



The Buddhist Temple of Chicago

BULLETIN



Volume 69, Number 8  May 2013 (2557 B.E.)

May Calendar of Events

Call 773-334-4661
Also visit www.budtempchi.org

Regular Sunday Services

Dharma Sunday School – Sundays (May 12 & 26), 11am

Religious Service (English) – Sundays, 11am

Shotsuki Hoyo, Monthly Memorial Service – Sunday, May 5, 11am (English), 1pm (Japanese)

✿ Special Services & Events ✿

Tanjo-e (celebration of Shinran Shonin's birthday), May 9. See details p. 4.

Hatsu Mairi (official “first visit” for children), May 26. See details p. 3.

Interfaith Memorial Day at Montrose Cemetery (Pulaski/Bryn Mawr) – Mon, May 27 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. No class May 1, 8, & 15

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

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

Meetings & Socials

Asoka Society – 3rd Saturdays, 1pm

BTC Board – Sun, May 26, 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, Mon 7 to 9pm

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

Shi-jiki: Thought for Food

Rev. Yukei Ashikaga
Translated by Rev. Patti Nakai

[Translator's Note: This is a translation of an article written for the Japanese section of the August 1981 Bulletin where Rev. Ashikaga is reflecting on the occasion of O-Bon. However, much of what he says applies to any memorial gathering.]

As O-Bon approaches, I realize this is the Hatsubon (first O-Bon after a loved one's death) not only for many Temple members, but for quite a few dear Dharma friends. To think of their passing made my heart ache for their families, and I wished I could find something to say that would ease their sorrow at this Hatsubon. Finally, I thought of the passage from the Kusha-ron (Sanskrit, Abhidharma-kosa-basya) by Vasubandhu (4th century Buddhist philosopher in India) where he describes a mother sea turtle who lays her eggs on the beach, then covers them over with sand to protect them from predators.

When the eggs are ready to hatch, she must remember to return to the exact spot where she buried them. If for some reason she forgot where she laid the eggs and could not find them, the buried eggs would rot away without the mother to aid in their hatching. It is the mother's mindfulness of her eggs that makes it possible for the baby turtles to be born into the world, so Vasubandhu uses the term *shi-jiki* (*omou*, to think + *taberu*, to eat), “thought-food,” to characterize the mother turtle's thoughts as the nourishment for her offspring. Vasubandhu uses the sea turtle to illustrate the power of thought in Buddhist practice, to portray the Buddhist as one who “feeds” all sentient beings by keeping them in mind.

To those of you observing Hatsubon in your families this month, since the memories of your loved ones are still poignantly fresh, I would say, “Make those thoughts your spiritual food.” Your dearly departed father or mother, sister or brother, spouse or child – they have been keeping you in their thoughts, providing you with nourishment for your spiritual self (the embryo which will develop and break out of the shell of the worldly ego).

In Tannisho, Section Five, Shinran says:

I, Shinran, have never called the Nembutsu, not even once, out of filial piety for my deceased parents. The reason is that through karmic relations during numberless rebirths, all sentient beings are or have been my parents or kinsmen. So we should attain Buddhahood in the next life [go on to our new life living as our True Self] and then we shall be able to bring deliverance [from the narrow ego self] to all other beings...*

(Continued on page 7, right column, at bottom)

