



# The Buddhist Temple of Chicago BULLETIN



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Rev. Patti Nakai

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Bill Bohlman

## Not The Sounds You Make – The Nembutsu at BTC

Listening was everything to Shinran. It was not a means to liberation. It was itself liberation.

-- from *Dharma Breeze* by Nobuo Haneda

The significance of “Namu Amida Butsu” is the one thing I hope you receive when you come to the Buddhist Temple of Chicago, whether it’s your first and only visit or if you’ve been coming regularly for the whole seventy-three years. Our founding minister, Rev. Gyomay Kubose, knew from his teacher Akegarasu Haya that the nembutsu (the “contemplation of the Buddha,” what we call the phrase “Namu Amida Butsu”) was so full of meanings and influential power that one has to talk about it. Rev. Kubose was not like most ministers of his time who were like, “Just say the nembutsu – that’s all, end of story, don’t bother me with any more questions.” He wanted people to understand what it was and Shinran was the same way. Shinran in his poems and commentary written for the common people was continually explaining Namu Amida Butsu, offering up alternative expressions that would make more sense to Japanese speakers than the seven syllables supposedly from Sanskrit. His *Shoshinge* from the very beginning and throughout is full of expressions of the nembutsu from phrases of the Larger Sutra and the words of the “magnificent seven” Pure Land teachers.

## Benefits of Membership

This past Labor Day weekend, I attended the Eastern Buddhist League (EBL) conference held at Midwest Buddhist Temple. (The EBL is comprised of six Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) temples located eastward from Minneapolis in the United States, plus our temple and Toronto. Although BTC is not a Nishi Honganji temple as the other EBL groups, we participate in the annual conference.)

The minister’s assistants of the New York and Twin Cities sanghas officiated the Saturday and Sunday morning services. Each group performed the service as it is done at their temple. Although the content was similar to BTC, the service seemed to be more formal, for lack of a better word. BCA has a specific program for minister’s assistants; BTC as an independent temple has lay leaders trained by Rev. Patti. The theme of the conference was “North American Buddhism: A Path Forward.” The seminar, break out sessions and most of the talks dealt with how to present Jodo Shinshu Buddhism in today’s world. A common problem among the temples seemed to be declining membership and how



Rev. Patti Nakai  
Resident Minister

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

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Bill Bohlman  
BTC President

Contact Bill at [budtempchi@aol.com](mailto:budtempchi@aol.com) or find him most Sundays after service at the information desk & bookstore.

This article continues on page 7 column 2.

## OCTOBER 2017 Temple Events & Activities Guide

- See Calendar (page 8) for specific dates.
- Up-to-date details/last-minute changes are available on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/budtempchi](http://www.facebook.com/budtempchi)
- **ALL EVENTS ARE FREE, OPEN TO THE PUBLIC, and held at the Temple (unless otherwise noted).**

### ➤➤➤ Special Temple Services and Events ◀◀◀

- Oct. 8—**BTC 73<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary.**

#### Regular Temple Services

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

#### Temple Meetings & Community Service

- **Bulletin mailing**—2<sup>nd</sup> to last Friday every month, 10 am (volunteers welcome). This month: Oct. 20.
- **Bulletin submissions**—Deadline for notices and articles: every month, 6 pm, the Thursday 15 days prior to mailing. This month: Oct. 5.
- **Temple Board Meeting**—Once a month, Sunday, 12:30 pm. This month: Oct. 29
- **Upaya Helpers**—(refreshment service, community outreach, ping pong, etc.) Call Candy for info: 312-618-0880.
- **Cook It Forward** (feeding unhoused persons)—Mary Harvey <https://www.facebook.com/groups/CookItForward/>

#### Meditation & Buddhist Education

**Meditation**—Sundays, 9:00 am, Thursdays, 7:30 pm. First-timers: come 10 minutes early for instruction.

**Introduction to Buddhism**—offered periodically throughout the year. E-mail Rev. Nakai: [rev.eshin.patti23@gmail.com](mailto:rev.eshin.patti23@gmail.com).

- **Buddhism Study Class**—Wednesdays, 7 to 8:30 pm.
- **Sutra Study Class**—2nd or 3rd Sunday of the month, 12:30 to 2 pm.

