



The Buddhist Temple of Chicago

BULLETIN



Volume 69, Number 11  August 2013 (2557 B.E.)

August Calendar of Events

Call 773-334-4661

Also visit www.budtempchi.org

Regular Sunday Services

Service (English) – Sundays, 11am

Dharma Sunday School – On summer hiatus

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

Special Services & Events

Temple Picnic – Sunday, July 28, 11am

Bon Odori – Saturday, Aug 3, 7:30pm

Obon Service – Sunday, Aug 4, 11am

Lay Speaker – Sunday, Aug 18, 11 am

Koso-ki (Haya Akegarasu memorial) – Sunday,
Aug 25, 11am

Education & Meditation

Introduction to Buddhism – Call temple or visit
budtempchi.org for schedule

Buddhism Study Class – On summer hiatus, open
to all, Wednesdays, 7pm

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

Sutra Study Class – Sunday, July 14, 12:30 pm,
open to all

Meetings & Socials

Asoka Society – On summer hiatus

BTC Board – Sun, Aug 25, 12:30pm

Culture

Calligraphy – Brush writing, on summer hiatus

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 – Introduction 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) – On
summer hiatus, Saturdays, 10am, call temple to
register

Japanese Swordsmanship – Iaido, Mon 7 to 9pm

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

See More Important Dates on page 3.

August Dance: Buddhism Not Required

By Rev. Patti Nakai

During the mid-1980s when I was studying Buddhism in Japan, I got the chance to visit the home of my maternal grandparents. My grandfather wanted to visit “the island” one last time even though his knees were bad and he had to be in a wheelchair most of the time. My aunt Miye accompanied him from the States and I met them at the Amami-Oshima airport where we boarded a small plane to Kikaijima. It looked like the second coming of Elvis when we landed – several dozens of cheering people were there to meet the plane, mostly middle-aged and elderly women.

One of the events during our stay was a picnic with the extended family at a public park. As I learned at other gatherings, eating is only a preliminary activity to hurriedly get through so we can proceed to the main event – the music for singing and dancing. Since we had a wide grassy area, the group spread out into a large circle and did a series of repeated moves as my great-uncle played the snake-skin *jamisen* (three-stringed banjo-like instrument) and his wife clapped the rhythm and led the singing. I asked my relatives, “Are these Bon Odori dances?” and they retorted, “No! These are *Hachi-gatsu Odori* [“August dances”].”

In the small southern islands of Japan, Buddhism had very little presence. In fact, at the recent World Dobo Convention in Kyoto, we heard Okinawa spoken of as an overseas missionary district, the same as the U.S. and Brazil. On Kikaijima the only sign of Buddhism is a historical marker about Shunkan (1143-1179), the Buddhist priest who was exiled there as punishment for conspiring against the government. Unlike Shinran, he was apparently uninterested in sharing the Dharma with the natives.

Hearing my relatives talk about Hachi-gatsu Odori and the many dances they performed for that summer festival made me realize that the Japanese custom of mid-summer dancing pre-dates the introduction of Buddhism. We need to remember that in Japan, people worked every day –

(Continued on page 7, right column)

Our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of:

