



The Buddhist Temple of Chicago BULLETIN

願
慧

VOLUME 73
NUMBER 2
NOVEMBER
2016 CE
2559 BE

Articles

- Into Action, Not Complacency, by Rev. Patti Nakai ..1
- Thanks Giving, by Bill Bohlman1
- The Sunset Limited* Preview, by Candy Minx4
- Just a Moment's Thought!5

News & Items

- Asoka Society Report3
- Navigating the Veterans Benefits System4

Regular Features

- Events2
- Mission Statement2
- Temple News3
- Thank You!3
- Calendar8



Address:
1151 W Leland Ave.
Chicago, IL
60640-5043

Telephone:
773-334-4661

Online:
BuddhistTemple
Chicago.org

Resident Minister
Rev. Patti Nakai

Minister Emeritus
Rev. Yukei Ashikaga

President
Bill Bohlman

Into Action, Not Complacency

*For the great engagement with lives everywhere and of all times,
I will break my back to pay it forward
For the clear insights I have received from teachers and Dharma friends,
I will bust my butt to support the sharing of the teachings
-- Ondokusan (my translation)*

What's not to like about the theme of "gratitude"? Recently in another temple's bulletin, they had the transcription of a talk one of their members gave about gratitude. It was very disturbing to me because the article seemed to suggest that all we have to do is feel gratitude and that's the end of the story. The speaker talked about Genza, a *myokonin* (one of the spiritually awakened peasants documented by Nishi Honganji during Japan's feudal era) who repeatedly said, "I am truly, truly grateful," as if that's all he did. But someone such as Genza didn't just settle for feeling grateful, he was up and about helping his neighbors, including a man who was resorting to burglary to survive.

As we commemorate the memorial of Shinran Shonin this

Thanks Giving

"I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next, as a day of Thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens."

With these words, as part of his proclamation, President Abraham Lincoln established Thanksgiving as a national holiday on October 3, 1863.

The nation was mired in the depths of the Civil War, yet President Lincoln realized there was much for which we should be grateful. This proclamation spoke of how even in the midst of war, our nation continued to grow and thrive. Representative of the overwhelmingly Judeo-Christian composition of America, this proclamation ascribed the source of our bounty to the Heavenly Father. As we celebrate Thanksgiving this year, the underlying sentiment has expanded to include people of all faiths.

Buddhism does not have a belief in a divine being. Shakyamuni, the historical Buddha, was simply a human being who attained awakening. He awakened to the understanding that life as it truly is, not as we chose to see it, is perfect. From this life



Rev. Patti Nakai
Resident Minister

For more writings by Rev. Nakai, visit her blog, *Taste of Chicago Buddhism*, at: tinyurl.com/chibud

(Continued on page 7, column 1)



Bill Bohlman
BTC President

Contact Bill at budtempchi@aol.com or find him most Sundays after service at the information desk & bookstore.

(Continued on page 7, column 2)

BTC Temple Events & Activities Guide NOVEMBER 2016

- 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 Temple Services and Events ◀◀◀

- Nov. 5—**Lecture by Steven Asma**, 2-4 pm.
- Nov. 20—**Ho-on-ko** (Shinran Shonin Memorial Service)

Regular Temple Services

- **Religious Service** (in English)—Sundays, 11 am.
- **Lay Speaker Sunday**—Usually, 3rd Sunday every month, 11 am.

Temple Meetings & Community Service

- **Bulletin mailing**—2nd to last Friday every month, 10 am; volunteers welcome. This month: Friday, Nov. 25.
- **Bulletin submissions**—Deadline for notices and articles: every month, 6 pm, the Thursday 15 days prior to mailing. This month: November 10.
- **Temple Board Meeting**—Once a month, Sunday, 12:30 pm. November 27.
- **Upaya Helpers** (refreshment service, community outreach, ping pong, etc.) Call Candy Minx for info: 312-618-0880.
- **Cook It Forward** (feeding the homeless)—Mary Harvey <https://www.facebook.com/groups/CookItForward/>

Meditation & Buddhist Education

- **Buddhism Study Class**—Wednesdays, 7 to 8:30 pm. No previous Buddhism study required.
- **Dharma School** (children's Sunday school)—2nd and 4th Sundays, 11 am. This month: Nov. 13th and Nov. 27th.
- **Introduction to Buddhism**—4-week course offered

periodically throughout the year. E-mail Rev. Nakai at rev.eshin.patti23@gmail.com.

