

Hikari the Light



May 2021

The only thing necessary is that we obtain a firm basis, the most important foundation for our life. — Manshi Kiyozawa (1863-1903)

Nearly 2600 years ago, Siddhartha Gautama, a prince of the Shakya in Northern India, present-day Nepal, left the world, abandoning his family, title, wealth to seek the truth of life. After six years of struggles he discovered the truth of life with the power of wisdom. He was then at the age of 35 and returned to the world he had left. People called him Gautama Buddha or Shakyamuni Buddha, a wise person of the Shakya tribe. Thereafter, he travelled in northern India on foot and taught the way to become an awakened one. The Buddha taught the way to remove suffering is to practice the eightfold path which can be summarized to keep precepts, practice concentration and cultivate wisdom. Buddha's disciples, monks and nuns worked studiously day and night to remove the cause of their suffering. It was not an easy path but extremely difficult to practice to keep precepts, to do concentration and cultivate wisdom, sincerely and honestly for 24/7. They were really, I say, professional monks and nuns. We ordinary people are incapable of practicing these activities like them. However, the Buddha's compassionate eyes moved toward the ordinary people whose minds were mired deeply in the world of delusion and suffering.

One day, Buddha's primary attendant, Ananda, noticed Buddha's countenance was particularly pure and brilliant. The Buddha was filled with gladness and serenity. Ananda had never seen Buddha's face as noble as this. He asked the Buddha, Why? The Buddha said, "Your question is excellent. Listen well." Then the Buddha explained,

"The Buddha had appeared in this world and expounded the teaching of Enlightenment, seeking to liberate not only selected but also the multitudes of living beings by bestowing upon them *namo amida butsu*, a call of Amida, infinite wisdom and boundless compassion, that is true and real. Rare is it to encounter and rare to behold Amida!"

Furthermore, Shakyamuni Buddha said, "In the future, all the sutras will become extinct. However, out of compassion and pity, I will ensure that the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* (Larger Sutra) alone remains for a further one hundred years. Those sentient beings who encounter this sutra will attain emancipation in accordance with their aspiration." Here, "one hundred" which is a "full number" meaning forever and ever.

In other words, Shakyamuni Buddha tells us, "Hold the *Sutra of Immeasurable Life* and rely on the vow of Amida who is always and constantly calling you with *namo amida butsu* amid the world of delusion and suffering." The historical Buddha entered into final Nirvana at the age of 80. Almost 1500 years later, Shinran, a religious genius who was born in Kyoto Japan, wrote: Shakyamuni and Amida are our father and mother, / full of love and compassion for us, / Guiding us through various skillful means, / They bring us to awaken the supreme shinjin – awakening of entrusting heart.

Beyond time and place we, here and now, put our palms together in one and recite *namo amida butsu* in gratitude. How wonderful it is! In the *nembutsu*, *namo amida butsu*, we are one with Shakyamuni, Amida and those who followed the teachings.

Indeed, we are nurtured every day by the great compassion of Shakyamuni and Amida to be born in the realm of peace and serenity. Let's walk our life each day to the fullest with deep gratitude. *Namo amida butsu*

Yasuo Izumi, Minister
Buddhist Temple of Southern Alberta

天国それとも浄土?

最近の日本のニュースを聞いていますと、どなたかが亡くなると、「天国に行くた」、という表現が多いことに気づきます。浄土という言葉がなくなってしまったのか、と思わせるほどです。お寺でのお話では、お浄土という言葉が、いつも使われているにもかかわらず、何故このようになったのでしょうか。ひよとすると天国は日常語、浄土は何か特別な言葉と考えられるようになったのでしょうか。あるいは「天国」という言葉の響きがよいのでしょうか。

仏教では六道輪廻の迷いの世界の最上にあるのが天国です。思い通りに物事が運び、時には「有頂天」という天国のような世界になるのです。それでも迷いには変わりありません。しばらくすれば落ちるのです。

浄土の「浄」という字は「水」と「争」(あらそい)の合成語。つまり争いが水に流されている状態で、お浄土は「安らぎの世界」ということです。お浄土は阿弥陀様の願いの力によって、私たちのために用意された「安らぎの世界」なのです。苦しみ、悩み、悲しみの中にあっても、阿弥陀様の願いを聞く人には、日々お浄土に支えられ、命終われば帰っていただける世界なのです。阿弥陀様のお浄土の世界を、いよいよ聞かせて頂きましょう。

合掌 泉康雄

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403.327.1260 • www.theBTSA.com

UPDATE from the Board of Directors

During the Hanamatsuri service, a small number of in-person attendees was allowed. Unfortunately, there is an increase in the number of infections and concerns about the spread of variant strains of the COVID virus. Given this, the board has decided to stop in-person attendance at our services and other activities once again. The re-launch strategy will be reassessed at the May Board meeting to determine plans for June and Obon. During this suspension, the Odori group (Mondays) and Explore Buddhism group (Saturdays at 10:30 AM) continue to meet via zoom. If you would like to join the Odori group, please contact Pat Sassa (sas7@telus.net) and if you would like to join the Explore Buddhism group, contact Robert Muskovich at (bobmuskovich@gmail.com).

