



The Buddhist Temple of Chicago BULLETIN

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FEBRUARY
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The Fear of Losing A Life

The date on which submissions to our temple bulletin is due is called a “deadline.” Originally, the word indicated a boundary drawn in a prison—if any inmate stepped beyond that line the guards were to shoot him. Often I have submitted my article later than the deadline but for this February issue, I need to submit my piece before the scheduled date of my surgery. Beyond that date I might not be in a position to write anything.

In the month of February we commemorate the death of the historical Buddha, Shakyamuni. His passing illustrates the point that ministers often make at memorial services—the physical life of a person may be over but something lives on and continues to be an active force in our lives. Although in some religious traditions, the founder says, “I didn’t really die. I just went into hiding,” in Buddhism, it is important to see the lesson the Buddha taught with his own death: each particular life must come to an end. Although we will miss the physical presence of that person, all of their karma—each thought, word and action—lives on, integrated into the web of causes and conditions which result in the world of now and the future.



Rev. Patti Nakai
Resident Minister

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

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Rev. Patti Nakai

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Bill Bohlman

Why I Sit

by Bill Bohlman

After six years of various intense practices, Gautama Shakyamuni realized he was no closer to understanding the cause of suffering than on the day he left the castle. Abandoning other practices, he vowed to sit under a tree, next to a river, until he either perished or attained his awakening. On the morning of the seventh day, as the sun arose, he attained this awakening. From this day forward, meditation in various forms has been a part of Buddhism.

The type of meditation most commonly associated with Buddhism is zazen. This translates to “sitting meditation.” I first started sitting zazen in 2002. Traditionally, Jodo Shinshu does not have zazen as a part of the nembutsu practice. However, it does have a practice of contemplation known as “deep listening.” In addition, Rev. Gyomay Kubose felt there was value in zazen and started a zazen practice at our temple. For various reasons, I never attended the zazen at our temple. Only after I moved to Kenosha did I begin to sit with a group at the local Unitarian church.

Certain questions often arise. Why do I sit? What do I hope to gain? How does it help me in my everyday life? When asked how to attain enlightenment, Zen teachers will often say, “Just sit.”



Bill Bohlman
BTC President

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

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FEBRUARY 2018 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
- **ALL EVENTS ARE FREE, OPEN TO THE PUBLIC, and held at the Temple (unless otherwise noted).**

➤➤➤ Special Temple Services and Events ◀◀◀

- **February 11**—Nirvana Day.
- **February 18**—Pet Memorial.
- **February 25**—Interfaith Sunday.

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: February 23.
- **Bulletin submissions**—Deadline for notices and articles: every month, 6 pm, the Thursday 15 days prior to mailing. This month: February 8.
- **Temple Board Meeting**—Once a month, Sunday, 12:30 pm. This month: February 25.
- **Upaya Helpers** (refreshment service, community outreach, ping pong, etc.). Email Ann: Upaya@BuddhistTempleChicago.org to be added to the mailing list to help with refreshments and special projects.
- **Cook It Forward** (feeding unhoused persons)—Email Mary: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/CookItForward>

Meditation & Buddhist Education

- **Buddhism Study Class**—Wednesdays, 7 to 8:30 pm. For info, call Darryl 847-208-0564.

- **Introduction to Buddhism**—five Tuesdays, February 6 through March 6, 6:30 pm. Email Nancey: naepperson14@gmail.com
- **Meditation**—Sundays, 9:00 am and Thursdays, 7:30 pm. First-timers: come 10 minutes early for instruction.
- **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. No meeting in February.
- **Ukulele Group**—Tuesdays, 1 pm. Email Ruth: fabbinanti@sbcglobal.net.
- **Iaido** (Japanese Swordsmanship)—Mondays, 7-9 pm. For info, call Jerry at 847-758-0776.
- **Kumihimo** (Japanese braiding). Returns Saturday March 17. Email Nancey: naepperson14@gmail.com
- **Qigong** (Chinese Movement)—Tuesdays, 11-12:30pm. For info, call Dennis 312-771-6087.
- **Taiko** (BTC Kokyo Taiko Drum Troupe)—**Adults**, Fridays, 7-9 pm; Sundays, 1:30 pm. Email Miriam: kokyotaiko@BuddhistTempleChicago.org to confirm. **Children**, 1st, 3rd, and 5th Sundays at 11:15 am. This month: Feb. 4 and Feb. 11.



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 & Submissions Questions, comments, corrections 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 or speak with anyone on the BTC Team

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- 12/03 - December memorial service conducted by lay leaders.
- 12/08 - Elaine Siegel spoke about Buddhism to the third grade class at Frances Xavier Warde School in downtown Chicago.
- 12/10 - Bodhi Day and Dharma School service.
- 12/16 - Asoka Society met.
- 12/17 - Regular service and annual Mochi-Tsuki.
- 12/24 - Regular service (no Dharma School).
- 12/29 - Calendar and January bulletin prepared for mailing.
- 12/31 - Year-end service. *** Sutra study class met.



Understanding the Nembutsu through recognizing the Paramitas in others.

Note: This new list is in progress because so many people have done so much tremendous work—especially cleaning—anonously. It's time for everyone to know who is keeping our temple so clean, especially as it becomes harder and harder to find people to do it. Thank these people profusely for helping, or even better, join in!