Temple News March 2013

- ❁ 3/02 The 25th year memorial service for Mr. Joe Oda was conducted by Rev. Nakai at the home of Mrs. Ruth Oda.
- ❁ 3/03 Shotsuki Hoyo (Monthly Memorial Service) was observed. Rev. Ashikaga delivered Dharma message both at morning English Service and afternoon Japanese Service. The morning service chair was Glenn T. Fujiura.
- ❁ 3/09 Rev. Ashikaga attended the 100th birthday celebration of Mrs. Pat Matsue Honda at daughter, Joanne Kawanaga's home. * * * Rev. Nakai officiated the wedding of Mieko Fujiura and Jacob Landers at Danada House in Wheaton.
- ❁ 3/10 Rev. Gyoko Saito's memorial was observed at Sunday Service. Rev. Nakai delivered the Dharma talk. Service was chaired by the Dharma School children. * * * The 4th Year Memorial Service of the late Kenneth Shindo was conducted at the Temple.
- ❁ 3/12 Rev. Michael Conway from Kyoto, Japan visited the temple.
- ❁ 3/14 Rev. Nakai spoke to the world history class at the Chicago Academy for the Arts.
- ❁ 3/15 The 3rd Year Memorial Service of the late Yasuko Horiuchi was conducted at the Temple by Revs. Ashikaga and Nakai.
- ❁ 3/16 Asoka Society met. * * * Rev. Ashikaga attended the 27th Annual Japanese Language Speech Contest sponsored by the Consulate of Japan in Chicago, Chicago Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Japan America Society of Chicago, and Sister City of Osaka and Chicago at the Cultural Center of the Consulate of Japan.
- ❁ 3/17 O-Higan Special Service was observed. Rev. Ashikaga delivered the O-higan message both at the morning English service and afternoon Japanese service. The morning service chair was Bill Bohlman.
- ❁ 3/20 Rev. Nakai conducted the one-year memorial service for her sister, Nancy Honda at the temple.
- ❁ 3/22 The April issue of the temple Bulletin was mailed.
- ❁ 3/23 The winter term of the Japanese School ended.
- ❁ 3/24 Gyomei-ki (Rev. Kubose'e Memorial) was observed as the Founder's Day Service. Rev. Nakai delivered the Dharma talk. Service Chair was Janet Lipner.
- ❁ 3/25 Rev. Nakai conducted the Buddhist portion of the funeral service for the late Mr. Adolfo Martinez at Lakeview Funeral Home.
- ❁ 3/30 Rev. Nakai met to plan the funeral/memorial services with the family of the late Mrs. Alice Fukuyama who passed away on March 29 at the age of 91.
- ❁ 3/31 Regular Sunday service was observed. The lay speaker was Kay Schroeter and service chair was Bill Bohlman.

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

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

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

- ❁ Special thanks to Justin Woodward for cleaning the Temple every week. See page 4.
- ❁ Special thanks to Michael Yasukawa for expertly cleaning and restoring the finish on our piano.
- ❁ Special thanks to Wall's Flowers for donating the flowers for our Hanamido (flower shrine) for Hanamatsuri.
- ❁ Sunday Service Participants: Karen Baier Sue Balsam, Bill Bohlman, Dharma School students, Wendy Fawcett, Glenn T. Fujiura, Anna Idol, Janet Lipner, Kay Schroeter, Leroy Wiley, & Mrs. Hisayo Ashikaga, our pianist.
- ❁ Sunday Service Refreshments: Chris Becker, Rodel De Ocampo, Noreen Enkoji, Haru Ito, Michio Iwao, Joe Korner Jane Morishige, William Shehan, Kay Schroeter, Mary Shimomura, Frank Valdez, Jr.
- ❁ Temple Bulletin Mailing: Rev. Ashikaga, Sue Balsam, Antoinette d'Vencets, Noreen Enkoji, Haru Ito, Chuck Izui, Michele Mulcahy, Rev. Patti Nakai, Masa Nakata, Mary Shimomura, Tak and Tommi Tomiyama.
- ❁ Taking care of the Temple inside and out: Tomio Tademoto.
- ❁ Cleaning the Temple every week: Justin Woodward, Mia Blixt-Shehan, Michele Mulcahy.
- ❁ 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, April Kellman, Michele Mulcahy, Rev. Patti Nakai.

Hatsu Mairi Ceremony

On May 26 during the regular Sunday morning service at 11am, the Temple will conduct the annual Hatsu Mairi ceremony. Hatsu Mairi means “first visit,” and the ceremony is the official first welcoming of a child to the temple (although some of them already may have been attending). Each family participating in Hatsu Mairi will receive a certificate and o-juzu (meditation beads) for their child and will be part of the group picture featured in our temple’s calendar.

If you would like your child (any age from infant to teen) to be included in the ceremony, please contact the temple office before May 18. Please provide the following information:

Child: Full name, birth date, & gender

Parent(s): Full name(s)

Contact info: Address, phone, & e-mail

We ask past Hatsu Mairi families to help welcome the new honorees by helping with refreshments after the service. Please contact Diana Schoendorff of the BTC Dharma School at billandi@sbcglobal.net if you can help serve and/or bring a food item.

