



The Buddhist Temple of Chicago BULLETIN



Volume 69, Number 7  April 2013 (2557 B.E.)

April Calendar of Events

Call 773-334-4661

Also visit www.budtempchi.org

Regular Sunday Services

Dharma Sunday School – Sundays (April 14 & April 28), 11am

Religious Service (English) – Sundays, 11am

Shotsuki Hoyo, Monthly Memorial Service – Sunday, April 7, 11am (English), 1pm (Japanese)

Special Services & Events

Hana Matsuri, Celebration of the historical Buddha's Birth, Sunday, April 14 at 11am

Education & Meditation

Intro to Buddhism – Call 773-334-4661 or visit budtempchi.org for schedule

Buddhism Study Class – Open to all, Wednesdays, 7pm

Meditation Sessions – Thurs evenings 7:30pm, Sun mornings 9am

Sutra Study Class – Open to all, 3rd Sundays (call temple to verify), 12:30pm till 2pm

Meetings & Socials

Asoka Society – 3rd Saturdays, 1pm

BTC Board – Sun, April 28, 12:30pm

Culture

Calligraphy – Brush writing, 1st & 3rd Tuesdays, 7pm

Chinese Movement – Qigong, Tuesdays, 11am to noon, call Dennis Chan 773-465-6422 for information & to register

Crafts – 1st & 3rd Saturdays, 10am to noon

Japanese Fencing – Intro to Kendo, Dojo sessions, Tuesdays, 8 to 10pm at Bethany United Church, call Bob Kumaki, 847-853-1187 for information

Japanese Language (children or adults) – Saturdays, 10am, call temple to register

Japanese Swordsmanship – Iaido, Mondays 7 to 9pm

Taiko Drums – BTC Kokyo Taiko Drum Troupe, Fridays, 7pm to 9pm

Retirement of Reverend Yukei Ashikaga

Rev. Yukei Ashikaga will be retiring this year after 52 years of service to BTC. This is bittersweet news for the Temple; his formal service to the BTC began in 1961 as an Assistant Minister, making him the longest serving kaikyoshi minister (missionary minister) presently serving. As a second grader I recall my parents talking about “that young kid, the new minister.” Our temple history is intertwined with Rev. Ashikaga’s journey from “new minister” to Minister Emeritus, his new title in retirement.

The official retirement date will be June 16th, a month after Rev. Ashikaga’s return from the Dobo Convention in Kyoto, Japan. There will be many stories to share and much gratitude to express, so please be alert to special events, including plans for a luncheon on June 15, honoring Rev. Ashikaga’s service to The Buddhist Temple of Chicago.

— Glenn T. Fujiura, BTC President

Hana Matsuri: The Buddha of Children

By Rev. Patti Nakai

Of all the major Buddhist services, Hana Matsuri is one where children have a chance to participate. Hana Matsuri, Japanese for “flower festival,” is the celebration of the historical Buddha’s birth, and at our temple, the service begins with the O-chigo procession. In this procession, girls and boys are dressed as imperial ladies and lords of ancient Japan. The satin robes go on easily over the kids’ regular clothes, but the tricky part is getting the headgear to stay balanced on their heads. At least at BTC we haven’t subjected them to wearing white face makeup with exaggerated red lips and black dots for eyebrows as the west coast temples do.

To begin the service with the entrance of the children is a reminder that each of us – and the Buddha as well – started off as small children, so innocent and cute, with bright futures ahead. Yet although our childhood days may seem long ago, the message of Hana Matsuri is that in the Buddha’s awakening, life is experienced as new and fresh. The legendary account of the Buddha’s birth is most likely based on a metaphorical description of his awakening – “It is like being born as a new baby in this world.” Taking the seven steps is symbolic of liberation from the cycle of the six realms that represent our self-centered views. Pointing upwards with one hand and downwards with the other is the expression of independence from the judgments of ourselves and others as superior and inferior. Shouting “I alone am most noble!” is acknowledging the dignity of our life and each life in its deepest essence.