Evelyn Inamine

Shigeta Kuwada

Toshiko Paullin

Please see Temple News for details

Temple News 🌸 June 2013

- 🌸 6/01 Rev. Ashikaga conducted the memorial service at the temple for Mr. Shigeta Kuwada who passed away on April 10. He is survived by his wife Fumiko, daughters Ellen Ruck and Cheryl Kuwada, and son John.
- 🌸 6/02 June monthly memorial service was held and Rev. Ashikaga gave the Dharma Talk in English and Japanese. He also conducted the Ti-Sarana (confirmation) ceremony for Denise Zimmerman. * * * Rev. Nakai presented a paper at the International Association of Shin Buddhist Studies Conference in Vancouver, Canada.
- 🌸 6/08 Asoka Society met and cleaned the temple in preparation for Natsu Matsuri. * * * Rev. Ashikaga conducted ashes burial service for the late Mr. Kiyoshi Hosokawa at Montrose Cemetery
- 🌸 6/09 Dharma School chaired and provided music and a presentation on the Six Paramitas at the regular Sunday service. Rev. Nakai gave the main Dharma Talk.
- 🌸 6/12 First planning meeting for Eastern Buddhist League (EBL) conference.
- 🌸 6/15 Luncheon to honor Rev. Ashikaga on his retirement was held at Monastero's Ristorante and attended by more than 150 people. * * * Rev. Nakai conducted memorial service at the Temple for Mrs. Evelyn Inamine, who passed away on May 19. She is survived by sons Victor (Alyse) Ito and Don (Sandie) Ito.
- 🌸 6/16 Rev. Ashikaga gave the Dharma Talk at Sunday Service, and his retirement was officially acknowledged. Bishop Noriaki Ito of Higashi Honganji presented Rev. Nakai with the new *gojo-gesa* (brocade vestment) to recognize her as the Resident Minister. * * * William Shehan represented BTC at a seminar discussing meditation in various Buddhist traditions held at Wat Dhammaram temple.
- 🌸 6/16 Rev. Nakai and Bishop Ito visit the graves of Rev. Gyomay Kubose and Rev. Gyoko Saito (pictured) at Montrose Cemetery .
- 🌸 6/18 Rev. Nakai conducted ashes burial service for the late Mrs. Evelyn Inamine at Montrose Cemetery. * * * Planning meeting for EBL was held.
- 🌸 6/20 Rev. Ashikaga conducted ashes burial service for the late Mr. Minoru Kanki, a member of the Chicago Jodoshu Temple, at Montrose Cemetery.
- 🌸 6/22 Volunteer workers prepared temple for Natsu Matsuri.
- 🌸 6/23 Natsu Matsuri summer festival was held. * * * Rev. Ashikaga participated in and Rev. Nakai attended memorial service for the late Rev. Shunjo Takahashi, minister of the Chicago Jodoshu Temple at Lakeview Funeral Home. Since the Jodoshu group will be without a local minister, our temple will provide services if requested. For many years Rev. Takahashi served as a backup minister for our temple when BTC ministers were unavailable.
- 🌸 6/25 Natsu Matsuri clean-up carried out by daytime and evening volunteers.
- 🌸 6/26 Rev. Ashikaga conducted funeral service at Glueckert Funeral Home in Arlington Heights for Mrs. Toshiko Paullin who passed away on June 22. She is survived by husband Shizuo Ohtsuki and son Ian Paullin.
- 🌸 6/27 Rev. Ashikaga conducted Third-Year memorial service for the late Mr. Masami Takayama at the temple. * * * World Religions class (nine students) from Harper College visited temple. * * * Bon Odori teaching crew planned and practiced dances for 2013.
- 🌸 6/28 July Bulletin was mailed.
- 🌸 6/29 Rev. Nakai conducted ashes burial service for the late Mrs. Dorothy Kuse at Montrose Cemetery.
- 🌸 6/30 Rev. Nakai gave Dharma Talk at regular Sunday service. * * * BTC Board of Directors met.

**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, Glenn T. Fujiura, Wendy Fawcett, Anna Idol, William Shehan, Mia Blixt-Shehan, and accompanists Dharma School students Ava, Bea, Ian, Wen Qing, Will, Yulian.
- 🌸 Sunday Service Refreshments: Chris Becker, Noreen Enkoji, Haru Ito, Jane and Jerry Morishige, Betty Segal, Elaine Siegel, Peggy Waters, Denise Zimmerman.
- 🌸 Temple Bulletin Mailing: Rev. Ashikaga, Sue Balsam, Mia Blixt-Shehan, Dennis Chan, Antoinette d'Vencets, Noreen Enkoji, Haru Ito, Chuck Izui, Rev. Nakai, Masa Nakata, Mary Shimomura, Tak Tomiyama.
- 🌸 Taking care of the Temple inside and out: Tomio Tademoto.
- 🌸 Cleaning the Temple: Michele Mulcahy.
- 🌸 Manning the Temple office every Thursday: Tak Tomiyama.
- 🌸 Maintaining 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.