- **Meditation**—Sundays at 9 am and Thursdays, 7:30 pm. No meditation, Thursday, November 24th.
- **Sutra Study Class**—2nd or 3rd Sunday of the month, 12:30 to 2 pm. No previous Buddhism study required.

Social & Cultural Activities

- **Asoka Society** (refreshment service, social club, outings, etc.)—3rd Saturday every month, 1 pm. This month: Nov. 19th.
- **Book Club**—One night a month. This month: Tuesday, November 1st, 6:30 pm.
- **Iaido** (Japanese Swordsmanship)—Mondays, 7-9 pm.
- **Kendo** (Japanese Fencing)—Tuesdays, 8-10 pm, Bethany United Church. Call Bob Kumaki, 847-853-1187 for information.
- **Kumihimo**—Japanese braiding. Nov 5th. 9 am - noon. Email Nancey Epperson: naepperson14@gmail.com
- **Movie Night**—One Tuesday night a month. This month: Nov. 15th, 6:30 pm.
- **Qigong** (Chinese Movement)—Tuesdays, 11-noon. Call Dennis Chan 312-771-6087 for info.
- **Taiko** (BTC Kokyo Taiko Drum Troupe)—**Adults**, Fridays, 7-9 pm. Email kokyotaiko@yahoo.com to confirm. **Children**, 1st, 3rd, and 5th Sundays at 11. Email sanghacomod@yahoo.com for appointments.
- **Ukulele Group**—Tuesdays, 1-3 pm.

Have fun! Find an interest! Get involved!

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.

BTC BULLETIN

Team Darryl Shishido (Editor), Rev. Patti Nakai, Ann Yi, Nancey Epperson, Helen Rom

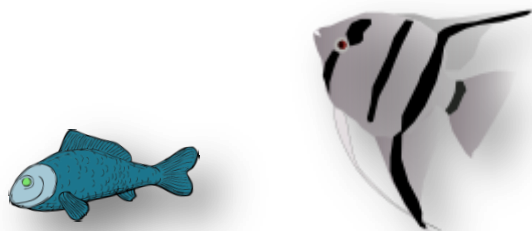
Feedback & Submissions Comments, corrections, questions and suggestions are welcome. Submissions are encouraged (reviewed for suitability and space availability)—articles, essays, book reviews, photos, poetry, news items, announcements, drawings, etc. Anonymous submissions are not published but author's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

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

© **Copyright 2016 BTC Bulletin**, except where otherwise noted.

Temple News September 2016

- ❁ **9/02-04** Rev. Nakai and temple members attend the Eastern Buddhist League conference at the Seabrook Buddhist Temple in New Jersey.
- ❁ **9/08** Tom Lane represented BTC at the ONE-Northside Membership Meeting at the North Shore Baptist Church.
- ❁ **9/11** September memorial and Dharma School service. *** No Japanese service. *** Sutra Study class met.
- ❁ **9/13** Rev. Nakai attended the monthly Uptown clergy luncheon.
- ❁ **9/16** Tom Lane represented BTC at the Interfaith Breakfast at Sarah's Circle.
- ❁ **9/17-18** Rev. Nakai at the Orange County Buddhist Church for Saturday seminar and Sunday service. Also gave Dharma talk at the Vista Buddhist Temple.
- ❁ **9/17** Asoka Society met.
- ❁ **9/18** Lay Speaker service—Tom Corbett was speaker. *** Board of Directors met.
- ❁ **9/20-9/26** Special Iaido seminar with teachers from Japan.
- ❁ **9/20** Rev. Nakai attended Chicago Japanese American Council meeting in Park Ridge, IL
- ❁ **9/25** Fall Ohigan and Dharma School service.
- ❁ **9/26** October bulletin mailed.