(Continued on page 6, right column)

More Important Dates

- ❁ Now through summer 2013: The spring issue of quarterly Buddhist magazine *Tricycle* featuring BTC's Rev. Patti Nakai is available for sale or online (for a fee) at www.tricycle.com/living-dharma/get-real
- ❁ Apr. 7-13: Polishing of altar decorations and decorating of Flower Altar (Hanamido). See Rev. Patti's article, page 1.
- ❁ May 8-10: Dobo Conference in Kyoto. Contact Rev. Ashikaga or Rev. Patti for more information.
- ❁ May 30: BTC Scholarship application due. See page 4.
- ❁ June 1-7: BTC Scholarship winners notified.
- ❁ June 16: BTC Graduation Service and scholarship presentation.
- ❁ Aug. 31-Sept. 2: BTC hosts 2013 Eastern Buddhist League Conference. See page 4.
- ❁ Sept. 28: BTC Rummage Sale. See page 3.

Also see the *April Calendar of Events*, p. 1

Temple News February 2013

- ❁ 2/01 Rev. Patti Nakai began full-time as resident minister.
- ❁ 2/02 The 49th Day Memorial Service of the Late Dorothy Kuse was conducted at the Temple.
- ❁ 2/03 Shotsuki Hoyo (Monthly Memorial Service) was observed. Rev. Ashikaga delivered Dharma Messages for the morning English service and afternoon Japanese Service.
- ❁ 2/10 Nirvana Day Special Service was observed. Rev. Ashikaga gave the Dharma School talk. Rev. Nakai delivered the Dharma message.
- ❁ 2/16 Rev. Nakai attended Michael Conway's wedding in Japan. * * * The Asoka Society Met.
- ❁ 02/17 Rev. Ashikaga delivered the Dharma Message. * * * Pet Memorial was observed. Rev. Ashikaga, Anna Idol Sugano, Glenn T. Fujiura, Rodel De Ocampo, Lisa Oda, and others shared memories of their beloved pets.
- ❁ 2/19 Rev. Nakai conducted workshop for ministers in Hawaii at Higashi Honolulu Betsuin. * * * Rev. and Mrs. Ashikaga attended the welcome reception for Mr. Masaharu Yoshida, the New Consul General of Japan, at the Willis Tower.
- ❁ 2/20 Rev. Ashikaga welcomed the students of Glenbrook High school on their visit to the Temple and shared a talk on Shin Buddhism and The Buddhist Temple of Chicago. * * * Rev. Nakai presented a public lecture, "Modern Shin Buddhist Teachers" in Hawaii.
- ❁ 2/22 The March issue of the Temple Bulletin was mailed.
- ❁ 2/23 Rev. Nakai assisted with memorial service for Mrs. Marion Kayano at Midwest Buddhist Temple.
- ❁ 2/24 Brotherhood Sunday Service was observed. Guest Speaker Mr. K. Rizwan Kadir of the Muslim Community Center in Morton Grove was the guest speaker for Brotherhood Sunday.



Photo by Rev. Patti Nakai

behind them is Prof. Shinya Yasutomi, who performed the traditional Buddhist ceremony.

Congratulations to Michael Conway on his marriage to Kayoko Kobayashi. Mike is an alumnus of the BTC study groups and went on to Kyoto, Japan to earn a PhD at Otani University where he now teaches. Pictured are the newlyweds and behind them is Prof. Shinya Yasutomi, who performed the traditional Buddhist ceremony.

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!

**Understanding the Nembutsu through
recognizing the Paramitas in others.
Send in your recognitions!**

- ❁ Sunday Service Participants: Sue Balsam, Bill Bohlman, Dorothy Chvatal, Wendy Fawcett, Glenn T. Fujiura, Anna Idol, Janet Lipner, Kiyo Omachi, Mia Blixt-Shehan, William Shehan, Leroy Wiley, and Mrs. Hisayo Ashikaga, our pianist.
- ❁ Sunday Service Refreshments: Jackie Denofrio, Rodel De Ocampo, Noreen Enkoji, Anna Idol, Haru Ito, Michio Iwao, Izui family, Dennie Okuhara, Helene Rom, Peggy Sasamoto, William Shehan, Harky Tademoto, Ruby Tsuji, Frank Valdez, Jr.
- ❁ Temple Bulletin Mailing: Rev. Ashikaga, Dennis Chan, Noreen Enkoji, Haru Ito, Chuck Izui, Michele Mulcahy, Rev. Patti Nakai, Masa Nakata, Mary Shimomura, Ruby Tsuji.
- ❁ Taking care of the Temple inside and out: Tomio Tademoto.
- ❁ Cleaning the entire Temple every week: Justin & Alison Woodward.
- ❁ Manning the Temple office every Thursday: Tak Tomiyama.
- ❁ Maintaining and updating the temple website and computer: Shawn Lyte.
- ❁ Emptying the trash bins, filling them with new bags and putting them out for disposal: Sue Balsam, Adam Kellman, Michele Mulcahy, Rev. Nakai.