More Important Dates

- ☸ Now through summer 2013: The spring issue of *Tricycle* featuring BTC’s Rev. Patti Nakai is available in BTC’s resource center.
- ☸ Now through early June: Doc Films presents Japanese films. See page 6.
- ☸ May 8-10: World Dobo Conference in Kyoto will be attended by BTC reverends and a delegation from BTC.
- ☸ May 8: “Preserving Your Family Archives” presentation hosted by JASC. See page 6.
- ☸ May 18: Hatsu Mairi Ceremony deadline (see left).
- ☸ May 18: Kodomo No Hi (Children’s Day Festival), hosted by Asian Improv Arts Midwest. See page 6.
- ☸ May 30: BTC Scholarship application due. See page 6.
- ☸ June 1-7: BTC Scholarship winners notified.
- ☸ June 15: Luncheon honoring Rev. Ashikaga’s years of service to BTC. See flyer insert for details and to RSVP.
- ☸ June 16: Rev. Yukei Ashikaga retires.
- ☸ June 16: Natsu Matsuri food orders deadline. See flyer.
- ☸ June 16: BTC Graduation Service and scholarship presentation.
- ☸ June 23: Natsu Matsuri. See flyer.
- ☸ Aug. 31 to Sept. 2: BTC hosts 2013 Eastern Buddhist League Conference. See page 5 and flyer.
- ☸ Sept. 28: BTC Rummage Sale. See page 2.

Also see the *May Calendar of Events*, page 1

IN THIS ISSUE

Articles

- Shi-jiki: Thought for Food,
by Rev. Yukei Ashikaga . . . 1
- Impractical Concerns,
by Rev. Patti Nakai . . . 5
- A Primer for EBL 2013 Conference,
by Gary T. Nakai . . . 5

News & Items

- Rummage Sale Reminder . . . 2
- Hatsu Mairi Ceremony . . . 3
- NEW Sangha News – Your News Here . . . 4
- Rev. Ashikaga Retirement Luncheon . . . 4
- Tanjo-e . . . 4
- Annual Natsu Matsuri . . . 4
- Tricycle Magazine for Sale . . . 4
- BTC Looking for Diamonds Reminder . . . 4
- 2013 BTC Scholarship Reminder . . . 6

Regular Features

- May Calendar of Events . . . 1
- Temple News (English) . . . 2
- More Important Dates . . . 3
- Thank you! Thank you! Thank You! . . . 2
- Buddha 'Bout Town . . . 6
- Temple News (Japanese) . . . 8

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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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NEW Sangha News – Your News Here

The BTC Bulletin is launching a new section called *Sangha News* to cover important events in the lives of temple members, friends, and/or regular visitors. This section will rely primarily on reader submissions. That means *you!*

Please submit news regarding engagements, weddings, major promotions, graduations, moves, deaths, important milestones, significant birthdays, and other news items to anyone on the BTC Team (listed on page 3) or e-mail them to BTCbuledtr@hotmail.com. Items will be reviewed for suitability and relevance to BTC.

Include all pertinent information such as names (spelled correctly please!), dates, and background information. Feel free to send photographs (digital JPEG, TIFF, PNG, BMP files preferred, film photographs accepted) and be sure to include the names of the people photographed and who took the photo. More information is better than less.

🌀 For our first *Sangha News* item, we'd like to wish the best of luck to Justin Woodward, who moved to Eugene, Oregon to start graduate school. He has been an enormous help to the temple over the years, doing the weekly cleaning of the temple and manning the audio console at Sunday services. He also digitized all the gatha music so that we no longer have to rely on cassette tapes. At last year's Natsu Matsuri he organized a series of musical performances with Justin Lack (who also recently left us for Los Angeles to teach music and work as a film extra). At a few Sunday services Justin played piano and trumpet. One day when he becomes a big name in music, we can say proudly say that we there to see his early performances.



Justin Woodward helping plant donated bushes in fall of 2011, just one of his many volunteer activities that helped our temple greatly.