Asoka Society Report

by Alice Murata

Asoka Society is grateful to Jane and Jerry Morishige for arranging the Shedd Aquarium show and lunch trip for us. Everybody had a wonderful time.

We are grateful to Matsue Momohara for donating delicious cookies for Asoka Society members' enjoyment.

Mary Ozaki took yarn from the Craft group and made five scarves and three hats for the homeless which will be distributed when the weather turns colder. Domo arigato, Mary.

THANK YOU !

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

- **Sunday Service Participants:** Lynn Maruyama, Miriam Solon, Tom Lane, Nancey Epperson, Antoinette d'Vencets, Tom Corbett, Anna Idol, Bill Bohlman, Elaine Siegel, Alice Murata
- **Music/Accompanists:** Mrs. Ashikaga, Drea Gallaga
- **Audio Controls:** Tom Corbett, Wendy and Jacob Fawcett, Gary T. Nakai
- **Sunday Service Refreshments:** Amy Kawamoto, Peggy Sasamoto, Wendy Lua, Hector Rivera, Carl Scroggins, Noreen Enkoji, Haru Ito, Ruby Tsuji, Upaya
- **Maintaining and updating the Temple computer:** John Kelly, Gary T. Nakai
- **Maintaining and updating the Temple website:** Ann Yi, Wendy Fawcett
- **Administrative Office Volunteers:** Ruth Abbinanti, Darryl Shishido, Ruby Tsuji, Helene Rom
- **Bulletin Mailing:** Lane Kometani, Alice Murata, Mary Shimomura, Haru Ito, Ed Horiuchi, Mary Ozaki, Dennis Chan, Maddy Honda, Ruby Tsuji, Masa Nakata, Antoinette d'Vencets, Candy Minx
- **Cleaning Hondo and Nokotsudo:** Michael Yasukawa
- **Emptying the trash bins, filling them with new bags and putting them out for disposal:** Sue Balsam, Adam Kellman, Candy Minx, Ruby Tsuji, Nancey Epperson
- **Cleaning Temple washrooms:** Anonymous
- **Taking care of the Temple inside and out:** Tomio Tademoto
- Our apologies to anyone we have failed to include on this list.





***The Sunset Limited* Preview**

by Candy Minx

“We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars.”—Oscar Wilde

Filmed from an original play written by Cormac McCarthy, *The Sunset Limited* is a philosophical contest between two men with different ideologies. The movie begins with beautiful, simple cinematography of a subway tunnel and then moves inside to a stark, chipped-paint apartment. These two settings are all we are given and they seem to enforce the contrast between the very “bottom” of life in the United States with some of the “higher,” lofty ideas of the mind. The two characters we meet are named only Black and White, respectively, for their skin color. Tommy Lee Jones and Samuel L. Jackson play two men who meet in a subway when one of them tries to jump in front of a train.

The movie is cerebral as it follows the discussion between two strong-minded people who seem to be the opposite of each other. One is well-off financially, one is poor; one is an ex-convict, one is a professor. One embraces life and one rejects life. This movie is perfect for Buddhists because the two characters embody much thinking that is mainstream and popular right now...hope versus pessimism. For Buddhists considering the basic Buddhist concepts, hope and pessimism become thought processes that fall under the “suffering is caused by desire.” How does faith, or hope, and pessimism function in a Buddhist model of practice and philosophy?

I think this McCarthy script, brought to life by two amazing actors, will give us a great opportunity to discuss suffering, compassion and the contemporary trend of pessimism.

***The Sunset Limited*, NOV. 15th, 6:30 pm
Free! / Open to the Public! / Join us!**

Community Calendar

Navigating the Veterans Benefits System

Veterans, their surviving spouses and family members are invited to attend a seminar on how to secure benefits from the US Department of Veterans Affairs.

This seminar is *free* and *open to the public* and is co-sponsored by the Japanese Mutual Aid Society of Chicago and the Japanese American Service Committee.