#### Social & Cultural Activities

- **Asoka Society** (refreshment service, social club, outings, etc.)—3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday every month, 1 pm. This month: Oct. 21.
- **Qigong** (Chinese Movement)—Tuesdays, 11-12:30pm. Call Dennis for info: 312-771-6087.
- **Iaido** (Japanese Swordsmanship)—Mondays, 7-9 pm.
- **Taiko** (BTC Kokyo Taiko Drum Troupe)—**Adults**, Fridays, 7-9 pm. Email [kokyotaiko@yahoo.com](mailto:kokyotaiko@yahoo.com) to confirm. **Children**, 1st, 3rd, and 5th Sundays at 11. Email [sanghacomod@yahoo.com](mailto:sanghacomod@yahoo.com) for appointments.
- **Kumihimo** (Japanese braiding). This month: Oct. 14 and 28, 9-12 pm. Email Nancey Epperson: [naepperson14@gmail.com](mailto:naepperson14@gmail.com).
- **Ukulele Group**—Tuesday, 1-2 pm. Call Ruth for info: 773-784-0239.

### 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** Rev. Patti Nakai, Darryl Shishido (Editor), Nancey Epperson, Ann Yi

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

**Contact** E-mail [BTCbuledtr@hotmail.com](mailto:BTCbuledtr@hotmail.com) or speak with anyone on the BTC Team

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8/04 Rev. Nakai performed the wedding of Stella McKearn and Sergio Gomes at BTC.

8/05 Bon Odori



8/06 Obon service. \*\*\* Rev. Nakai conducted memorial service for the late Sakaye Morinaka at BTC. She is survived by sons Ken and Rodney and daughter Joyce.

8/07 Rev. Nakai conducted burial service for the late Mitsue Kimura at Montrose Cemetery. She is survived by daughter Tina and son Randy.

8/10 Darryl Shishido did chanting for the 7<sup>th</sup> year memorial gathering for Masako Misawa at Windridge Memorial Park in Cary, IL.

8/13 August memorial service. \*\*\* Rev. Nakai conducted memorial service for the late Mieko Kotake at BTC. She is survived by husband Nobuo and daughter Emari.

8/19 Asoka Society met.

8/20 Koso-ki (Rev. Akegarasu memorial) Sunday service. \*\*\* Sutra study class met.

8/22 Movie Night.

8/25 September bulletin mailed. \*\*\* Rev. Nakai attended Catholic Buddhist dialogue meeting at Midwest Buddhist Temple.

8/27 Lay speaker Sunday service – Ann Yi was speaker. \*\*\* Board of Directors met.

It was announced in the Chicago Tribune that longtime temple member Mrs. Kiyoko Minaga passed away on August 4 and that the family had a private memorial gathering. She is survived by son Steven.

Our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of:

**Mitsue Kimora**  
**Mieko Kotake**  
**Kiyoko Minaga**  
**Sakaye Morinaka**

## THANK YOU

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

- Sunday Service Participants: Ed Horiuchi, Amy Kawamoto, Brian Ozaki, Nancey Epperson, Michael Gallaga, Bill Gallaga, Glenn Fujiura, Bill Bohlman, Tom Corbett, Diana Schoendorff, Anna Idol, Ann Yi, Liam, Eli
- Music/Accompanists: Drea Gallaga, Ukulele Group
- Audio Controls: Wendy and Jacob Fawcett, Gary T. Nakai
- Sunday Service Refreshments: Noreen Enkoji, Haru Ito, Ruby Tsuji, Elaine Siegel, April Kellman, Gallaga Family
- Bulletin Mailing: Amy Kawamoto, Mary Ozaki, Sue Balsam, Seichi Shiraiwa, Sharon Shiraiwa, Dennis Chan, Ruby Tsuji, Sadie Kasamoto, Noreen Enkoji, Haru Ito, Ed Horiuchi, Masa Nakata, Candy Minx, Helene Rom
- Cleaning Temple washrooms: Anonymous
- Taking care of the Temple inside and out: Tomio Tademoto
- Maintaining and updating the Temple computer: John Kelly, Gary T. Nakai
- Maintaining and updating the Temple website: Ann Yi, Wendy Fawcett
- Emptying the trash bins, filling them with new bags and putting them out for disposal: Sue Balsam, Adam Kellman, Nancey Epperson, Ruby Tsuji
- Cleaning Hondo and Nokotsudo: Michael Yasukawa,
- Administrative Office Volunteers: Ruth Abbinanti, Sue Balsam, Nancey Epperson, Helene Rom, Mary Samson, Darryl Shishido
- Our apologies to anyone we have failed to include on this list.