The BTSA podcast continues to be well received. We have an exciting second season planned. This season started with an interview with Candice Shibata Sensei on grief and Kaitlyn Mascher-Mace sensei working as a paramedic during COVID.

Due to ongoing technical difficulties with the zoom format, our monthly Shotsuki services will be provided via the YouTube Channel. This is a more manageable format for our technical people to produce and requires fewer volunteers. Although the zoom services did give a more in-person touch, we have found small numbers attending in person and much larger numbers watching our services in the recorded format. For May and ongoing, we will have live production of our services on our YouTube channel, which can also be viewed as a recorded version. Please click on the link below or go to our web page and find the yellow banner to lead you to the service directly. If you subscribe to our BTSA Chanel, it will automatically load our content when you click on YouTube.
https://youtu.be/_ihI4p-XSE0

The new board of directors for the BTSA had its first meeting in April. Members who have agreed to stay on are Wayne Tsukishima, Andrew Ichikawa, Sheila Oishi, Rachelle Muskovich, Robert Muskovich, Jeff Haines, and new members are Anthony Richardson and Sachi Scharf. Staying on the board in their executive positions are Roland Ikuta (Chairperson), Val Boras (Secretary), Trent Takeyasu (treasurer), and Kynan Gordon (Vice-Chair). Thank you to these dedicated members of the BTSA for stepping up filling these vital roles.

Our April financial report noted that the proceeds from our volunteer casino date (held in Nov. 2020) and our successful grant application from the Provincial government for Faith-based organizations were acquired in March 2021. While these funds will help with our deficit budget, the lack of fundraising activities is an ongoing concern for the BTSA.

If you have any concerns or issues about temple activities, please do not hesitate to contact Roland Ikuta (403-317-0078) or any members of our board.

Linking Gotan-e and Mother's Day

On May 21, we celebrate Shinran Shonin's Birthday called (Gotan-e). Shonin means "holy person" given by his followers. Shinran (his name of childhood was *Matsuwakamaru*) was born in 1173 in Kyoto, Japan. This means that the year 2021 is his 848th birthday. How many people are celebrated by so many people for such a long time?

When Shinran was eight years old, his mother died. He must have been very sad and lonely. I am sure mother's kind image is always in his mind throughout his life. We have Mother's Day during May every year and we should not take for granted to have mother with us.

Let's briefly look into Shinran's life.

When Shinran was nine years old he received Buddhist ordination and was given the dharma name, Hannen. Thereafter, he spent 20 years on Mt. Hiei and studied and practiced studiously. But he was not able to find peace of mind.

Descending Mt. Hiei, he started to listen to Master Honen's Dharma talk. Master Honen taught all kinds of people--farmers, fishermen, samurai, men and women--saying "Regardless who we are, recite the nembutsu, *namo amida butsu*, then you will be liberated because this is the vow of Amida." Honen gave Shinran his dharma name, *Shakku*. Shinran took refuge in Amida's Vow.

The nembutsu group taught by Honen gradually grew popular and large. Jealous monks together with a retired Emperor prohibited the nembutsu teaching. Honen was exiled to *Tosa* (*Kouchi* Pref.) and Shinran to *Echigo* (*Niigata* Pref.). In *Echigo*, it is said that Shinran was married to *Eshin-ni*.

Shinran began to teach the nembutsu for the local people. It is around this time he added *Gu-Toku* (a foolish and short-haired monk) meaning "neither monk nor layman" to his name Shinran.

In 1211, Shinran received a pardon and the following year his teacher Honen died. Shinran and his family moved to the *Kanto* area where he spent another 20 years and began to write. At the age of 60 he

returned to Kyoto to finish writing his masterpiece, *Kyo-gyo-shn-sho* (Teaching, Practice, Entrusting and Realization). He continued to write many *wasan* (Japanese poems). By the age of 90 his health had deteriorated and he passed away reciting the *nembutsu, namo amida butsu*, an expression of his gratefulness to the compassion of Amida Buddha. (Y.I.)



