Soldiers and Veterans – Embraced in Right Livelihood

[A] person who has attained religious conviction is a free person, for whom nothing is an obstacle. …He may engage in politics or business. He may go fishing or hunting. When his country is endangered, he may march to war with a rifle on his shoulder.
– Manshi Kiyozawa, “The Indispensable Conditions for Religious Conviction”*

Buddhists are commonly stereotyped as passive and calm, and so people expect Buddhist leaders and followers to be as far removed from military life as possible. Visitors to our temple have been surprised to hear Rev. Ashikaga talk of his education at a high school-level military academy in Japan during World War II and of his father’s absence from the family temple because of military duty. In Japan at that time, ordained Buddhist clergy were not exempt from military service and so the participation in the war effort by Rev. Ashikaga’s family was the norm. In fact, anyone reading Brian Victoria’s 1997 book Zen at War can’t help noticing that each of the Buddhist leaders who dared to openly oppose the war were imprisoned, brutally abused, and usually executed. People in Japan at that time, religious or not, were faced with the choice of joining in the violence of war or receiving violence from their own government.

In June, our temple is one of the few outside of Japan that observes Rosen-ki, the memorial for Manshi Kiyozawa (1863-1903). Kiyozawa is important to our temple because he was the direct teacher of Haya Akegarasu (1877-1954), the teacher of both Rev. Gyomay Kubose and Rev. Gyoko Saito, our temple’s first ministers. During my study in Japan 1984-87, I was surprised to hear Akegarasu often criticized as a war-supporter because he spoke as a chaplain to the Japanese army in China and other occupied areas in Asia.

(Continued on page 6)

Safe Sangha

The stories of abuse in churches and other religious settings, especially of children, are depressingly familiar in the media. Buddhist temples are not immune, and recent abuse allegations have been reported in Chicago suburbs and in Los Angeles. The possibility of abuse is an uncomfortable topic, especially for a temple like ours whose operations are based on trust and long-established relationships.

As a small Sangha, our “screening” and “background checks” are based on trusted friendships developed over years and extending across generations. Our temple environment is a trusting and nurturing one. Abuse has not been an issue for us at The Buddhist Temple of Chicago. But the world is changing and it is vital that we directly discuss the potential for abuse and proactively work to address vulnerabilities. While a trusting environment has served to protect our members over the years, it can also be exploited by a potential abuser. Our obligation is to create as safe a setting for all our members as is possible.

The Board is in the process of finalizing a “Safe Sangha” policy – principles and practices intended to prevent abuse in the form of discriminatory acts or sexual misconduct. The policy incorporates basic common sense procedures that have been practiced informally over the years as well as some new additional precautions. Informal is no longer sufficient.

The process of implementing these sorts of protections will take time and will no doubt evolve in response to changing circumstances within the temple. The preliminary policy calls for education and training for BTC leadership and those volunteers who regularly work with children and youth. Screening, background checks, and the development of safety practices in our school and educational programs are key new elements to the policy. A complaint process is in place that involves the Resident Minister and a response team selected from members of the Board. Our thanks to Board member Elaine Siegel for her leadership on this initiative.

Your input on the draft and suggestions and recommendations are important. To obtain a copy of the draft policy, please contact Elaine.
Temple News June 2014

4/05 Memorial service for the late Ms. Virginia Morrison was conducted at BTC by Rev. Nakai. Ms. Morrison is survived by daughter Kate Warpeha and sons John and Frank Warpeha.

4/06 April monthly memorial service was held. *** The Shoshinge class met then joined the afternoon Japanese service for chanting. *** Rev. Nakai and several temple members participated in the Treasures of Uptown interfaith discussion of the film “The Power of Forgiveness” held at Peoples Church.

4/08 Glenbrook North High School social studies class visited the temple.

4/11-12 Volunteers polished brass altar ornaments, decorated the Hanamido (flower shrine), and cleaned up in the hondo in preparation for Hanamatsuri.

4/13 Hanamatsuri service was held with Dharma School and English Dharma talk by Rev. Nakai and Japanese Dharma talk by Rev. Ashikaga. Luncheon was served by the Board of Directors.

4/14 North Park University philosophy class visited the temple. *** North Park University sociology class visited the temple.

4/18 May Bulletin was collated and sorted.

4/19 Asoka Society met. *** Rev. Nakai presented seminar on “Unquiet Women of Buddhism” at the Toronto Buddhist Church.

4/20 Lay speaker for Sunday service was Nancey Epperson. *** Rev. Nakai gave Dharma talk at the Toronto Buddhist Church’s Hanamatsuri service.

4/21 Bulletin mailed.