### SOLAR ECLIPSE August 21, 2017



(photo: Candy Minx )

August 27, 2017: Ann Yi gave a Dharma Talk using the solar eclipse and her solar protection glasses as a metaphor for empathy, and shared her experiences of pain and illness giving her an insight into compassion.

## 2017 Eastern Buddhist League Convention

by Darryl Shishido & Sandra Adams

On Labor Day weekend (Sept. 1-3, 2017), the Eastern Buddhist League (EBL) held its annual convention here in Chicago at the Midwest Buddhist Temple (MBT). Approximately 130 Jodo-Shinshu Buddhists from seven churches/temples from the eastern US plus Canada met to discuss matters of shared concern. The theme of the convention was "North American Buddhism: A Path Forward."

These are some of our impressions of the weekend:

First, Friday night, Sept. 1, everyone socialized in the social hall, then went upstairs to the hono to hear the ministers introduce themselves.

Saturday had two workshops: 1) Diversity and Inclusion and 2) Selfless Giving. Also, Reverend Kurt Rye gave a public talk. Sunday had three workshops: 1) 325% Differences, 2) Buddhism and the Environment and 3) Dharma School Brainstorm. In addition, there were a series of 5-minute talks inspired by the online "TED" talks.

At the "Diversity and Inclusion" panel discussion, people spoke about their particular paths to Buddhism and Jodo-Shinshu. For example, Anita of Cleveland, of Armenian Orthodox Christian origin, said her anger disappeared when she met a Buddhist teacher in Boston.

Certain important questions which were raised should be kept in mind:

What do people ask you about Buddhism?

What do temples need to do about membership?

What barriers to Jodo-Shinshu are there for people at our temples?

Todd of Twin Cities analyzed the "structural diversity" in his 4sangha. He said it was a small family-sangha with three ministers' assistants, an interfaith minister-trainee, and two Catholic priests who regularly attend their services.

(An audience member asked about being a "secular Buddhist" or a "religious Buddhist," although what these meant was not clarified.)

Some miscellaneous comments:

Reverend Ron Miyamura (BTC): "We [meaning Jodo-Shinshu] are Buddhists hiding in plain sight."

Dan Petersen (MBT): "Buddhism is a 2600 year old fad."

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Bill Bohlman (BTC): "I celebrate all holidays and I accept all blessings."

Reverend Rye, in his public talk, asked "What is Buddhism?" Upaya (usually translated, "expedient means") he understood to mean "no correct or wrong answer." "Everyone has a lifelong and changing path regarding the Buddhist teachings," he said.

A speaker said: Raise your hand if you think Buddhism is a religion. Someone from the audience answered, it is a religion because "there are multiple texts behind it." Someone else answered, it is a philosophy because "the love of understanding makes it a philosophy."

Also, I heard:

"Buddha said to question everything—if you question something, then you own it."

"The books you have read will mean something different in ten years because you have changed."

"Why is chanting so important to our rituals? Because it is a way to memorize the texts."

In his public talk, when Reverend Rye introduced himself, he mentioned he had worked in a psych ward in "lock down." Then he provided everyone with a handout on "Buddhism and Psychology" with information on the "Skandhas." He emphasized that Theravadins consider Buddhism a psychology and that Buddhism is making strides into psychotherapy—specifically, "Morita Therapy" and "Naikan."

Morita Therapy is derived from Zen Buddhist principles. It involves acceptance of our thoughts and feelings without trying to change them. Instead, we are to direct our attention and energy toward living our life well by setting goals and taking constructive actions.

Naikan is a method of self-reflection on our relationships with others which begins by our asking ourselves three questions—1) "What have I received from X?" 2) "What have I given to X?" and 3) "What troubles and difficulties have I caused X?" He also said we should reflect on what we have done for others.