Composite of BTSA statues of Shinran in Front Hall

“JODO SHINSHU GONSHIKI” – “JODO SHINSHU RITUALS”

REVEREND YOSHIMICHI OUCHI



**THE HOW, WHY, WHEN & WHERE OF
TRADITIONAL NAIJIN (ALTAR) ARRANGEMENT
DEMYSTIFYING CHANTING SUTRAS AND GATHAS**

Part 2: TRADITIONAL NAIJIN (ALTAR) ARRANGEMENT

Sunday May 16, 2021

7pm ET, 6pm CT, 5pm MT, 4pm PT



Part 3: DEMYSTIFYING CHANTING SUTRAS AND GATHAS

Sunday June 13, 2021

7pm ET, 6pm CT, 5pm MT, 4pm PT

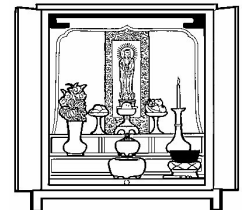
Pre-registration is required.

A graduate of Gonsiki 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 2—TRADITIONAL NAIJIN (ALTAR) ARRANGEMENT—Sunday May 16, 2021

7pm ET, 6pm CT, 5pm MT, 4pm PT

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.

Advance registration required: <https://www.google.com/url?q=https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUlc-2oqD4jE9cU8DBP46cPgXgn6iqAVoLK>

Part 3—DEMYSTIFYING CHANTING SUTRAS AND GATHAS—Sunday June 13, 2021

7pm ET, 6pm CT, 5pm MT, 4pm PT

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.

Advance registration required: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAsf--trTlqGNwohRHdzFZH3PZTx-2dNai>

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

A Story for Children

A tiny sparrow was living in town and absolutely happy because there were many places where he was able to enjoy and eat freely. But one day, he saw a large swan on the lake in the town. "Wow, this swan is not only large but beautiful!"

So, the sparrow approached the swan and said, "I think you must be the happiest bird in the world!" But the swan said, "Well, I thought so, too, until I met a parrot. The parrot I met had two beautiful colorful feathers and speaks the human language. I speak only bird language. He must be the happiest bird."

The tiny sparrow then visited the parrot. "Hello!" said the sparrow. The parrot replied, "Konnichiwa!". "So, you speak the human language and have two beautiful colorful feathers. You are the happiest bird." The parrot said, "I thought I was the happiest bird until I saw the peacock. You know, the peacock has not only beautiful feathers but also sings with a nice voice."

The tiny sparrow went to the zoo to approach the peacock. Surely enough, the peacock had not only beautiful and colorful feathers but also a nice voice. The tiny sparrow told the peacock, "You have so many colorful feathers and your voice is so beautiful. You must be the happiest bird in the whole world." The peacock sadly said, "Perhaps it is true. But because of my beautiful feathers and nice voice I am entrapped in this small cage."

For the first time the tiny sparrow reflected on himself and thought, "Well, at least I have food, friends and can fly anywhere. Why do I have to compare myself with others? I think I am all right as I am." (Y.I.)



The following EchoSangha article by David Major is from the Lethbridge Herald, April 15 (pg. 7).

Buddhism and environmental responsibility form EcoSangha

David Major

LETHBRIDGE INTERFAITH NETWORK

Part of a series of ongoing contributions from the Lethbridge Interfaith Network

Every meeting of the Lethbridge Interfaith Network, we participate in some group discussion about some topic of mutual interest. This past month, we discussed how our faith informs our beliefs and practices regarding changes happening in the climate. Our attention was collectively drawn to the Buddhist Temple and their inspiring response in creating an "EcoSangha" here in our community. We applaud their exemplary actions and the foundational beliefs from whence they spring. To this end, we asked them to share their journey with the greater community and present it to you as fodder for your own ideas in anticipation of Earth Day, April 22, 2021.

The Buddhist Temple of Southern Alberta (BTSA) dates back to 2007. Eight churches that have been in southern Alberta for over 100 years joined to form the BTSA. The congregation or the temple is called the Sangha.

Buddhism is all about self-reflection and to be responsible for our actions. Combine climate change with Buddhism and the natural result is EcoSangha. This is what we are trying at the BTSA. Our Mother Earth is suffering because of our actions. Making our Sangha an EcoSangha is how we are trying to ease Mother Earth's suffering.

Rev. Castro of Seattle came up with the concept. "To be a Buddhist is to be both an ecologist and a conservationist. Ecology is science and Buddhism goes beyond science. Based on the Four Noble Truths, Buddhists are working for a cure. This is why Buddhists are both ecologists and conservationists."