4/22 Bon Odori instructors met to plan 2014 program.

4/27 Regular Sunday service. *** Board of Directors met. *** BTC Kokyo Taiko Children’s Taiko held an introductory session. Seven children and their grownups attended.

4/30 Rev. Nakai conducted ashes interment service for the late Mr. Peter Oda at Montrose Cemetery.

Sangha News

The tentative date for the BTC Scouts Reunion (both boys and girls) is Saturday, Sept. 27, 2014. For now the temple office will collect names and contact info of everyone who is interested and will pass them on to the organizers.

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


Musicians: Mrs. Ashikaga, Ruth Abbinanti, John Marino.

Audio Controls: Jacob and Wendy Fawcett.


Bulletin Mailing: Sue Balsam, Dennis Chan, Antoinette D’Vencets, Noreen Enkoji, Haru Ito, Mary Shimomura, Ruby Tsuji.


Cleaning Temple washrooms: Michele Mulcahy, Ruby Tsuji.

Taking care of the Temple inside and out: Tomio Tademoto.

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, Ruby Tsuji.
Children’s Taiko Program
BTC Kokyo Taiko has launched a children’s taiko program. All children and their grownups are invited to join. The suggested age range is 5 to 15. Parents and guardians of children under 8 should participate or assist. There is no charge for this program. For more information and to register, email Miriam Solon at sarahksmom@yahoo.com.

SAVE THE DATE
Eastern Buddhist League Conference 2014
By Ruth Abbinanti
This year’s Eastern Buddhist League Conference, “Flourishing through Difference” will be held August 29-31. The host is Ekoji Buddhist Temple in Fairfax Station, Virginia near Washington, D.C. This is a wonderful opportunity to grow in Dharma knowledge and deepen Sangha friendships as we live and work together for a few days.

The sessions will explore various perspectives on how as individuals and as communities we can thrive by learning from the many points of view and experiences within our Sanghas. We will discuss how to use our many differences of age, gender preference, perspectives, and opinions to create plans to help our temples not to survive but to flourish. More detailed information will follow. Check our website regularly for links to updates.

The BTC Mission Statement
Founded in 1944 as an administratively independent temple, The Buddhist Temple of Chicago aspires to the following:

★ To present and explore the Three Treasures of Buddhism – the Buddha (teacher), the Dharma (teachings), and the Sangha (community).
★ To be guided and inspired by the historical Buddha, Gautama Shakyamuni, and the teachers who have followed – Shinran Shonin, Manshi Kiyozawa, and Haya Akegarasu.
★ To present the Buddha-Dharma in a language and manner relevant and understandable in contemporary America.
★ To welcome all who seek the Dharma without any exceptions.
★ To be a positive presence in our local community working to enhance the vitality of our neighborhood.
★ To honor and continue the traditions of our founding members.
★ To always live the Nembutsu – Namu Amida Butsu.
It’s Natsu Matsuri Time!
By Bill Bohlman

It isn’t really summer until we have Natsu Matsuri. This year, the festival is Sunday, June 22 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. We’ll have all the great things you love: taiko, haiku contest, cultural exhibits, Taste of Chicago Buddhism talks, crafts, gift items, and delicious food featuring our world famous chicken teriyaki! In this issue of the Bulletin you will find a food presale order form. Make sure to send it in to guarantee your share of the delicious specialty items. There are few things sadder than someone who doesn’t get their chicken because they forgot to pre-order. Once again you will have a chance to win cash or a beautiful handmade quilt in our festival sweepstakes. We look forward to seeing you.

Natsu Matsuri Quilt 2014
By Alica Murata

The BTC Craft Group happily produced another fabulous completely handmade quilt to raffle for this year’s Natsu Matsuri. The colorful squares include a mixture of medium blues, a touch of metallic gold, and maroon red, all bordered in black (see photos to the left – full color photos available on the online version of this bulletin). Please support our craft group and our temple by purchasing quilt raffle tickets. We have also been busy making other fun hand crafted items for sale. Among our treasures this year are dolls, baby futons, bags, o-juzu beads, tissue box covers, pillows, and jewelry. Also, please consider donating items for our Silent Auction or for sale on the Natsu Matsuri craft tables.

The Craft Group usually meets on the first and third Saturdays of each month from September to June. We are looking for new members who would enjoy learning how make crafts. Current members include Ruth Abbinanti, Mandy Kapsalis, Alice Murata, Shizue Nakanishi, Arlene Nozawa, Linda Triplett, Ruby Tsuji, and Jane Watanabe (co-ordinator of the yearly quilts we make). Ex-officio members include Jane Ike, Anna Nagata, Jan Saiki, and Harky Tademoto.
What Are You Seeking?
By Nancey Epperson

Adapted from a lay talk given April 20, 2014.


