and that our actions must help to sustain our environment. In practical terms the BTSA has done well, particularly in the face of COVID-19.

Our accomplishments include:

- Installation of sufficient solar panels for power net-neutrality
- Close monitoring of our use of the HVAC system
- Replacing high pressure light standards with efficient LED lights
- Replacing soffit pot lamps with new, efficient retrofit LED lamps when the existing pot lamp bulb was burnt out.
- Studying how to eliminate single-use plastics, including water bottles and styrofoam food trays. The latter is a work in progress.
- Supplying drinking water as a means to discourage single-use plastic water bottles. Temple visitors are encouraged to fill their own water bottles or to use washable glasses.
- Being mindful to always reduce, re-use and recycle.

Although the temple was locked down over most of the year and we do not yet have a full year of data from the solar panels, we have enough experience to forecast that we will generate enough income from the sale of generated power to the grid to greatly reduce our overall utility bill in the future.

Our next step in the ecoSangha process should be to recruit interested members to guide and oversee the direction we are taking. There are a number of web sites that can be reviewed to gain experience with the concept but there is a deficit in defining how the ecoSangha concept can actually be put into practice in terms of actual changes. The BTSA could become a leader in defining some of the aspects of ecoSangha. A page on the BTSA website would be a welcome addition. In terms of leadership, the BTSA is also in a good position to get involved in ecoSangha advocacy, locally and nationally.

The following is a short list of some ecoSangha web sites:

<https://oneearthsangha.org/>

<https://www.ecosangha.net/>

<https://www.buddhisttemplesandiego.org/ecosangha>

<http://boundlessinmotion.org/>

David Major

# Dharma School Report AGM 2021

Ministers/Ministerial Assistants and Dharma School Leaders from Calgary Buddhist Temple and Buddhist Temple of Southern met in November, 2020 to discuss resources for young families in the temple. Much of our attention in 2020 had been given to the dramatic swings of opening and closing the temples and getting the technology and skills in place to move activities online. At the same time, families were navigating the new world of online schooling, periods of isolating at home and added work stress.

Prior to the pandemic, Ministers and Dharma School Leaders observed that children, youth and parents lead very active lives or they don't have access to a temple nearby, making regular attendance at Dharma School difficult at the best of times. Creating online resources could have post-pandemic value as well:

- a. helping parents teach their children and youth about Jodo Shinshu concepts and rituals
- b. providing Dharma School Teachers with resources, materials, examples for lessons
- c. providing information on Buddhism in general and Jodo Shinshu Buddhism specifically to an interested public audience

To this end, we have been working on two projects:

The first is a dynamic webpage: **“Build Your Family Service”**. This page captures common components of a temple service and is geared towards young families: quieting oneself to the sound of the bell, short sutra chanting, basic recitations, offering incense, simple songs, and short dharma talks. In addition, one would find a variety of activities and resource links based on the dharma talks and background information on rituals.

The second project creates a variety of materials and activities for children and youth based on the theme of “shoes”.

**“Shoes Muse”** uses a Jodo Shinshu Buddhist perspective in focussing on a common object to teach children about self-reflection, empathy, resilience, doing your best in all things, interconnectivity, and taking care of the planet. This project can be found on the Build Your Family Service webpage with the potential to add new themes in the future. Wherever possible, Dharma School children / youth contribute to the creation of the material.

Please see the most current activity on this webpage:

<https://www.thebtsa.com/byfs>

This collaborative project is intended to be shared with any family who might benefit from the material. We welcome your feedback; you can direct questions and comments to Brenda Ikuta at [btsaboard@gmail.com](mailto:btsaboard@gmail.com)

In Gassho,

Dharma School Leaders  
Calgary Buddhist Temple / BTSa



THE BUDDHIST TEMPLE OF SOUTHERN ALBERTA  
**CHILDREN & YOUTH**

## Mean Words

One day, a boy came to Sensei. He was sobbing. Sensei gently put his hand on his shoulder and asked, “What’s the matter?”

The boy said, “One of my friends said mean words to me.”

“Did you fight back?” asked Sensei.

“No, I didn’t. I just ignored him,” said the boy.