The Four Noble Truths are (1) suf-

fering, a characteristic of existence; (2) suffering is caused by craving desires; (3) suffering ends when we let go of the craving; and (4) the Eightfold Path is how to end the craving desires: right views, right thoughts, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right meditation.

The logo with the Buddha touching the Earth is a symbol of our ecological and conservation-oriented religion. Here is what the BTSA has done in our journey to be an EcoSangha. We had solar panels installed to be net-neutral for electricity, put in LED light standards and soffit LED lamps as the present ones burn out, stopped using single-use plastics, and we supply water for

visitors to fill their own water bottles or use washable glasses. We are trying to be mindful of ways to reduce, re-think, re-use and recycle.

Gratitude to the BTSA mem-

bers and Board for taking a giant leap into the unknown. The EcoSangha tells us we must be mindful that we are part of Mother Earth and our actions must help sustain our environment.

The BTSA temple has been locked down for most of 2020. We will generate enough income from sending power to the grid to greatly reduce our overall utility bill.

The next step in the EcoSangha journey is to recruit more members to guide the direction and spread the word that we can all make a difference. The BTSA can also share our EcoSangha experiences with other churches and temples locally, nationally and internationally.

Submitted by David Major for the Buddhist Temple of Southern Alberta <https://www.thebtsa.com> or on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/BuddhistTempleOfSouthernAlberta>

Follow us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/LethbridgeInterfaithNetwork>



In Touch With the Earth

Seattle EcoSangha Seminar



SPEAKERS

Wayne Suyenaga, Ph.D., Geology and Geophysics, has worked in geothermal, and oil and gas exploration. He is now a member of Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple.



Jason Wirth, Ph.D., Professor of Philosophy and Buddhism, Seattle University, and Soto Zen priest.



Reverend Emeritus Donald Castro, Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Minister, Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple.



The Seattle Buddhist Temple and Seattle Buddhist Study Center co-sponsored *In Touch with the Earth: Seattle Eco-Sangha Seminar*

It premiered online Sunday, April 18 in anticipation and celebration of Earth Day, and the recording can be found at: www.YouTube.com/seattlebuddhisttemple

Springtime in the BTSA Garden



Daffodils pop up in April to surround the statue of the Buddha in the BTSA Garden, signalling warm days ahead.

HANAMATSURI

The annual BTSA Hanamatsuri, held Apr. 4, in conjunction with the monthly memorial service, drew a small group of in-person participants in keeping with the limited attendance prescribed in advance by provincial restrictions as reflected in the photo to the right.

The annual event, celebrating the birth of Siddhartha Gautama in 556BCE Nepal, required prior registration to comply with the limitation during the pandemic. Siddhartha eventually achieved enlightenment as the historic Buddha, Shakyamuni, and spread the teaching throughout East Asia, and in time, the world.

Gift bags were prepared for children--since the event's usual focus is on the young--and were available for families with children to pick them up. The original notice indicated: "Children can celebrate Hanamatsuri during the week of April 4-11: they can visit the temple, say 'hi' to Sensei, make offerings at the Hanamido, and receive a treat bag and take-home craft (or get one delivered to them)." Four families chose to visit the temple by appointment throughout the week and the rest of the bags were delivered by parents and grandparents.



Emcee Bob Muskovich



Sensei's Dharma Message



Roland sensei assisting



Hanamido and Homyo Stand



Oshoko - Mrs. Tsujita

LDC Zoom Dharma School

Once monthly from 10:00 to 10:45am **PST** time on the **fourth Saturday of each month.**

Short Service lead by a JSBTC Minister or Assistant-Minister.
20-minute Dharma School Activity/lesson for three age categories:

- Grade Three and under
- Grade Four to Seven
- Grade Eight and up

Each month will have a different theme based on The Three Dharma Seals, The Four Noble Truths, The Eightfold Path and The Six Paramitas.

Upcoming Schedule:

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| Feb 20 | Everything is Changing (Impermanence) |
| Mar 27 | Everything Depends on Everything Else (Interdependence) |
| Apr 25 | (Sunday) What does Nirvana Mean? |
| May 22 | Life is a Bumpy Road (First Noble Truth) |
| June 26 | Why Life can seem like a Bumpy Road (Second Noble Truth) |
| July 24 | How to Smooth the Bumpy Road (Third Noble Truth) |
| Aug 28 | Road Smoothing Directions from Shakyamuni Buddha (Fourth Noble Truth) |

Zoom passcode needed to access the Dharma School Service. *They will not be recorded.