In the Dhammapada, there is a reading titled “The Seeker.” This poem addresses the search for the meaning of life and advises the reader to control the senses and follow the truth of The Way.

In literature a common trope is the Hero’s Quest, where the hero sets out in search of something unobtainable in his daily life or in search of adventure and self-fulfillment.

Many of the readers of this newsletter came to BTC seeking meaning and purpose in their lives. The search usually starts when s/he asks, “What is lacking in my life? And how will I know when I find it?”

The Search for the Ultimate Lunch

Years ago, when I worked in the Sears Tower, my friend Pam worked nearby. We would meet for lunch about once a week. Pam was a new lawyer and had begun working for her first law firm. She needed to build up her “billable hours,” the hours that could be charged to a client. She was also a single mom with a teenage son.

She thought that one of the way to increase her billable hours was spend no time preparing lunch or thinking about what to eat and to have lunch at her desk while working. This ended our lunch outings together.

She asked her son to make her lunch and his lunch on the mornings. She was pleased that the lunch issue was solved so easily and quickly until she started getting peanut butter & tomato sandwiches with a side of jalapenos.

Her next plan was to place a standing order at a deli in her building for “soup of the day” plus baguette to be delivered to her office precisely at 12:15 PM. The first few days she got a soup she liked. When a Manhattan clam chowder showed up, she freaked out.

She came up with another idea. She would go to the same restaurant at the same time every day and order the same thing. I could join her if I wanted to. In fact, she had just the place – a pizza shop across the street that sold slices of exotic pizza, like artichoke! Hawaiian! Broccoli! Pam loved broccoli and claimed she could never get sick of broccoli pizza. I met her on the sixth day of this regimen. She was sitting at the restaurant’s counter looking dispirited. I asked her what was wrong. She made a face and pointed to the un-touched pizza on her plate.

“Broccoli pizza. What was I thinking?”

I asked her why she didn’t order something different. She replied that she had made a decision, and needed to stick to it. She didn’t want to be seen as wishy-washy by her office-mates, whom she had told about her streamlining idea.

This happened more than 20 years ago yet I still think about it. Perhaps Pam had been chasing co-worker respect by making decisions that were meaningless to anyone other than herself. I don’t know if her attachment to “always having the same lunch” brought her the acceptance she sought.

Often I have pondered the illusions I have been chasing, only to discover that the answer or resolution should have been evident all along. I’ve thought about the attachments I have held on to, believing that I could find the Ultimate Answer to Truth, Meaning and Happiness in Life.

The Search for Home

Several years ago, I dated Sylvia, the most attractive person I had ever met. I had found my soul mate. We had both spent the better part of our younger lives looking for our missing piece, someone to make us complete. Someone to come home to. We made plans for the future. We were going to visit all her friends in Massachusetts and Canada. Curiously, Sylvia said we didn’t have time to visit my family, who lived en route. I was taken aback, but didn’t want to doubt her perfectness just yet.

Still, we enjoyed each other’s company. And, she enjoyed my house. I had just purchased a 2-flat with a longtime friend. Sylvia liked to sit in a recliner, with her feet up, and read mystery novels. She had such a chair at her own apartment, but she didn’t like hanging out there. Her place had become overgrown with stuff. I was uncomfortable in her cluttered, cramped space, so we spent most of our time together at my house.

I bought an overstuffed recliner for Sylvia to sit in and placed it in the back corner of the living room, looking out of the front windows with a view of leafy tree branches and sun shining through them. It was almost like sitting in a very comfy tree house. With the windows open, the cross-breezes keep the summer air from being stiflingly hot. Yet Sylvia never sat in the recliner. She said that the light was bad and that she couldn’t read in the chair. She implied that I had made a bad choice in furniture, as well as its placement.

Though I invited her to share my wonderfully large space, she declined to move in. We dated for a while after that but eventually broke up. Meanwhile, I was enjoying fixing up my house, on my own. My house. I was the one who liked sitting in the recliner. I was the one who liked the large open windows. I was the one who liked the open, uncluttered space. I had found my home.

(Continued on page 6 at bottom right)
This same antagonism is extended to Kiyozawa because of statements such as the one quoted above. Although Kiyozawa died before the ramped-up militarism of Imperial Japan, he well knew military service is a matter of inconceivable karmic causes and conditions, since his father was a foot-soldier samurai under the Tokugawa shogunate. So in Kiyozawa’s writings there is the recognition that people find themselves in military service due to forces beyond their control.