He claimed that the West uses a medical model to look at psychological issues, and that the Chinese call this the "cut, burn and remove" way to treat psychological illness. (A question came from the audience:

(continued on next page)



Is it okay to have an ego? Reverend Ron replied “We have no choice.”)

Morita Therapy is practiced in only one hospital in Tokyo plus a center in Vermont which provides both Morita and Naikan Therapy. Naikan Therapy is the more widely practiced therapy, but it is not inpatient.

Rev. Rye also mentioned Freud, who did work in depth psychology regarding suppressed memories, and Jung, who worked on the personal and universal unconscious (incidentally, Rev. Rye’s thesis was on Jung and Shinran). Jung analyzed the *Amida Sutra*, one of the Pure Land sutras (though Rev. Rye does not care for this analysis).

For Seminar Two: a Path Forward, Rev. Rye asked, what is it like for a person walking in the door of a Jodo Shinshu temple? He talked about the need for a “mission statement,” and for “branding and marketing” our temples. We must ask ourselves: What does this temple represent to newcomers? What does this temple mean to the larger community? Remember, he said, “Every temple has a distinct personality.”

As an exercise, in small groups, we branded a hypothetical temple to create a mission statement. What do people get when they come? We were asked, then told to write for the general community.

Anita, speaking for Cleveland, asked, What do we have to sell that someone would want to buy? Some of the answers included:

- Come as you are
- Living a life of gratitude
- Infinite compassion
- To continuously live and learn the Buddhist teachings
- Fellowship with a purpose
- A compassionate community
- Self-awareness
- An oasis of peace

Anita summarized by saying we should answer: who we are, what we do, why we do it.

Saturday night was our social event. A large group of us were taken on a tour of “Revolution” brewery, a large, start-up craft brewery. The clean, completely odorless factory included an expert tour guide and a beer hall, where EBLers enjoyed a couple of glasses of lager. (After this, our memories got a little foggy.)

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*Reverend Kurt Rye*

For Sunday’s opening service, Todd from the Twin Cities, addressed his Dharma talk on the Golden Chain to the Dharma School children present. He said that they should ask of themselves and of their parents the question “How were you kind today?” And he reminded us all that the Golden Chain may be thought about throughout the day.

Later, we all assembled for a large group photo on the steps of MBT, then, in the social hall, enjoyed chicken teriyaki feast. Before the meal we saw “The Orange Story,” a short film about the incarceration by MBT’s Jason Matsumoto, and a slide show of conference highlights.

Finally, we said our farewells and promised to meet next year in Toronto for their EBL convention.



*“Getting to Know You” icebreaker on Saturday: Who are you? What do you do? Why do you do it? (photos: Rev. Patti Nakai)*

## BON ODORI 2017

*Thank you to all who helped make Bon Odori a success!*



(photos: Jenn Bauer)



(photo: Rev. Patti Nakai)

The full-bloom days of spring are gone,  
Now, autumn deepens  
And winds toss the dead leaves.  
But for one living in earnest  
There is joy in flowers blooming  
and even in flowers fallen,  
Serenity.

From *Suiren*, by Miyoko Gyoren Nozawa

## EBL 2017 “TED” TALKS



(photo: Rev. Patti Nakai)

Bill Bohlman (BTC): “I celebrate all holidays and I accept all blessings.”



(photo: Candy Minx)



## Not the Sounds You Make

(continued from page 1)

In his “thank you, my shoes” story, Rev. Kubose introduced the nembutsu to the Dharma School children. If you could start with one common object such as “my shoes” and take a moment to think about all the ways it got you through the day—“my shoes” protected my feet from dirt and rocks and kept them warm and dry – then you can feel a sense of gratitude and respect for something beyond yourself. That sense is what is expressed in “Namu,” to look up to something that helped and sustained your daily life. Now add to that one item, “my shoes,” all the other items you need to thank—all the people, animals, plants and inanimate objects—the sum total being “Amida,” which literally means “uncountable.” Then “Butsu” is the heart/mind of awareness of all beings as interdependent—I am one item which is being helped by so many other items and at the same time, I am a part of the items which help each other item. So “thank you, my shoes” can help lead us to the meaningfulness of “Namu Amida Butsu.”