Rummage Sale Reminder

The Fall Rummage Sale is on Saturday, September 28. Please start going through all of those closets and boxes in the basement to see what you don't need or want anymore.

In addition to the general sale, there are a limited number of tables for those temple members who wish to do their own selling. The donation is \$30 per table.

Please contact Lynn Maruyama with any questions or if you would like to be an individual vendor:
Lmaruyama114@earthlink.net

BTC Looking for Diamonds

By Glenn T. Fujiura

That is, "diamonds" as in used auto dealer slang for a low mileage car that looks just like new and runs smooth and trouble-free. Our old Ford Taurus has served the Temple and Reverend Ashikaga honorably and well for many years but is at that point of being put out of its misery. As the Temple treasurer, I am well aware of the minor and major surgeries we have paid for during the past 18 months: brake line replacements, rotor replacements, new radiator, new starter, ignition switch, exhaust pipe, thermostat, blower motor, thermal gasket . . . well, you get the idea.

We need a replacement vehicle for use by the ministers for Temple travel. Before we commit BTC resources to the purchase of a minister's vehicle, are there any members out there who would like to donate a "diamond" to the Temple? If so, please contact me at 312-752-7773 or by e-mail at gfujiura@uic.edu.

Empress of Japan Cherishes Michio Iwao's Bird Pin

The "Art of Gaman" exhibit of arts and crafts by Japanese Americans incarcerated during World War II is currently touring Japan after several stops in the U.S., including the Illinois Holocaust Museum. The Empress of Japan had wanted to see the exhibit in 2011 but was unable to do so due to the tragic events of the earthquake and tsunami in northeastern Japan. She requested to see the exhibit when it was brought to Japan in November last year.

Long-time BTC member Michio Iwao donated his hand-carved pins for the Japan tour and to the empress. He received a letter from exhibit curator Delphine Hirasuna. "Thank you for generously donating the bird pins to give to the Empress of Japan. I chose to give her the red cardinal which her chamberlain e-mailed to say she would cherish. I also gave one of your pins to Hiroko Kuniya, the NHK anchorwoman. She was elated, too. Your pins are very special." With the letter Ms. Hirasuna enclosed a donation to BTC in appreciation of Mr. Iwao's work.

Photographs of Mr. Iwao's wood carvings can be seen on page 4 of the July 2012 issue of the BTC Bulletin. That issue as well as other past issues are available online at:
<http://budtempchi.org/bulletin/>

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BTC BULLETIN

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Feedback & Submissions

Comments, corrections, questions, & suggestions welcome. Submissions of articles, essays, book reviews, photos, poetry, news items, announcements, drawings, etc., strongly encouraged. Submissions will be reviewed for suitability and space availability. Anonymous submissions will not be published, but author's names may be withheld from publication upon request.

Contact

E-mail BTCbuledtr@hotmail.com or speak with anyone on the BTC Team

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2013 Eastern Buddhist League Conference: Save the Date

The Buddhist Temple of Chicago is hosting the 2013 Eastern Buddhist League Conference on Saturday, August 31 to Monday, September 2 (Labor Day). Please mark your calendars. The conference will likely be held west of the city in order to give us an opportunity to visit historic sites central to our conference theme. The exact location will be announced at a later time.

Sunday will be the main activity day so that people who aren't local can use Saturday as a travel day. Registration will be all day Saturday with hospitality and mixer activities in the afternoon. The conference will officially open on Saturday evening with a panel presentation. On Monday there will be a brief service followed by performances in the morning which will run until about 11:00 am so people can be on their way home by noon.

The tentative conference theme is "Buddhism Comes to America – A Legacy/Benefit of Inclusion." Featured speakers include Rev. Wayne Yokoyama (D.T. Suzuki researcher and principal translator of *Coffinman*, *Buddha's Wish for the World* and many other Jodo Shinshu books) and Dr. Gail Chin of University of Regina who has researched Buddhist texts in relation to art at Otani University.