Sometimes I wonder why atrocities such as the Rape of Nanking (1937-38) happened in China when Akegarasu spoke to the Japanese soldiers there. Wasn’t there something he could say to stop such inhumane actions? Maybe he might have had some influence in preventing the massacres from becoming more widespread or maybe he planted a sense of conscience in the soldiers who came forward after the war to confess what was done to the Chinese people by the Japanese army. Or maybe not.

In our Buddhist temples in America, many of the supporters and leaders have been veterans of World War II, and the Korean, Vietnam, and Middle Eastern wars. Not too long ago, the Los Angeles Higashi Honganji Buddhist Temple published reports from a member serving in Iraq and I couldn’t help thinking “We need more Buddhists in the U.S. military” because he talked about showing compassion to the native Iraqis and telling those under his command not to indiscriminately attack those who seemed to show resistance.

Jodo Shinshu is in a particularly advantageous position to take in veterans because Shinran and all our teachers have understood that in “the fog of war” all kinds of atrocities are committed and yet the source of all life (symbolized by “Amida Buddha”) still embraces all and abandons none. It’s sad to read about veterans confronted by civilians with the question, “Did you kill anyone?” when Shinran himself acknowledged that given certain circumstances, any of us could be driven to kill.

In Buddhism, killing is never justified yet we recognize that we participate in the taking of other lives in much of our daily activities, whether it’s eating a hamburger or buying a product from a country or company that lets people and animals die in the production of that product. I don’t believe there’s such a thing as a Buddhist conscientious objector unless he eats and uses plant and animal products harvested without killing anything. If you ride in a gasoline-powered vehicle or use a flush toilet, you are contributing to the destruction of lives in the natural world.

In the same article quoted above, Kiyozawa says, “All means of livelihood are harmonious with the teaching of Buddhism.” Soldiers and veterans have witnessed the impermanence of life and the destructiveness that results from the web of ego-enhancing desires that intertwines our own (“I need the financial aid for college after my service”) with others (“Our country needs control over the raw materials for producing energy”). In their work soldiers have already been receiving the teachings of Buddhism, much more poignantly than those of us in “peaceful” occupations (far away from seeing the injury and death coming out of conflicts). They have already experienced the “Namu” in Namu Amida Butsu – to bow down one’s whole being in recognition of our helplessness in the face of overwhelming causes and conditions.

The working of Right Livelihood is what embraces all of us in the various occupations we find ourselves in (most likely not our choice). No matter how respected or despised our vocation is, we are included in the path of the seeker. Even Kiyozawa when he found himself ex-communicated for his involvement in a reform movement, saw his time of unemployment as Right Livelihood. As we honor him this month, we see how he continued in the footsteps of Honen and Shinran, in the nembutsu teachings of realizing all lives are illuminated by the light of Wisdom. Kiyozawa, like Shinran, teaches us that we are not in a morally superior position to look down on those engaged in military service. If anything, there’s much to learn from having soldiers and veterans in our sangha.

*From December Fan: The Buddhist Essays of Manshi Kiyozawa, translated by Nobuo Haneda (Kyoto: Higashi Honganji, 1984). A new edition will be published soon by the Shinsu Center of America (project of Higashi Honganji’s North America and Hawaii districts).

What Are You Seeking?

(Continued from page 5)

For the first time in my life, I lived in a space that I would never have to leave. No lease to negotiate. No roommate to accommodate. No job transfer to work around. For my whole life, I had wanted a “something” that would give me roots and permanence. During my youth, my father’s job took our family to six different cities. I attended eight different schools. As a young woman, I moved from city to city, even country to country, looking for work. Something inside me had changed, but I did not realize it. I thought I had been searching for a partner. But, really, what I had been seeking was the feeling that I belonged somewhere. And, I belong to BTC. Here I have found a spiritual home, something I did not know I was looking for, until BTC found me.

Namu Amida Butsu.
Buddha ‘Bout Town: Buddhist & Cultural Happenings

June 8: BTC Kokyo Taiko. Location: MAJC Japan Day, 12:30 p.m. at Forest View Educational Center, 2121 S Goebbert Rd, Arlington Heights.

July 25-27: Annual Maida Center Retreat, “Tradition and Creativity: Introduction to the Kyogyo shinsho” led by Dr. Nobuo Haneda, long-time BTC teacher and friend. BTC’s Rev. Patti Nakai will also speak. More info and registration materials are available on the Temple information counter or by contacting MaidaCenter@sbcglobal.net or 510-843-8515.

August 16 & 17: BTC Kokyo Taiko. Location: Chicago Botanic Garden Children’s Festival at 12:30 p.m. 1000 Lake Cook Rd, Glencoe.