You may hear from people at other temples or in writings about Pure Land Buddhism that saying the syllables “Namu Amida Butsu” is all you have to do for some kind of spiritual reward (i.e., an after-life in some heavenly realm). But that’s certainly not what Shinran says. He criticized the Pure Land followers of his time who practiced “empty” nembutsu—reciting meaningless syllables. Rev. Gyoko Saito in his article “*San Gan Tennyu* (Three-Vow Transformation)” pointed out that saying the empty nembutsu is like the child Helen Keller learning the letters w-a-t-e-r that meant nothing to her. But when her teacher Anne Sullivan doused her with cold well water, the letters together signified the real experience of wetness. It is our teachers, people like Rev. Kubose and Rev. Saito and the people they taught us about—Akegarasu, Shinran, Jesus, Socrates et. al.—that give us evidence of the experience that “Namu Amida Butsu” indicates.

Whether we think we have had that experience or not, for the nembutsu to reveal its rich contents to us, we need to keep learning from those who walk the path of bowing down to all beings in the awareness of interdependence. Our temple has been and I hope will continue to be a place of Dharma learning—of people coming to listen to the significance of Namu Amida Amida Butsu” or how loudly or precisely you

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pronounce it. It’s more important to have your ears open and a heart/mind eager to receive the teachings of transcending the ego and living in oneness with all beings. There is no true oneness without confronting our own ego—such a difficult thing that without continually listening to the teachings we easily slide into a deluded pride in “being Buddhist,” in denial about our ego-attachments.

This is my celebration of BTC on its anniversary—the place where we come to listen to the rich, full nembutsu, the expression of living one’s true life.

## Benefits of membership

(continued from page 1)

to stem this decline. As religious organizations, our primary source of funding is through memberships and donations. The question became, why would someone be a member?

At BTC, there are certain tangible benefits to being a member; they include:

- Availability of the temple for wedding, funeral and other memorial services.

- Eligibility for financial assistance to attend seminars/conferences

- Eligibility for scholarships

- Discounts on certain books and merchandise

- Vote at the general membership meeting.

These are the tangible benefits; however, there are many intangible benefits. First and foremost is the temple as a place to hear the Dharma. As we celebrate our 73<sup>rd</sup> anniversary this month, we can look back upon the impact BTC has had on the lives of many. In times of personal suffering, BTC has provided a place of comfort and support. Children attending Dharma school receive lessons from the Buddhadharma that will benefit them throughout their lives. BTC provides a place where the Three Treasures, the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha come to life. As a member of our community, BTC strives to welcome all who wish to enhance their lives thru the Buddhist teachings. However, we are only able to provide these benefits thru the generosity of our members.

If you are already a member, we thank you for your support. If you are not yet a member, we urge you to consider becoming a member, or at least a friend. Thru your support, BTC will be able to continue to “teach the Dharma with a lion’s roar.” Namu Amida Butsu.



# The Buddhist Temple of Chicago

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## BTC CALENDAR OCTOBER 2017

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](http://www.facebook.com/budtempchi) for the most up-to-date changes.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 11 am Monthly Memorial	2 7 pm laido	3 11 am Qi Gong 1 pm Ukelele	4 7 pm Buddhist Study Class	5 6 pm Bulletin Submissions Deadline  7:30 pm Meditation	6 7 pm Taiko	7
8 11 am Regular Service/BTC 73 <sup>rd</sup> Anniversary/Dharma School	9 7 pm laido	10 11 am Qi Gong 1 pm Ukelele	11 7 pm Buddhist Study Class	12 7:30 pm Meditation	13 7 pm Taiko	14 9-12 Kumihimo OPEN HOUSE CHICAGO
15 OPEN HOUSE CHICAGO	16 7 pm laido	17 11 am Qi Gong 1 pm Ukelele	18 7 pm Buddhist Study Class	19 7:30 pm Meditation	20 10 am Bulletin Mailing 7 pm Taiko	21 1:00 pm Asoka Society
22 11 am Regular Service/Dharma School	23 7 pm laido	24 11 am Qi Gong 1 pm Ukelele	25 7 pm Buddhist Study Class	26 7:30 pm Meditation	27 7 pm Taiko	28 9-12 Kumihimo
29 11 am Regular Service 12:30 pm Board Meeting	30 7 pm laido	31 11 am Qi Gong 1 pm Ukelele				