“Very good. A courageous boy doesn’t fight. Well, next time remember this story about the Buddha.”

Then Sensei told the following story: The Buddha also received mean words from a stranger one day. The Buddha told the stranger, “Listen, if you receive a gift which you don’t like, you may not accept it. Then to whom does the gift belong?”

The stranger said, “It belongs to the one who gave it.”

The Buddha told the stranger with a smile, “Well, you gave me a gift of mean words which I do not accept. It is yours.”

Rev. Yasuo Izumi





# BUDDHIST TEMPLE OF SOUTHERN ALBERTA

470 - 40th Street South, Lethbridge, AB T1J 3Z5 | 403.327.1260 | [www.thebtsa.com](http://www.thebtsa.com)

## Annual General Meeting Agenda

April 4st, 2021, after Sunday Service  
Via zoom or teleconference

1. Gassho
2. Approval of the Agenda\*
3. Approval of AGM Minutes of March 1, 2020\*
4. Chairman's Report\*
5. Treasurer's Report – Review Engagement\*
6. Minister's Report\*
7. Committee Reports
  - a. Dharma School\*
  - b. AV Committee\*
  - c. EcoSangha\*
  - d. Report about our investment account (Kevin Sassa)
8. Recommended Membership Dues/Donation for 2022: \$100 per individual
9. Election of Board Members – staggered terms from 2019 through 2021
  - a. Board Members still having one-year remaining are: Roland Ikuta (Chairman), Kynan Gordon (Vice Chair), Rachelle Muskovich, Andrew Ichikawa
  - b. Board Members who are at the end of their two-year term are: Trent Takeyasu (Treasurer), Wayne Tsukishima, Jeff Haines, Sheila Oishi, Valerie Boras (Secretary), & Bob Muskovich and Eichi Tanaka (Building Maintenance)
10. Other Business
  - a. Motions from the floor
11. Next BTSA AGM meeting – March 6th, 2022
12. Gassho and Adjournment

\* Included in the March 2021 issue of the Hikari and/or available on BTSA's website [thebtsa.com](http://thebtsa.com)



## **“JODO SHINSHU GONSHIKI” – “JODO SHINSHU RITUALS”**

**REVEREND YOSHIMICHI OUCHI**

**THE HOW, WHY, WHEN & WHERE OF**

**GASSHO, OSHOKO**

**TRADITIONAL NAIJIN (ALTAR) ARRANGEMENT  
DEMYSTIFYING CHANTING SUTRAS AND GATHAS**



**PART 1: GASSHO, OSHOKO, SUNDAY MARCH 28, 2021**

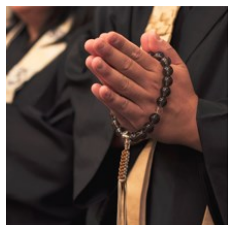
**7pm EST, 6pm CST, 5pm MST, 4pm PST**

**Part 2: Obutsudan and Offerings – TBA    Part 3: Chanting – TBA**

Pre-registration is required. To register see registration link at bottom.

A graduate of Gonshiki Shidosho in Kyoto, Rev.Ouchi received his licence of Tokubetsu Homuin in 2016 and is Canada's only Ritual Specialist. Rev. Ouchi is currently head minister of the Toronto Buddhist Church.

### **Part 1—Gassho and Oshoko—March 28, 2021**



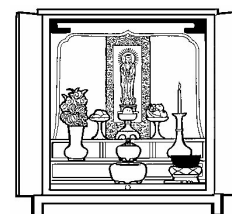
**7pm EST, 6pm CST, 5pm MST, 4pm PST**

Do you know why we traditionally place our palms together (Gassho) when we bow or when we offer incense (Oshoko) to Amida Buddha? Why do we burn incense in front of the Buddha during the service? Rev. Ouchi will teach you how to do Gassho and Oshoko in Jodo Shinshu formal style. Q & A will follow the lecture.

### **Part 2—Obutsudan and Offerings—TBA**

Do you know how to properly set up your home altar (Obusudan)? Do you know what types of offerings you should prepare? Rev. Ouchi will demonstrate how to set up the Obutsudan and will also explain what the Temple's offerings mean in the teaching of the Buddha.

Q & A will follow the lecture.