Light refreshments.

Presenter:

Frank J. Del Barto, Principal, Masuda, Funai, Eifert & Mitchell, Ltd.

Veterans Legal Support Center & Clinic
John Marshall Law School, Chicago IL

When: Tuesday, November 1, 2016, 7:00 pm

Where:

Japanese American Service Committee
4427 N. Clark Street
Chicago IL 60640

Information: 773/907-3002

or jmaskanemoto@gmail.com.



Just a Moment's Thought!

by Darryl Shishido



Carl Scroggins is a longtime member of The Buddhist Temple of Chicago who works as an Alcohol & Substance Abuse Counselor. He studied at Northeastern Illinois University and has thirty years work-experience in the Chicago area, including ten with the Gateway

Foundation, the largest drug-treatment provider in Illinois. Recently, as Editor for **The BTC Bulletin**, I talked to Carl about his profession.

He counsels people who abuse alcohol and other drugs, and their family and friends. He also provides training on substance abuse and mental health to probation and parole officers, as well as hospital case managers, medical personnel, universities and high schools. Potential clients are referred by government agencies and various sources. Besides alcoholism and other substance abuse, some suffer from co-occurring mental health disorders such as bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, etc.

In counseling, many methods are used. One is called “motivational-interviewing”; clients are counseled in ways to change their thinking, develop a healthful lifestyle, and work on spirituality. One way to define spirituality is the totality of relationships between oneself and others and something greater.

According to Carl, those who abuse alcohol and other substances often lack knowledge of how to manage these relationships, and often lack hope for a better life of any kind. So, substance abusers must find a form of spirituality to *fit their individual personality, to help them connect to others, and to give them hope.*

Three forms of a belief in a higher power may be defined: One, *theism*—a belief in the God that is revealed in the written scriptures of Jews, Christians and Muslims. Two, *deism*—a belief in an unknowable force in the universe which *does not intervene* in individual human affairs. Three, *pantheism*—a belief that God and the universe or Nature are the same; this belief includes Stoics and Buddhists.

According to Carl, most clients find certain Buddhist concepts useful, pantheistic clients more so. Clients are taught these concepts with no attempt to recruit them for, or even interest them in, the practice of Buddhism: 1) **Craving**—Beware the grasping-feeling (sensation and emotion) caused by alcohol and intoxicants, and always keep in mind their potential harm. 2) **Ignorance**—Remember, ignorance includes lack of knowledge and lack of desire to change, and being ignorant is neither evil nor sinful. 3) **Mindfulness**—Identify and change behavior with awareness of thoughts and feelings, and keep in mind, thoughts do not have to be acted out. Clients often remark

upon a feeling of relief gained merely by knowing and understanding these concepts.

People in helping professions, such as doctors, nurses, even medical technicians, may suffer Compassion Fatigue, a medically-recognized psychological state requiring lifestyle changes to mitigate its ill effects, and may require psychological therapy as well. Those who live or work with alcoholics or drug addicts may also suffer this state. Sufferers are taught not to “personalize” the alcoholic's or addict's relapse, slow recovery or lack of success—“don't take it personally”; they are reminded they are not to blame, they are not at fault, they did all they could. They are advised to seek a fulfilling life outside of work to counterbalance the stresses that can come when helping others, and they are encouraged to “work on their own healthy spirituality.”

Buddha's Noble Truths cause us to understand and change our minds and spirits. Buddhists are taught: recognize your suffering; trace the origin of your suffering back to your Self; contemplate the cessation of your suffering, Nirvana (Sanskrit for “extinguished,” like a candle-flame blown out); try to end your suffering by following The Eightfold Path. Also, according to Carl, Buddhists' habit of thinking without God in mind is compatible with the Twelve Step Program of Alcoholics Anonymous, which focuses on a “Higher Power,” not necessarily God or Jesus—a “higher philosophy.” Buddhist-oriented treatment-centers now exist in the United States and elsewhere, several therapies used throughout the U.S. use Mindfulness and meditation as aids in the recovery process, and a Buddhist-influenced therapy, “Acceptance Commitment Therapy,” is commonly used in substance abuse and mental health counseling. Thus, Buddhists and others may find Carl's conceptual approach useful in overcoming alcoholism or substance abuse.