September 18-21: Joffrey Ballet presents three dances in their Stories in Motion program. Location: Auditorium Theatre. The third dance is called RAKU, with choreography by Yuri Possokhov and music by Shinji Eshima. The burning of the Golden Pavilion in Kyoto, Japan, is the point of departure for a story of love and tragedy. For tickets, visit http://joffrey.org/stories

Through July 13: Kitagawa Utamaro selections. Location: Art Institute, Gallery 107. Chosen from among approximately 300 works in the Art Institute’s collection, this exhibition highlights some of the artist’s most celebrated prints.

ONGOING

The Field Museum features Buddhist artifacts in permanent sections devoted to China and Tibet.

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

The Smart Museum of Art at the University of Chicago features rotating works of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean art, often with Buddhist themes. Visit smartmuseum.uchicago.edu/exhibitions/asian-art/ for current highlights.

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

June Temple Events & Activities Guide

See Calendar on page 8 for specific dates.

Up-to-date details and last-minute changes are available on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/budtempchi

All events are free, held at the Temple (unless otherwise noted), and open to the public.

Special Services & Events

June 1 Sunday, 11am – Shotsuki Hoyo Monthly Memorial Service (English)
June 8 Sunday, 11am – Rosen-ki Service, Mansho Kiyozawa Memorial Service (English)
June 21 Saturday, 11am – Natsu Matsuri Summer Festival preparation
June 22 Sunday, 11am to 5pm – 2014 Natsu Matsuri Summer Festival

Regular Sunday Services

Religious Service (English) – Sundays, 11 am
Dharma Sunday School (for children) – Second and fourth Sundays of the month. This month: June 8, the final class before summer break. Classes will resume September 14.
Shotsuki Hoyo (Monthly Memorial Service) – First Sundays at 11 am (in English) and 1 pm (in Japanese).
Lay Speaker Sunday – Third Sunday of month, 11 am.

Meetings, Socials, Volunteering

Asoka Society – 3rd Saturday of the month at 1 pm. Includes refreshments.
Board Meeting – Once a month, Sundays, 12:30 pm. This month: June 29.
Bulletin mailing & submissions – Mailing is conducted the 2nd-to-last Friday of every month, at 10 am. Submissions are due eight days prior to the mailing on Thursday, 6 pm. See page 3 for details on submissions.

Cultural Activities

BTC Kokyo Taiko Drum Troupe – Fridays, 7 to 9 pm.
Calligraphy (Japanese brush writing) – First and third Tuesdays, 7:30 pm. Currently on hiatus. Contact Temple if interested.
Chinese Movement (Qigong) – Every Tuesday morning, 11 am to noon. Call Dennis Chan 312-771-6087 for information & to register.
Crafts Group – First & third Saturdays, 10 am to noon. This month: June 7. On hiatus in summer.
Japanese Fencing (Kendo) – Dojo sessions held every Tuesday from 8 to 10 pm at Bethany United Church. Call Bob Kumaki, 847-853-1187 for info.
Japanese Language School (children or adults) – Every Saturday, 10 am. This month: June 7 and 14. Will be on hiatus for summer. Call Temple to register.
Japanese Swordmanship (Iaido) – Mondays, 7 to 9 pm.

Education & Meditation

Introduction to Buddhism – This 4-week course is held periodically throughout the year. Visit budtempchi.org for the schedule or e-mail Rev. Nakai at rev.eshin.patti23@gmail.com.
Buddhism Study Class – Wednesdays, 7 to 8:30 pm. June 4 and 11 then break till Sept 10. No previous Buddhism study required.
Meditation – Thursdays, 7:30 pm June 5 and 12 and Sundays, 9 am June 1 and 8. On break starting July.
Sutra Study Class – Being held on June 8th but normally the second or third Sunday of the month, 12:30 to 2 pm. No previous Buddhism study required.
**BTC Calendar June 2014**

See Temple Events & Activities Guide on page 7 for more details.

Events may be cancelled or moved after press time due to unforeseen circumstances.
Check www.facebook.com/budtempchi for the most up-to-date changes.

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<td>7pm Kokyo Taiko</td>
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<td>11am Qigong</td>
<td>7pm Buddhism Study Class – last class until Sept 10</td>
<td>7:30pm Meditation (last class 9/4)</td>
<td>7pm Kokyo Taiko</td>
<td>10am Japanese – last class until Sept.</td>
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Tear off this last page and tuck it in your wallet/purse or post it on your refrigerator.

Flip it over for details on the specific events.

Never miss a Temple event again!