Rev. Nakai and Bishop Noriaki Ito visit the grave of Rev. Gyoko Saito at Montrose Cemetery. Photo by Gary Nakai.

More Important Dates

- ☸ July: Bon Odori dance practice at 7:30 pm at the Temple on July 22, 24, 26, 29, & 31.
- ☸ July 28: Temple Picnic.
- ☸ Aug. 3: Bon Odori.
- ☸ Aug. 4: Obon Service.
- ☸ Aug. 18: JASC All-Camps Reunion. See July issue.
- ☸ Aug. 31 - Sept. 2: BTC hosts 2013 Eastern Buddhist League Conference. See page 5.
- ☸ Sept. 28: BTC Rummage Sale. See this page.
- ☸ Now-Oct. 6: Hokusai exhibit at Art Institute. See July issue.
- ☸ Now-Oct. 27: Amdra Samelson & Indira Johnson exhibits at LUMA, Tomoaki Suzuki exhibit at Art Institute. See July issue.
- ☸ Now-Nov. 3: Jun Kaneko exhibition at Boeing Galleries, Millennium Park. See July issue.

Also see Rummage Sale dates this page and
August Calendar of Events, pages 1 & 8.

Rummage Sale Dropoff Dates

The rummage sale is Saturday, September 28, 10 am to 4 pm. Please take the time to go through your closets and garage for items you no longer wear or need. Drop off donated items at the BTC minister's residence on the following Sundays from 10 am to 1 pm: **Aug. 25, Sept. 8, 15, & 22.**

We accept clean, gently used clothing and accessories and small appliances in good working condition. We cannot accept TVs, mattresses, furniture, humidifiers, electronics, or items that are stained, torn or broken. For those requiring assistance with drop-off please contact Laura Muraoka at: ewcamera@sbcglobal.net.

Anyone with questions or concerns please contact Lynn Maruyama at: lmurayama14@earthlink.net.

Hatsubon 2013

(As of press time)

Lillian Morishita	7/17/2012
Yuji Tamura	8/29/2012
George Hidaka	9/16/2012
Haruko Tanaka	9/29/2012
Akiko Sugano	10/04/2012
Yoko Kenmotsu	10/23/2012
Kaen Mey Liang	10/31/2012
Toshiko Saito	10/31/2012
Helen Kurita	11/05/2012
Dorothy Kuse	12/12/2012
Kiyoshi Hosokawa	12/28/2012
Minoru Kanki	1/13/2013
Kikuko Fujimura	1/14/2013
Alice Fukuyama	3/29/2013
Mitsuko Tokimoto	4/05/2013
Shigeta Kuwada	4/10/2013
Harue Miyata	4/12/2013
Fred Sasaki	4/26/2013
Evelyn Inamine	5/19/2013
Toshiko Paullin	6/22/2013

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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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President's Message for August: Introducing a Familiar Face

By Glenn T. Fujiura

At the beginning of the minister's message at July's Shotsuki Hoyo monthly memorial service, our Resident Minister, Rev. Patti Nakai, felt compelled to introduce herself. With Emeritus Minister Reverend Ashikaga's retirement in June, this was her first official memorial service as the Resident Minister. I quickly looked around. A few seemed surprised by the mention of Ashikaga's retirement. Except for the first-time visitors, everyone was familiar with Rev. Patti. She really did not need to introduce herself.

When the Board of Directors announced Rev. Patti Nakai's acceptance of our offer to serve as Resident Minister, the reaction was very positive. The decision was a "comfortable" one. Rev. Nakai was a familiar face for Temple members and universally liked and respected. Patti was an obvious choice and heck, she was already here.

But there is a downside to familiarity: We take the familiar for granted.

So let me make this clear. Having Rev. Patti as the Resident Minister was not a choice borne of convenience. She was the best choice, and a proverbial "grand slam" for The Buddhist Temple of Chicago.