Photo by Gary Nakai

Reverend Ashikaga Retirement Luncheon

On June 15, 2013, at from 11 am to 3 pm, the Temple will honor Rev. Ashikaga for his many years of service to the temple at Monastero's Ristorante & Banquets located at 3935 W. Devon, Chicago. The cost is \$20 per adult and \$17 per child. See the enclosed flyer for more information on the luncheon and to RSVP.



May 9: Tanjo-e

Tanjo-e is the annual celebration of Shinran Shonin's birthday. This year our speaker on Sunday, May 9, will be Rev. Bryan Emyo Siebuhr. Rev. Siebuhr served as a Buddhist Priest in the United States for Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha (True Pure Land Teaching-Temple of the Primal Vow, headquartered in Kyoto, Japan) for a period of ten years. Prior to the priesthood, he had a career as a software engineer for commercial and government organizations for ten years prior to his study to become a priest. He has presented dharma talks at our temple on multiple occasions. We welcome him back for Tanjo-e.

Annual Natsu Matsuri

On June 23 the Temple will celebrate the 67th annual Natsu Matsuri. As always, there will be great food including our world famous teriyaki chicken, chirashi, inari, udon, ohagi and other treats. Get your food pre-order in now! Orders are due June 16 (see flyer insert).

Tricycle Magazine for Sale at Temple

The Spring 2013 issue of Tricycle magazine (featuring Rev. Patti Nakai) is on sale at our temple's resource center. If there's enough interest we will continue to sell future issues of the magazine, which is a great publication to learn about various practices and topics of concern among a wide range of Buddhists. The resource center also sells a wide variety of books, cards Rev. Ashikaga's calligraphy, and other items.

BTC Looking for Diamonds Reminder

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.

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 Glenn T. Fujiura at 312-752-7773 or by e-mail at gfujiura@uic.edu.

Impractical Concerns

By Rev. Patti Nakai

Although many of our temple members have always been affiliated with BTC through their parents or their connection to Rev. Gyomay Kubose and other ministers, some of you have come to us after doing considerable “church shopping,” that is, trying out different faiths and congregations. I was a shopper myself when I was in my mid-20s, seeking some way to deal with the anxieties of my life. The Presbyterian church I had gone to as a child no longer appealed to me (a hard-line fundamentalist from Japan had become the minister), so I tried some other places. I ended up hanging out at the Midwest Buddhist Temple a while as I got involved with the Japanese folk dance group. But I remember at one Sunday service there I felt cheated out of the religious message I came for – instead of a Dharma talk, the minister used up his time at the podium pleading with the members to get more involved and help out at the temple.

Nowadays I feel like I sound like that minister – instead of sharing the Dharma and listening to members’ spiritual concerns, my main interactions lately have been in begging everyone to help out here and there and put more time into volunteer tasks and projects. There just seems to be so much busy work to get done at the temple, and I’m finding I can’t do very much of it by myself.

However, I have to remind myself that I came to this temple not to do cleaning and paperwork, but to listen to the nembutsu teachings that put my anxieties into a larger perspective and set me on the path towards awakening to Oneness. The teachings even point out to me that my current anxiety over “temple work” is really about my selfish concern that I look good as the administrator, keeping the building spruced up and getting all the paperwork processed.

In fact, much of what we call our practical concerns are really about propping up our ego-self. In the Chicago area there are sadly hundreds of people struggling day-to-day for the basics of food, shelter, and clothing. But for most of us what we call our practical concerns are just efforts to maintain a comfortable lifestyle with some leeway for a few luxuries and gifts for the friends and children in our lives. We easily get caught up in wanting “to do a good job” – that is, looking good to our bosses or projecting our ego-identities into our businesses. We end up pouring many hours and much energy into our work, generating stress for ourselves and the people around us.

Despite the items listed in my job description written by the temple’s board of directors, I see my real job is to

(Continued on page 7, left column)

A Primer for Eastern Buddhist League 2013 Conference

By Gary T. Nakai, EBL 2013 Chairman

The EBL 2013 conference over Labor Day weekend is hosted this year by BTC. Registration begins Saturday morning at the Best Western Plus Timber Creek Inn & Suites and Convention Center, in Sandwich, IL. This venue is 54 miles West/Southwest of downtown Chicago. State Highway 34, Ogden Ave. goes right through Sandwich. To drive there, take either I-88 or I-55 before connecting with 34. There is ample free parking. There will be two shuttles from O’Hare, and the Amtrak station is minutes away.