For more information, contact Rev. Patti at rev.eshin.patti23@gmail.com or EBL Co-Chair, Gary Nakai, at budtempchi@hotmail.com.

The 2013 BTC Scholarship

ELIGIBILITY – Applicant must be a high school senior or an undergraduate senior who has attended The Buddhist Temple of Chicago Dharma School and/or participated in one of the youth activities of BTC and has been a paid member or listed on a family membership two years prior to the scholarship year according to BTC membership records.

SELECTION – The BTC Scholarship will be awarded on the basis of scholastic merit and personal dedication to the Temple with consideration given to individual need.

PROCEDURE – An applicant must complete the Scholarship Application, obtain one recommendation, and write a 200-word essay. All applications must be accompanied by a certified transcript of the student's high school grades and ACT/SAT scores (if available, or a letter given as to the reason why this was omitted). The responsibility for a completed application and submission by the time of the deadline rests solely with the applicant.

OBTAIN the SCHOLARSHIP FORM – Contact Rev. Ashikaga or Rev. Patti at 773- 334-4661 for an application packet.

DEADLINE – Applications must be received by midnight May 30th, 2013. All correspondence, forms, inquiries and applications should be sent to:

The BTC Scholarship Committee
c/o The Buddhist Temple of Chicago
1151 W Leland Avenue
Chicago, IL 60640

PRESENTATION – The Buddhist Temple of Chicago Scholarships will be awarded in June during the BTC Graduation Service, on June 16th at 11 AM. Recipients will be notified by mail or telephone during the first week in June.



Gary Nakai demonstrates a science experiment for the Dharma School in order to illustrate the Paramita of Perseverance and a form of emptiness.

Photos by Dave LeShuk

*strolling beside
green rice-paddies
a reflecting pool*

- William Shehan
fiercebuddhist.org

*spring comes
and the grass grows
oneness*

Interview with Rev. Patti Nakai, New Resident Minister

By Michele Mulcahy

Rev. Patti Nakai has served as Associate Minister at BTC for several years. In February of 2013 she took on her new role as a full-time resident minister. The BTC Bulletin team wanted to take this opportunity to “introduce” Rev. Patti to our Sangha and friends.

Rev. Patti is a third-generation Japanese American born in Chicago to parents Osamu “Sam” and Lily Yuri Honda. She grew up in the Lake View neighborhood of Chicago. When the 3M Company bought Revere Camera, they moved Sam’s job to Minnesota, so the family settled in White Bear Lake, a suburb of St. Paul. Rev. Patti graduated from the University of Minnesota with a B.S. in Economics. She moved back to Chicago and in 1979 joined BTC, where the ministers and Ruby Izui talked her into becoming a Dharma School teacher.

Dr. Nobudo Haneda encouraged her to study Buddhism in Japan. From 1984 to 1987 she studied at Otani University in Kyoto, Japan where she received a Master’s degree in Shin Buddhist Studies and full ordination (kyoshi) at the Higashi Honganji head temple. From 1987 to 1995 she served as an assisting minister at the Higashi Honganji’s Los Angeles Betsuin Temple and the West Covina Buddhist Temple.

In 1995 she returned to Chicago and served as a minister at The Buddhist Temple of Chicago and as instructor and director of the temple’s educational center. She married Gary Nakai in 1996. She writes a blog entitled “Taste of Chicago Buddhism” and has published articles on-line at LivingDharma.org. Most recently, Buddhist quarterly magazine *Tricycle* published a profile and photographs of Rev. Patti in their spring issue. The magazine is available at Barnes & Noble, Women & Children First, and other bookstores across the country. It is also available online (for a fee) at:

www.tricycle.com/living-dharma/get-real

We wanted to ask Rev. Patti a few questions for our readers.

MM: Which teachers had the greatest impact on your understanding of Shin Buddhism?

Rev. P: When I first came to BTC, it was Rev. Gyoko Saito who made an impact on me, but I didn’t understand why at the time. I joined the Sunday morning meditation group led by Rev. Gyomay Kubose where he would have us chant “Namu Amida Butsu,” and he would talk about the nembutsu but I couldn’t quite get it. Then when I started going to Dr. Nobuo Haneda’s study classes Shin Buddhism started to have meaning for me. It was Dr. Haneda who told me I should go to Japan if I wanted to more deeply study Shin Buddhism.