Our temple has an extraordinary tradition of studying the Teachings, due in large part to a lineage of Buddhist scholars starting with Manshi Kiyozawa (1863-1903), and his student Haya Akegarasu (1877-1954). Rev. Gyomay Kubose, our founding minister, and Rev. Gyoko Saito, our head minister from 1966 to 1981, were direct students of Akegarasu and thus worked throughout their careers to further develop their teacher's focus on the insights of Shinran over 750 years ago. These teachings were not variations on a theme but direct connection to the teachings of Shakyamuni through the seven Pure Land masters recognized by Shinran. It is this teaching lineage that keeps Jodo Shinshu fresh and relevant for our time and our Sangha here at BTC. Shin Buddhism moves beyond the stale ceremony, and returns to what it was intended to be – a living perspective on our lives.¹ Our Rev. Patti Nakai was a student of Saito and also Akegarasu through Dr. Nobuo Haneda and Shuichi Maida and continues the heritage of teachings and practices of Oneness here and now.

An important aspect of mindfulness is maintaining a fresh perspective on the routine and on all those daily occurrences that we think we know – to always be open and aspire to see everything for the first time. So, let me introduce you to our new Resident Minister, a familiar face yes, but also a critical link in a heritage that makes our temple unique and critically important to the understanding of the essence of the Pure Land tradition.

1 Rev. Patti Nakai, "Faces Brightly Shining: Rev. Akegarasu and the Eternal Life Sutra," in *The Buddhist Temple of Chicago Bulletin* (August) (Chicago, 1997).

2013 Haiku Competition Winners

Children's Category

a robin sings
outside my window –
bath time
– A. Shehan



First Place

Singing birds greet me
every morning, not concerned
with the night before
– Tracy Ito

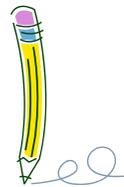
Second Place

The fowl in repose
Gracefully rests before me
My teriyaki
– Glenn T. Fujiura

Honorable Mentions

Quiet in the morn
a white crane stands in silence
observing his world
– Haruko Nakaoka

a sleepless night
watching the moon float by –
baby starlings
– W. Shehan



2013 Natsu Matsuri Raffle Winners

Grand prize - Mary Maruyama
First prize - Donna Ogura
Second prize - Hisako Tsukamoto
Third prize - Emma Philibert
Quilt Raffle - Sadie Kasamoto

Sangha News

🌸 Congratulations to past Dharma School student Sara Kuse who graduated from Northside College Prep High School and will begin attending the University of Chicago this fall. Sara is the daughter of Susan and the late Roy Kuse, and the granddaughter of the late Dorothy Kuse.

🌸 Congratulations to past Dharma School student Brian Patzwaldt who married Mindy Mettner in a ceremony on June 8 at the Midwest Buddhist Temple, where the bride is a member. Brian is the son of Otto and Frances Patzwaldt, and the grandson of Fumiko Takata.

🌸 Our condolences to BTC Bulletin team member Michele Mulcahy, who lost her father William Mulcahy. The July 3 funeral mass at St. Barnabas Church was attended by Rev. Patti and Gary Nakai, Ruth Abbinanti, and Ruby Tsuji.

Koso-ki: Haya Akegarasu Memorial

Every year in August our temple observes Koso-ki, the memorial service for Rev. Haya Akegarasu (1877-1954) who was the teacher of our temple's first two ministers, Rev. Gyomay Kubose and Rev. Gyoko Saito, and of many others such as Shuichi Maida. After Akegarasu's passing, his students named his annual memorial service "Koso-ki." *Ki* means "memorial" and *koso* is "aromatic grass," that is, wild orchids.

In the following passage, Akegarasu writes in a letter to a friend of how orchids truly inspired him during a time of personal turmoil. In his description of orchids, we can hear the true calling of Namu Amida Butsu:

...By year's end, I don't have enough money, and since during the year I have neglected many things, these things now pursue me, and I become irritated.... Then I look at the orchids, so vigorous and yet so quiet, which do not fight with any other life, and I am reminded of the feeling of deep meditation. I feel that the life of the orchids lets me slip into the state of Nirvana. These orchids teach me, guide me, more than people's words and articles. The orchid has no philosophy, no literature, no religion – or if so, then she is herself philosophy, literature, religion. She doesn't discuss, doesn't draw conclusions, doesn't preach, but lives her own natural life very cheerfully. In her there are no countries, no societies. Her buds cluster together in harmony among her roots. But the orchid does not force me to follow her, and I have no wish to follow her, either. ... Her life is straightforward: she makes a sincere effort to live in her own way without looking at the lives of others. This life of hers touches me very deeply. This is why I am attracted to her life, and why she teaches me the way. And the thing that has impressed me the most is that she has a special character not seen in other plants – she herself manifests tranquility in solitude, effort, hope.