Saturday afternoon tours will take you to the SCI-TECH museum in the western outskirts of Aurora, the Casino in downtown Aurora, and the hugely popular Chicago Premium Outlet Mall in the northeast outskirts of Aurora. In Sandwich are many antique stores. At the hotel there is a large, modern pool with soothing whirlpool, a modern workout room, an arcade for the young at heart, and a sand volleyball court. In the evening, EBL 2013 Conference will open with a service followed immediately by a panel presentation by distinguished panelists and moderated by Rev. Nakai.

Sunday (and Monday) morning starts with QiGong stretching sessions and a complimentary hot breakfast. Next will be the main presentations which will set the stage for our tour of the Hegeler Carus Mansion in LaSalle, IL. We will feast on gourmet box lunches on the ride over to LaSalle. Half of the group will tour the Mansion, the other half Lock 16 Canal for their first tour. Then during the second tour period, the groups will switch. Dinner will be in LaSalle before boarding the buses back to Sandwich. The evening segment will be in discussion format that will inspire questions and frank discussions are expected to be lively. The hospitality suite is an option, with its new surprise activity introduced at this conference.

Monday’s closing service follows with the traditional EBL business, hearing from next year’s EBL host, and enjoying deluxe box luncheons with beverages in fellowship as our Farewell Luncheon. By noon we will have adjourned EBL 2013 and everyone can be on their way. There

(Continued on page 7, right column)

2013 BTC Scholarship Reminder

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 completed application and submission by the time of the deadline rests solely with the applicant.

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

Buddha 'Bout Town: Buddhist & Japanese Cultural Happenings

✿ The JASC Legacy Center Archives & Library invites you to “Preserving Your Family Archives: A Practical Guide for Memory Keepers.” On Wednesday, May 8, Jane Kenamore, consulting archivist at the JASC and principal at Kenamore & Klinkow Archives Consultants, will give a presentation on how to keep images vivid, handwritten documents readable, and home movies viewable for years to come. She will address questions such as:

- Should we leave old photographs in albums and scrapbooks?
- Can we keep newsprint from crumbling?
- How can we protect textiles from insect damage and fading?
- Is there any way to ensure that audiotapes, videos, and digital files remain accessible as technology changes?
- What should we save and what should we toss?

This free program is open to the public and will be held at JASC, 4427 N. Clark Street, Chicago. RSVP to legacy@jasc-chicago.org or call 773.275.0097, ext. 222.

✿ Asian Improv Arts Midwest invites you Kodomo No Hi, Children's Day Festival, on Saturday, May 18, 2013. The festival will take place from 10:30 am to 4 pm at the Matthew Bieszczat Volunteer Resource Center at 6100A N. Central Ave., Chicago. Admission is free. Entertainment includes Taiko drumming and Japanese Dance. Face painting, caricatures, and other fun crafts and games will be provided for the children. Food for sale include Spam & Totoro Musubi, Teriyaki Burgers, Hot Dogs, & more.

Net proceeds from the event will benefit Asian Improv Arts Midwest, Chicago Nisei Post 1183, Chicago Japanese American Historical Society and Japanese American Citizens League. This community event celebrates the Japanese and Japanese American culture during Asian Pacific American Heritage Month.

✿ Doc Films at the University of Chicago is featuring select Japanese films on Tuesday nights. The cost is \$5 per film or \$30 for a quarterly pass. Films began on April 2nd and will continue through early June. Doc Films is located in the Max Palevsky Cinema in Ida Noyes Hall at The University of Chicago at 1212 E. 59th St, Chicago. Tickets go on sale half an hour before the screening. For more information, visit <http://goo.gl/FLs42>

✿ The Field Museum's primary collections exhibit Buddhist art and artifacts in its sections devoted to China and Tibet.