(Continued on page 7, left column)

President’s Message for March

By Glenn T. Fujiura

At a Sunday service about two years ago I noticed an elderly gentleman at The Buddhist Temple of Chicago accompanied by regular attendees Stanley, Lisa, and Sue Oda. I had never seen him before at a service. This was not a simple drop-in visit. He used a wheelchair and required the considerable assistance of this family. “How nice,” I thought, “the Oda’s bringing an elderly relative to the Temple, getting him out the house.”

I suspect my first impressions were shared by most others in attendance that day. The gentleman was Stanley’s uncle, and though he returned a few more times after that I did not interact much beyond greeting him with a “hello” or holding the door open when I happened to be at the entranceway with the Odas. In the months since,



Peter Oda. Photo by
Glenn T. Fujiura.

he has become more than a casual visitor, returning regularly, often on a weekly basis. Always sitting in the first row of the Hondo, he never misses an opportunity to make an incense offering.

I finally asked Stanley about his uncle and his sudden appearance as a regular at BTC since 2011. Stanley relayed the following life story about his uncle, Peter Iwaho Oda. Mr. Oda was born in northern California in 1917, the oldest of four Oda brothers, one of whom was Stanley’s father, Ted. Educated in Japan, Peter returned to California in 1936 and was drafted and inducted into the US Army in 1942. He initially went to cooking school, but volunteered for the Military Intelligence Service (MIS) because of his Japanese language skills. He met and married his wife Helen during the war years. Peter excelled with the MIS and so stayed on with the intelligence service after the war as an instructor.

The language school was relocated to Monterey, California after the war and Peter and Helen settled there for the next 54 years. They owned and operated many Asian restaurants during this period. His outgoing personality and business sense made him a successful restaurateur. Many people in Monterey still remember Peter from his restaurants and will stop to say hello to him.

(Continued on page 7, right column)

BTC Nokotsudo

The BTC Nokotsudo continues to accept cremains. It is configured to hold urns of various sizes and presentations for storage periods that fit each family's need. The Nokotsudo will be open for regular inspection each Sunday immediately after service and by appointment made with either Rev. Patti Nakai, Gary Nakai, or Kiyoko Omachi.

To inter cremains in the Nokotsudo, fill out the application form attached to the Nokotsudo Policy. These documents are available from the temple office or they can be mailed to you by contacting any of the above persons.

Whether you have a definite length of time in mind for interment in the Nokotsudo or whether the period of time is indeterminate while ultimate plans are being worked out, rest assured that the beautiful design of the BTC Nokotsudo presents each applicant with flexible, dignified storage accommodation. As a further service, the BTC Nokotsudo policy permits the holding of burial certificates when accompanying the admitted cremains.

... Hana Matsuri: The Buddha of Children

(Continued from page 1)

The Buddha at Hana Matsuri time is calling to us to be child-like, not childish. We're not to return to the days of fighting with our brothers and sisters over toys and dolls. But as we see in the faces of the children in the O-chigo procession, there is an openness and wonder about the world. That is the "beginner's mind" of children – ready to learn about the ever-changing lives of beings and never making the mistake of thinking we already know it all.

No matter how many Hana Matsuri services you've been to or if this will be your first, we hope you join us on Sunday, April 14 and celebrate the renewal of life. Also, there's time for you to participate in activities that may be new to you. Sometime during the week before Hana Matsuri we need volunteers to polish the altar decorations. For years Mrs. Harky Tademoto and several elders before her, kept the ornament shined up twice a year, but we'd like a new crop of members to try this hands-on service work. On Saturday the 13th, you can join the past Dharma School parents in decorating the Flower Altar (Hanamido) with real fresh-cut flowers. And we hope to see some new little lords and ladies in the O-chigo procession since the current Dharma School kids are getting a little tall for the costumes. Hana Matsuri is not just a celebration of the Buddha's birthday, but a party for the child reawakened in each of us.