...Orchids have no thoughts – not even experiences – no study, faith or morality. So orchids will say, "Welcome!" and "All right!" to you and open their arms to embrace everyone, saying without hesitation, "Come to me!"

(Pages 34-35 *Shout of Buddha: The Writings of Haya Akegarasu* translated by Gyoko Saito and Joan Sweany, Chicago: Orchid Press, 1977)

The EBL Countdown Checklist

By Gary T. Nakai, EBL 2013 Chair

The biography of Rev. Wayne Yokoyama is the latest to be posted on our website under the EBL 2013 tab. Rev. Wayne is a recognized scholar on D. T. Suzuki, and we are so fortunate that he is able to make and take time away from his busy schedule as a lecturer and researcher to share with us the fascinating accounts of how Buddhism was introduced to America back at the turn of the 20th century. He will talk of how beginning with the 1893 Columbian Exposition and the World's Parliament of Religions and the subsequent works of Edward Hegeler and Paul Carus in collaboration with Suzuki, the roots of Buddhism were firmly planted to grow into the availability it had for later generation of Americans, including us. As beneficiaries of this pioneering work, we can take away a deeper understanding of what they encountered and then perhaps apply such realizations in our outreach efforts in this century.

In any event, our conference theme, "Coming to America – Sharing Forward the Legacy of Inclusion" is resonating with celebrated people outside of the Eastern District, as witnessed by their early registration for the conference. Nothing speaks greater of one's word than one's action! With the conference less than 60 days away, time can begin to feel like it's moving oh so quickly. It feels like that for the committee! As attendees perhaps, so quickly that we don't realize we had better get into doing rather than thinking about it, namely, making up our minds to attend the conference, then doing something about it!

Accordingly, I offer this checklist of things to do:

- 1) Register for the conference by returning page 1 of the 6-page registration packet available on our website: www.budtempchi.org. Remember, late registration fees kick in after July 31st, so why cut it so close? Besides, early registration helps us get the best deals for tour prices for you. So you'll be helping all the way around by registering early. Also, because accommodating more than two busloads (110 people) will present further logistical challenges, we want to make sure the Eastern District people do get included.
- 2) Make sure you call the hotel and reserve your room at the affordable conference rate of just \$84.99 per room per night, plus tax. Don't miss out! Our current block of rooms is 47 rooms based on availability.
- 3) Let us know if you are flying into O'Hare International and will take one of the scheduled buses by so indicating that on the registration form. Most importantly, we need to know when everybody is coming in to finalize the two pickup times. We can't deal with stragglers after the schedule of two pickup times without incurring huge costs for private pickups. We want you to attend, but we also want you to help us keep costs down. For locals, carpools are available too. Go to our website to arrange for your ride.
- 4) Make your meal selection on the registration form as explained on page 3 of the packet.
- 5) Don't delay in getting your greetings into our program book. There always seems to be someone who regrets not getting their greeting included each year. And if you can't attend, you can still send your greetings to your friends via this method.

(Continued on page 7, left column)

Natsu Matsuri 2013

Since 1995, I have been chairman or co-chairman of Natsu Matsuri every year. Every year, my job seems to get easier. I assure you it is not because I am getting any smarter; rather, it is because of all the people who do the hard work. A group of dedicated temple members make the festival possible.