Addiction is a biological, psychological and spiritual problem, and alcoholics/addicts require help in all these areas. Remember, *addiction is not a choice* and when a person becomes addicted they usually lack knowledge of how to handle it. A counselor's job is to help a person understand their problem and teach how to manage it. Since a person's entire social network may be impacted by addiction, everyone connected to that person may require counseling as well to understand *the person is ill* and to manage the impact that person's illness may have on their own lives.

However, counselors such as Carl admit an average success rate of only ten to twenty percent! This demonstrates the power of an unhealthy desire for an intoxicated state of mind and body, a desire which may arise in anyone, clean and sober or not, with just a moment's thought! As Shinran said, “Just because we have an antidote doesn't mean we should play with a poison!”



Bulletin Editor Darryl Shishido with Rev. Ashikaga.



EBL Convention speaker Rev. Ken Tanaka



EBL Convention participants (l. to r.)
Nancey Epperson, Gary Nakai, Diane Schoendorff



World Dobo Gathering participants (l. to r.):
Darryl Shishido, Miriam Solon, Ann Yi, John Kelly



Fall Ohigan altar with "golden chain" made by Dharma School students



World Dobo Gathering with Rev. Patti and Gary Nakai (top)
Overseas District Abbot Rev. Choyu Otani and wife Sachika (bottom)

Into Action, Not Complacency

(continued from page 1)

month, I like to think that Shinran wants us to remember him in the true meaning of “Ho-on-ko” – that we gather (*ko*) to recognize how we’ve benefited (*on*) from his teachings and we do something to pay it forward (*ho*). I used to hear the word *ho* explained as “repaying”—but Shinran is long gone so we can’t exactly send him a thank-you gift. For him and for all the loved ones who have passed on, the gift we can give them is to use what they gave us and go pass on those benefits to others. The best way to honor Shinran is to expose more people to the teachings he worked so hard to clarify and communicate, especially to those who were not in the elite socio-economic class.

The speaker at that other temple asked the audience to write on slips of paper what they were grateful for. Some responses were published in the bulletin – most expressed gratitude for family and health, but one person wrote in specific detail about receiving an organ transplant. That reminds me of my teacher Nobuo Haneda, currently director of the Maida Center in Berkeley, CA. Early in 2007, his diseased liver was replaced by a liver from a person who died in an accident. The family of the donor wished to remain anonymous to Dr. Haneda, so he asked the hospital to deliver his letter of gratitude to them. As far as I know they never contacted him but he was assured they received his letter.

That could have been the end of the story – Dr. Haneda expressed his gratitude and went on to spend the rest of his days staying home gardening and watching baseball on television, as would any senior citizen after surviving a medical crisis. Instead, it didn’t take him long to return to his busy schedule of delivering Dharma talks and seminars at various West Coast temples, conducting his weekly study classes and lecturing at the annual Maida Center summer retreats. For him, the transplanted liver meant having renewed time and energy – not to sit home just feeling grateful, but to delve deep into Shinran’s teachings and get them out to the public.

It’s okay to feel gratitude for health and family, but from my own experience, the most poignant gratitude to feel is when you encounter the Dharma teachings that turn your life around – that let in the boundless Light to where you thought was only darkness. It is the Light that radiates from the flow of truth, showing how petty and delusionary your self-concerns were against the actuality of your participation in the ongoing creative interaction of lives. As Shinran expresses in his verse *Ondokusan*, how can I not dedicate myself to helping others to also encounter the Dharma? For a good decade and a half, he travelled with his wife and children all over eastern Japan to introduce the small town and rural folks to Buddhism’s liberating message of equal respect for all lives. Then in his 50’s

which would be the end of the average lifespan for his times, he settled down in Kyoto to do research and produce one text after another to transmit the nembutsu teachings to future generations. Until his late 80s he was actively writing and revising and passed away at the unusually high age of 90.