Please contact brenda.ikuta63@gmail.com if you would like to be on our Dharma School email list. The Zoom link will be sent the week prior to each session.



Barb Ceron with son, Sebastian, and sister Renee pose with Sensei



Brandon & Austin above, and Maverick, left, enjoy treat bag goodies.
photos provided by their families

2021 Membership Form

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

Last Name: _____ First Names(s): _____

Last Name: _____ First Names(s): _____

Home Address: _____

City, Province, Postal Code: _____

Telephone No.: _____ Cell: _____

Email: _____

- Check to receive The Hikari newsletter by email only.

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

*Note

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

LET'S EXPAND THE CIRCLE OF THE DHARMA!

Membership
at April 24 – 101

Hanamatsuri Donations

April 2021

Richard & Valerie Boras
Dorene (Keiko) Gordon
Shinako (Sheila) Higa
Tomi Hisaoka
Rumiko Ibuki
Akira Ichikawa
Dr. Roland & Brenda Ikuta
Lily Kaga
Hiroshi Kitagawa
David & Valerie Kunimoto
Kinuko Matsuno
Yutaka & Chiyoji Matsuno
Sway & Toshiko Nishimura
Oga Mitsuko
Mitsuko Oga
Ken Ohno & Nancy Eng
Setsuko Ohno
Heidi Oishi
Tak & Jan Okamura
Hisae Price
Irene Sakamoto
Roy & Pat Sassa
Bob & Eiko Shigehiro
Joe & Mary Shigehiro
Joyce Shigehiro & Trevor Van Sluys
Shari Shigehiro & Craig McMahon

Tom & Mitsuko Shigehiro
Emily Stitt
Tomiko Sugimoto
Noris & Sachi Taguchi
Robert & Judy Takaguchi
Fugi Takeda
Eichi & Betty Tanaka
Glen & Pamela Tanaka
Masaye Tanaka
Clifford Thomas
George Tokuda
Jim, Marion & Shannon Tomiyama
Joe & Sumiko Tomiyama
Tak & Yoko Tsujita
Total - \$3,875.00

Shotsuki Hoyo Donations

April 2021

John M. & Rita Ritsuko Aoki
Kathy Cochrane
Michelle Demers
Tomi Hisaoka
Rumiko Ibuki
Shinya & Jayne Ichikawa
Dr. Roland & Brenda Ikuta
Christopher & Yumi Johnson
Lily Kaga
Hiroshi Kitagawa

David & Valerie Kunimoto
Yutaka & Chiyomi Matsuno
Mitsuko Oga
Ken Ohno & Nancy Eng
Setsuko Ohno
Hisae Price
Irene Sakamoto
Sachi Scharf
Emily Stitt
Harry Sugimoto
Tomiko Sugimoto
Robert & Judy Takaguchi
Masaye Tanaka
Clifford Thomas
Jim, Marion & Shannon Tomiyama
Joe & Sumiko Tomiyama
Keith & Kathleen Kaoru Turnbull
Total - \$2,110.75

Other Donations

April 2021

George & Catherine Fujita
Rev. Yasuo & Sachi Izumi
Michie Kawasaki
Reyko Nishiyama
Sachi Scharf
Harry Sugimoto
Total - \$570.00

Funeral Donations

April 2021

Floyd & Yoko Gillies
Lois Hattori
Eleanor Katakami
Karen Masuda & Christopher Pfiger
Karen Mizushima
Heidi Oishi
Tak & Jan Okamura
Evenlyn Osaka
Roy & Pat Sassa
Noris & Sachiko Taguchi
Total - \$1,410

Total Donations - \$7,965.75

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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Condolences

Kay (Kazue) Osaka (96) passed away on April 2, 2021



Summary of WF AGM, April 18th via Zoom

- Speaker was Rev. Hirano, who gave a presentation, "Life Studying to be a Minister During a Pandemic"
- Again this year temples will be asked to use Dana Day funds for a local charity.
- Motion for WF long term investments to move to "medium risk" to be the same as the JSBTC portfolio. Passed.
- Motion for WF to move GIC type investments to long term investment portfolio with a better rate of return potential. Greg, Susan and Myra tasked to work on this. Passed.
- Updated Policies and Procedures were presented and passed with minor edits.
- Discussion regarding WF adapting and being flexible due to COVID.
- All temples should get involved and host an interesting cooking, or even craft type workshop via Zoom with other WF members.

Donna Dubbelboer
BTSa WF representative