The signature item at Natsu Matsuri is the teriyaki chicken. This year, we served 800 chicken dinners. As folks arrive to Natsu Matsuri, they see Team Teriyaki grilling the chicken, not realizing how much work has already occurred. On Saturday morning, the chickens are trimmed and made ready for the marinade. Neil Kanemoto prepares the secret BTC teriyaki recipe, then he and others bag the chickens and place them in the walk-in cooler. Chickens now prepped, Pete Izui and Tomio Tademoto supervise the construction of the cooking area. On Sunday morning they arrive shortly after sunrise to begin the cooking process. Throughout the day, Team Teriyaki cooks the chickens, but their day isn't done when the last chicken leaves the grill. Now the task of cleaning up and starting to dismantle the cooking area must be done. Late in the afternoon they are finally able to rest.

(Continued on page 7, left column)

Gigantic Thanks from the Craft Group

By Alice Murata

The 2013 Natsu Matsuri craft sale was very successful thanks to all of you. The Craft group is grateful to everyone who helped us make Natsu Matsuri 2013 successful.



We were happy to present our completely handmade quilt highlighted in Japanese fabrics and supported in the background by the pink and blue. A huge thanks to everyone who supported us by purchasing quilt raffle tickets. This year's quilt winner was Sadie

Kasamoto.

Thanks to the donors and purchasers of our crafts, gifts, and silent auction. Donors of treasures, time, and/or effort are the following: Ruth Abbinanti, Shizuko Akitomo, Fujiko Asa, Rev. and Mrs. Ashikaga, Karen Baier, Bill Bohlman, Dennis Chan, Jane Ike, Marion Ishii, Mandy Kapsalis, Gwen Kato, Hisako Kometani, Frances Lau, Laura Muraoka, Alice Murata, Anna Nagata, Shizue Nakanishi, Arlene Nozawa, Dennie Okuhara, Lynn Osato, Miriam Solon, Harky Tademoto, Jane Watanabe, the estate of Fred Babbin, the estate of Ebiisu, the estate of Evelyn Inamine, Karen Kanemoto, and the Japanese American Service Committee. This list may be incomplete, and we apologize if we omitted your name. Donations of Japanese goods, gift items, handmade items, and other treasures are gratefully acknowledged.

The Craft Group members include Mandy Kapsalis, Alice Murata, Anna Nagata, Shizue Nakanishi, Arlene Nozawa, Dennie Okuhara, Harky Tademoto, Ruby Tsuji, and Jane Watanabe (quilt designer).



Photos by Shawn Lyte, Debra Levie, and Jane Morishige

The EBL Countdown Checklist

(Continued from page 5)

- 6) If you can't attend, please consider a donation to help the cause. You will be recognized by name in the program book as an EBL 2013 Benefactor.
- 7) Periodically check the BTC website for the latest news about EBL 2013. Some things don't change, that's true, but some things do. Send me your e-mail address if you want to be included in up-to-the-minute EBL 2013 notices. This list is becoming the "in-crowd" of places to be!
- 8) Lastly, volunteer to help make this EBL the grand event it promises to be. Spots are still open. Already we have volunteers from outside BTC helping. Call or write to me with any questions or comments: 847-676-9309 or budtempchi@hotmail.com.

... Natsu Matsuri 2013

(Continued from page 6)

Meanwhile, in the kitchen a similar scene is playing out. Having made sure that everything needed to prepare and serve the chirashi, inari, soba, rice, cole slaw and beverages is ready, Kiyo Omachi and Haru Ito set the kitchen crew in motion. Throughout Saturday morning and early afternoon, the crew of volunteers they have assembled begin preparing the needed ingredients. On Sunday, Kiyo and Haru arrive at 5:30 AM, followed not much later by the chirashi preparation crew. From morning to afternoon on Sunday the kitchen runs like a well-oiled machine, making sure that a steady stream of delicious food is available until the final visitor is served.

The ladies of the Craft group work all year long preparing for Natsu Matsuri. They create a beautiful quilt to be raffled; this year it raised over \$800. Large selections of gift items and silent auction items are created or acquired. On Saturday afternoon the craft area is set up; on Sunday the ladies work all day staffing their area.

Jerry and Jane Morishige share their various collections with us thru the cultural exhibit area. Without their hard work, we would find it difficult to have such a wonderful exhibit.