BTC Nokotsudo
Dedicated October 4, 2009



Designed by
SCOTT NOBUYAMA ASSOCIATES,
Chicago



Photographs by Scott Nobuyama

... Interview with Rev. Patti Nakai

(Continued from page 5)

MM: Who were your direct teachers while studying to become a minister?

Rev. P: At Otani University I was fortunate to study under many outstanding teachers and also I learned from teachers at the various study gatherings in Kyoto and elsewhere. At Otani I was assigned to the seminar group led by Prof. Shunsho Terakawa, and I studied with him closely during my three years in the master's program. People told me I was assigned to Prof. Terakawa because he is kind towards women students, but since he did his research in comparative religions he was also more open to Westerners than the other professors. In his many travels around the world, he had stopped at BTC and toured Chicago with Rev. Kubose.

MM: You worked with Rev. Ashikaga since 1995. What other ministers have you worked with?

Rev. P: In Los Angeles, it was Rev. Saito who mentored me but I was able to work with a wide range of ministers, some long-time, some just students passing through LA for training. Next to Rev. Saito, I felt close to Rev. Kenjun Kawawata, who just became bishop of the Hawaii district.

MM: If you were pressed to extract one passage from the Buddhist sutras to help a newcomer understand Shin Buddhism, which passage would that be?

Rev. P: It would be the passage from the Larger Sutra where the seeker Dharamakara asks his teacher for instructions and the teacher says, "First, know yourself." Too many people go off on a spiritual search without examining their self, but Shin Buddhism keeps reminding us to really look at our self, so inconsistent and limited in power, continually grabbing to possess things, sensations and other people. It's like in the Four Noble Truths – there is no path of transcendence until you confront your suffering and greed. There is no "Amida Butsu" without first knowing "Namu" (humility) – to see what I am instead of what I conceptualize myself to be.

MM: How do you see the minister's role in creating and sustaining a strong Sangha?

Rev. P: The minister is there to encourage the members to interact with each other and be welcoming to newcomers. The word "Sangha" implies a gathering of Buddhist followers but historically and currently most of the groups who gather at BTC and assist at temple events are made up of people who do not identify as Buddhist. That's fine – I hope the temple opens up more to the surrounding community, inviting in those who are not ethnic-Japanese or involved in Japanese culture. But I also hope that those who do come for the Buddhist teachings will feel more responsible for keeping the temple going. The least I can do as a minister is remind them about showing gratitude for the teachings by donating their time and talents. And if that doesn't work ... [cue theme from *The Godfather*].

... President's Message for March

(Continued from page 5)

Helen passed on in 2001 and in 2010 Peter moved to Chicago to be closer to relatives. Visiting BTC he found enjoyment in the atmosphere and peace of the Temple as well as all the members of the Sangha who made him feel at home. For this he forgives our cold Midwestern weather. He particularly enjoys the seasonal festivals and Taiko drumming.

Hearing about Mr. Oda's life was a reminder of how easily we fall into the bad habits of categorizing and labeling people according to our own inherently limited perspectives. I originally saw him simply as "the elderly relative in a wheelchair" and pretty much left it at that. But the brief summary of Mr. Oda's arrival here at the BTC is a compelling reminder of the illusory nature of our labels.

What a wonderful life story. What other great stories and details were omitted – those events great and small that accumulate over the years and shape the contours of our lives? I discovered that even in retirement Mr. Oda's services as a chef were in demand and he continued to be a sushi chef at the award winning Robata Sushi Restaurant, one of Carmel's most famous Japanese restaurants. Clint Eastwood was one of his famous regular customers. What unanticipated connections are there between this life lived and ours? For example, the themes of Peter's story are likely familiar to all of us in the Japanese American community. My father, Henry, was MIS and now I wonder if they crossed paths. Not an "elderly relative in a wheelchair" but a rich life lived.

BTC's old friend, Dr. Haneda of the Maida Center of Buddhism recently wrote that the Sangha is the most important of the three treasures. He asserted that among our fellow members of the Sangha, "we are liberated from our preconceived notions and attached ideas. We can unlearn them. We can become true seekers, true learners." The lessons of the Dharma may be accessed through books, the Internet, and self study, but it is through other members of the Sangha that our personal views are challenged and revealed. So for all of you study-at-home Buddhists, come join us on Sundays and discover something about your fellow BTC members . . . and perhaps even something about yourself.