I can’t help being impressed by his *wasan* verses written in vernacular Japanese – taking the complex concepts of the sutras and commentaries and patiently spelling them out for those without training in classical Chinese, the language of the aristocratic monks. If anything, it should inspire all of us to bring Shinran’s teachings to those who don’t necessarily have a connection to Japanese culture, had the benefit of higher education or were given the opportunities for serious discussions about spirituality.

So there’s nothing wrong about extolling the virtue of gratitude, but for our temple to consider itself a Jodo Shinshu *dojo* (practice place), we need to hear Shinran’s call to break down the barriers of self-attachment and open up to involvement with other lives. We need to hear that Namu Amida Butsu is a call to action, not complacency.

Thanks Giving

(continued from page 1)

of infinite wisdom and compassion we too can draw the resources needed to overcome suffering. However, we must recognize that we do not stand apart from the infinite; rather, we are an integral part of it. This is the idea of Oneness.

It is customary to give thanks prior to partaking of the Thanksgiving dinner. At my home, we recite the opening line of The Golden Chain; “I am a link in the Buddha’s golden chain of love that stretches around the world. May I keep my link bright and strong.” We follow this by saying “*itadakimasu*”. This loosely translates to, “I will humbly receive.” With this word we are expressing oneness. Yes, we may have cooked the meal and served it, but we did not grow the vegetables or the turkey. We did not bring the food to market, or cause the rain to fall, or the sun to shine. A long chain of people, and elements beyond anyone’s control, came together to make this moment possible. For this we are grateful.

“Every day is a good day.” This was a favorite saying of Rev. Gyomay Kubose. He approached every day with a sense of wonder and enjoyment. Of course things don’t always go as we want; this is the basis of the First Noble Truth that all life has suffering, but the underlying potential for happiness always exists. Each day we face many choices; the choices we make will determine our outcome. Rather than dwelling on that which we don’t have, we should constantly be grateful for that which we do. As you sit down this year with family and friends, be grateful for all that has been bestowed upon you, regardless of its source.



The Buddhist Temple of Chicago

1151 W. LELAND AVENUE
 CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60640-5043 USA
 www.budtempchi.org
 phone: 773-334-4661
 fax: 773-334-4726

NOT FOR PROFIT
 ORGANIZATION
 U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
 CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
 PERMIT NO. 7329

Rev. Patti Nakai, Resident Minister
 Rev. Yukei Ashikaga, Minister Emeritus
 Rev. Gyomay M. Kubose (1905–2000), Founding Minister



BTC CALENDAR NOVEMBER 2016

- See **Temple Events & Activities Guide** on page 2 for details on events.
- Events may be canceled or moved after press time due to unforeseen circumstances.
- Check www.facebook.com/budtempchi for the most up-to-date changes.

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 11 am Qigong 6:30 pm Book Club	2 7 pm Buddhism study	3 7:30 pm Meditation	4 7 pm Taiko	5 9-12 pm Kumihimo 2-4 pm Asma lecture
6 9 am Meditation 11 am Monthly Memorial Service 12:30 pm Shoshinge Class	7 7 pm laido	8 11 am Qigong	9 7 pm Buddhism study	10 6pm Bulletin submission deadline 7:30 pm Meditation	11 7 pm Taiko	12
13 9 am Meditation 11 am Service/Dharma School	14 7 pm laido	15 11 am Qigong 6:30 pm Movie Night	16 7 pm Buddhism study	17 7:30 pm Meditation	18 7 pm Taiko	19 9-12 pm Kumihimo 1 pm Asoka
20 9 am Meditation 11 am Ho-on-ko (Shinran Shonin Memorial) 1:00 pm Sutra Study	21 7 pm laido	22 11 am Qigong	23 7 pm Buddhism study	24 NO Meditation	25 7 pm Taiko (tentative) 10 am Bulletin mailing	26
27 9 am Meditation 11 am Service/Dharma School 12:30 pm Board Meeting	28 7 pm laido	29 11 am Qigong	30 7 pm Buddhism study			