### **Part 3—Chanting—TBA**

Chanting a sutra or verses during the Buddhist service is the most important ritual in the service. You will learn why it is important to chant. Rev Ouchi will explain the meaning of chanting and how to chant.

Q & A will follow the lecture.

**Presented by Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temples of Canada's Living Dharma Centre and the JSBTC Women's Federation.**

Register in advance by visiting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwkde6upjwqG9A-062SsE-Fua56cG3ImTI4>

# 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.

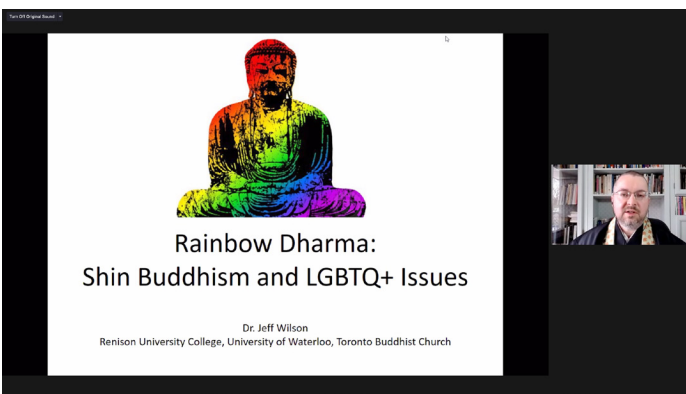
Please send this form and your remittance to:  
Buddhist Temple of Southern Alberta Treasurer  
470 40th Street South  
Lethbridge, AB, T1J 3Z5

## \*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 BSA 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!**

## JSBTC Lecture Series



On February 27th, Dr. Jeff Wilson, professor of Religious Studies and East Asian Studies at Renison University College (University of Waterloo) presented "Rainbow Dharma: Shin Buddhism and LGBTQ+ Issues in Canada and America." Dr. Wilson received his tokudo ordination as a Jodo Shinshu minister in 2012, and assists the Toronto Buddhist Temple.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Condolences

**Kazuo Kay Kitagawa** ((94) passed away on Jan. 30, 2021



Membership  
at Feb. 21 – 52

### Hoonko Donations

February 2021

Richard & Val Boras  
Judy Fukushima  
Shinako (Sheila) Higa  
Yutaka & Chiyomi Matsuno  
Jim & Joan Nakagawa  
Mitsuko Oga  
Setsuko Ohno  
Tomiko Shono  
Masaye Tanaka  
Clifford Thomas  
Joe & Sumiko Tomiyama

**Total - \$640**

### Shotsuki Donations

February 2021

Dorene (Keiko) Gordon  
Yoko Nishimura  
Heidi Oishi  
Joe & Mary Shigehiro  
Emily Stitt  
Robert & Judy Takaguchi  
Jim & Irene Tanaka  
Joe & Sumiko Tomiyama

**Total - \$1,645**

### Other Donations

February 2021

CanadaHelps.Org  
Hamilton Buddhist Temple  
Rumiko Ibuki  
Akira Ichikawa  
Roland & Brenda Ikuta  
Rev. Yasuo & Sachi Izumi  
Setsuko Kikuchi  
Teiji Nakamura  
Keith & Kathleen Kaoru Turnbull

**Total - \$888**

### Funeral Donations

Tak & Yoko Tsujita

**Total Donations - \$3,213**

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.

Wilson Sensei spoke of LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (or questioning) and others) issues in light of Amida Buddha's great compassion. Themes included a brief history of LGBTQ+ in Buddhism; how Shinran can be understood as a queer Buddhist icon; what resources Buddhism provides for understanding LGBTQ+ identities and issues in a positive manner; and why Jodo Shinshu has the best Buddhist record on LGBTQ+ concerns.

The Zoom session was recorded and can be viewed until April 26th, 2021 via the link below, or visit [www.jsbtc.ca](http://www.jsbtc.ca) for further information about the series.

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1b1ccUAVXFcMgQQJx-c00QDE7nEeBlwqO?usp=sharing>

The next lecture in the series occurs on April 17, arranged by BCA Center for Buddhist Education. Further information will be provided in the upcoming April Hikari.