✿ The Art Institute features a large collection of Buddhist statuary and art in its Alsdorf Galleries and in its collections of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean art. Additional Buddhist art in other galleries can be found using the search tool available at the Art Institute site: <http://www.artic.edu/aic/collections/>

✿ Please send information on other Buddhist and/or Japanese cultural events in the Chicago area to: BTCbuledtr@hotmail.com

... Impractical Concerns

(Continued from page 5)

talk about the impractical concerns of life. The historical Buddha left the palace of his princely upbringing and joined with the many mendicants in India at the time who were seeking for something more than a life of material gain that always brings one into conflicts with other people and the natural environment. The Buddha saw that the suffering we cause for others and feel in ourselves comes from the ego-self that deludedly thinks it is a fixed entity and blindly strives for attention and control.

In the “Brief Introduction to Buddhism” class that I offer about three times a year, I have the students read the “Dhaniya” chapter from Sutta Nipata. In that account, we see Dhaniya, the rich farmer lose everything in a flash flood – his fields are ruined and his livestock drowned. Yet he is grateful that the Buddha taught him not to identify so much with his particular work, possessions and status, but to awaken to being alive from moment to moment with a heart open to appreciating all lives. To live a real life does not depend on how much money you have, your popularity, or your notable achievements.

By loosening the grip of “practical concerns” on our hearts/minds, we start to see that being a part of the larger Life means becoming more aware of others and unselfconsciously acting to help and be helped by them. We all hear stories of heroes who give up all thought of self-preservation and rush to aid someone in a dangerous situation. But those who live the life of awakening are heroes every day, habitually putting aside their selfish practical concerns to give aid and encouragement to those in need. We hardly ever hear about them because they don’t acknowledge to themselves that they did anything good or even declare, “I was just doing my job.”

Shinran Shonin, whose birthday we will commemorate in May, was a most impractical person – only concerned with being a continual student of the Dharma and sharing it with others even if it meant traveling on difficult, dangerous roads, dragging his wife and kids around from place to place. Part of his being a person of *shinjin* (entrusting mind) meant unashamedly depending on the kindness of others – such as the financial support of his wife and her family and of his “fellow seekers” (he never called them his students or followers). Yet in his pointing out the way that transcends practical concerns, he inspired people to awaken to the dignity of their lives, no matter how economically oppressive or tragic things were for them.

In “Namu Amida Butsu,” we hear the voice of real life calling to us: “Don’t sweat the small stuff and it’s all small stuff in the larger scheme of things. Go forward, plunging into Life itself, the reality of interconnection with all lives.”

... Primer for EBL 2013

(Continued from page 5)

will be a large bus leaving for O’Hare at 1 pm that will continue on to downtown Chicago for a tourist stop. Later that same bus will depart for O’Hare one final time. Visits to BTC, departure flight times permitting, can be arranged with BTC members with rides to O’Hare afterwards.

In summary, BTC is committed to presenting a meaningful and rewarding conference that’s affordable for the greater sangha. Detailed early registration packets for the conference will be sent out soon. Please watch for them! Direct questions, comments to: budtempchi@hotmail.com.

... Shi-jiki: Thought for Food

(Continued from page 1)

In this passage, Shinran wants to clear up the misunderstanding that reciting “Namu Amida Butsu” is something you do to benefit your loved ones. Filial piety (*oya-ko-ko*) is usually thought of as what we must do for our parents out of obligation, but our acts of filial love should really be coming out of the increasing awareness of what our parents have done and are doing for us. Shinran, in recognizing that not only his birth parents, but so many various living beings have made his life possible, demonstrates that the real Nembutsu is the expression of deep gratitude toward all of life. Rather than an act of self-power (what we do consciously to win points for ourselves), it is an act of the Power Beyond Self (arising naturally from our gratitude towards the beings around us).

The Tathagata (“Thus Come One” = awakening to the universe as it is) is continually sending us *shi-jiki*, “thought-food.” In honoring our loved ones at O-Bon time, we can find much *shi-jiki* in our memories of them. And the unpleasant memories (*gyaku-en*, “opposing condition”) serve to lead us to the Teachings as effectively as the pleasant memories (*jun-en*, “following condition”). In coming to appreciate the nourishment we receive from their mindfulness of us, we cannot help but say, “Namu Amida Butsu” in gratefulness to them and to all of life.

* Translated by Bando Shojun and Harold Stewart (BDK English Tripitaka Vol. 105-II). Berkeley: Numata Center, 1996.