The layout and logistics of the indoor festival area is the domain of Gary Nakai. His planning and supervision of the set-up, and dealing with issues as they arise, assures that everything runs as smoothly as possible.

Kokyo Taiko once again entertained us with another stellar performance. Elaine Siegel and William Sheehan oversaw the haiku contest and Rev. Nakai presented her informative "Taste of Chicago Buddhism" talks.

On festival weekend, dozens of volunteers provide us with the enthusiastic help needed to guarantee a great time. They show up ready to help in any way possible, willing to do any job that is needed. As chairman, I know I never have to worry that there will be enough help.

We often speak of sangha; Natsu Matsuri is sangha in action. All I have to do is set things in motion; the sangha does all the hard work. I humbly express my gratitude to all who help to make my job so easy.

Gassho,
Bill Bohlman
Chairman, Natsu Matsuri Committee

... August Dance

(Continued from page 1)

there was no mandated weekly "day of rest" as in the Judeo-Christian tradition. Holiday festivals were important because they provided rare time-outs for working people. In agriculture, there is a brief lull in summer between cultivating the crops and harvesting them when farmers can afford a couple days off from constant labor.

In the same way that Christians piggy-backed on the pagan celebration of Yuletide (winter solstice) in Europe, those who spread Buddhism in Japan found the mid-summer dancing an opportunity to introduce "Obon," the concept of honoring our loved ones through charitable acts. The Ullambara Sutra became the *raison d'être* for Bon Odori – identifying with Buddha's disciple Maudgalayana dancing for joy when his mother was freed from hell after he fed the monks coming out of their rainy season retreat. I believe that with all the problems associated with the Obon story in the light of the Jodo Shinshu teachings (e.g., Shinran wouldn't tell us we can get our loved ones out of hell by keeping the monks well-fed), we should get back to the folk roots of Hachi-gatsu Odori, the August dance.

Instead of asking "Why do we dance?" we could ask ourselves, "Why are we able to dance?" Bon Odori reminds us that we are alive and are continuing to live not by "my power" but by "others' power." And for most of us past the age of forty, we know that many of those influential "others" are people who've passed away – our grandparents, aunts, uncles and mentors. Obon, then, is not a mournful time but a time to express our appreciation for the people who've supported and inspired us. What better way to do that than to dance the night away in lively fellowship and joyful movements?

So Bon Odori is really another form of nembutsu, the calling of Namu Amida Butsu. In dancing we "Namu" – abandon our ego-self (concerns like "Does this kimono make my butt look big?") and just join in with the lives around us. In enjoying the music and dancing together, our hearts are opened and we awaken to this palpable sense of the Oneness of life – "Amida Butsu," the Unbounded Light shining from and onto all beings.

Hope to see all of you on Saturday, August 3rd and at the practice sessions before that date. Together let's raise our arms and step lively in Namu Amida Butsu.

AUGUST 2013 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

日本語の 祥月法要
8月11日 午後1:00 時

- See page 1 for more details.
- Events may be cancelled or moved after press time due to unforeseen circumstances
- Asoka Society (Saturday), Buddhist Study Class (Wednesdays), Calligraphy (Tuesdays), Dharma Sunday School (Sundays), Japanese Language School (Saturdays), and Meditation (Thursdays & Sundays) are on hiatus for the summer.

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2 7pm Kokyo Taiko	3 10am Crafts 7pm Bon Odori
4 11am Obon Service	5 7pm laido	6 11am Quigong	7	8	9 7pm Kokyo Taiko	10
11 11am Shotsuki Hoyo (English) 1pm Shotsuki Hoyo (Japanese)	12 7pm laido	13 11am Quigong	14	15	16 7pm Kokyo Taiko	17 10am Crafts
18 11am Lay Speaker Service (English) 12:30pm Sutra study	19 7pm laido	20 11am Quigong	21	22	23 7pm Kokyo Taiko	24
25 11am Service (English) 12:30pm Board Meeting	26 7pm laido	27 11am Quigong	28	29	30 7pm Kokyo Taiko	31