Temple Keepers

- Maintaining Temple inside and out: Tomio Tademoto
- Cleaning Hondo & Nokotsudo: Michael Yasukawa
- Cleaning washrooms: Ann Yi, John Kelly.
- Emptying trash, putting it out for disposal: Nancey Epperson, Adam Kellman, Upaya Group, Ed Horiuchi
- Sweeping and mopping: John Sagami
- Restocking paper towels and toilet paper: Miriam Solon
- Watering plants: Alice Murata, Ruth Abbinanti
- Cleaning up outdoor litter: Wendy Fawcett, William Fawcett
- Cleaning minister's residence: Diana Schoendorff, Miriam Solon
- Setting up and taking down chairs & tables: Too many to thank—thanks to all of you!

Service & Hospitality

- Sunday Service Participants: Bill Bohlman, Sue Balsam, Sandra Adams, Darryl Shishido, Diana Schoendorff, Wendy Fawcett, Peter Mizuki, George Mizuki, Nancey Epperson, Linda Tademoto, Dan Kikuchi, Elaine Siegel, Alivia
- Lay Leaders: Karen Baier, Sue Balsam, Bill Bohlman, Nancey Epperson, Wendy Fawcett, Lynnell Long, Helene
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THANK YOU

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- Rom, Darryl Shishido, Elaine Siegel, Miriam Solon,
Music/Accompanists: Drea Gallaga, Ukulele Group
- Audio Controls: Wendy and Jacob Fawcett, Gary T. Nakai
 - Sunday Service Refreshments: Dan Kikuchi, Anna Idol, Jan Saiki, Linda Tademoto, Joyce Yamamoto, Upaya Group, Susan Nakamura

Special Projects

- Calendar and Bulletin Mailing: Nancey Epperson, Diana Schoendorff, Ann Naumes, Carrie Breitbach, April Kellman, Ruby Tsuji, Masa Nakata, Ed Horiuchi, Adam Kellman, John Sagami, Gary T. Nakai, Antoinette d'Vencets, Sadie Kasamoto, Haru Ito, Dennis Chan, Mary Ozaki, Amy Kawamoto, Alice Murata, Sue Balsam
- Administrative Office Volunteers: Ruth Abbinanti, Nancey Epperson, April Kellman, Adam Kellman, Mary Samson, Darryl Shishido
- Maintaining and updating Temple website: Wendy Fawcett, Ann Yi
- Maintaining and updating Temple computer: John Kelly, Gary T. Nakai
- Cleaning and silencing refrigerator: Gary T. Nakai

Our apologies to anyone we have failed to include on this list. Please send your recognition of hard-working temple volunteers to BTCbuledtr@hotmail.com.

MOCHITSUKI 2017

(See page 5 for more photos!)



After Long Meditation

by Roger Adams

The Buddha saw the fixed self, the ego-shell, as the cause of all things evil, and saw the three poisons (of greed, anger and ignorance) as also coming from this source. These poisons are nothing but dirt to be washed away for the spacious freedom of the Pure Mind. Both in body and mind, dirt accumulates, as in a stinky washroom that needs cleaning. Taking this to heart, the Buddha realized, since all life is impermanent, cleansing is essential to be in harmony with the natural state of affairs based on impermanence, the freshness of Life itself.

The Buddha accepted people on the basis of friendship. How wonderful it was to have so many people in his huge Sangha (of followers, students, fellow practitioners) also interested in the same thing—non-attachment to self and the very basis of Buddhism, the power of a living spirit: a pure mind and an awakened self.

So, the end result of self-realization is within the emptiness of selflessness. But just thinking one is a good person, already *there* and *blessed*, is not good enough!

The noble “Self” exists as just a self alone. “Alone” means without attachment to worldly things or worldly affairs. Such is the power of being at one with Life itself! This is what moves people and the world itself. Do we not worship this unknowable source and bow with hands clasped in reverence to our deepest aspiration to be at one with the Buddha-nature of all things and all beings? All things in this regard make me feel *peaceful*, *happy*, and most of all, *alive*! This is what the Buddha was really *feeling*: going beyond dichotomous concepts (about religious practices, and static, external entities, etc.) and flowing as Nature flows, nakedly, courageously.

Listen to your true voice coming from within. This voice, this mind, all within the voltage of your Spirit, will come up as a shout. Then your life will have sparks of truth to it.

With a shining face, the Buddha brought to people the essence of self-realization through the enlightened state of non-attachment to the relative self, the ego-self. This is what he extinguished in the final stage of

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After Long Meditation

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awakening into enlightenment. Beyond darkness, there is the light of self-realization, the freshness and spaciousness of an open mind. This is liberation. I am encouraged to follow these precepts, but am most inspired by the freedom and spaciousness of awakening to the simplicity of Life itself. The flowing essence of an open and alive mind that can communicate with others is the essence of my own life: I as I.

Today, with joy, I wake up in the morning. My spirit jumps up to meet the fresh new day! The sun shines through the window after freshly fallen snow. The world glistens with a brightness which matches my feelings. My face shines with a smile! With perseverance and dedication, I am well-rewarded in the creation of things as an infinite source of inspiration—oh, creation!—as the seeds of Life itself.

Let us sweep away the clouds of darkness and share Amida Buddha’s deepest wish for all of us—Namu Amida Butsu, the bowing Buddha: Amida Buddha, infinite Light, and infinite Life.

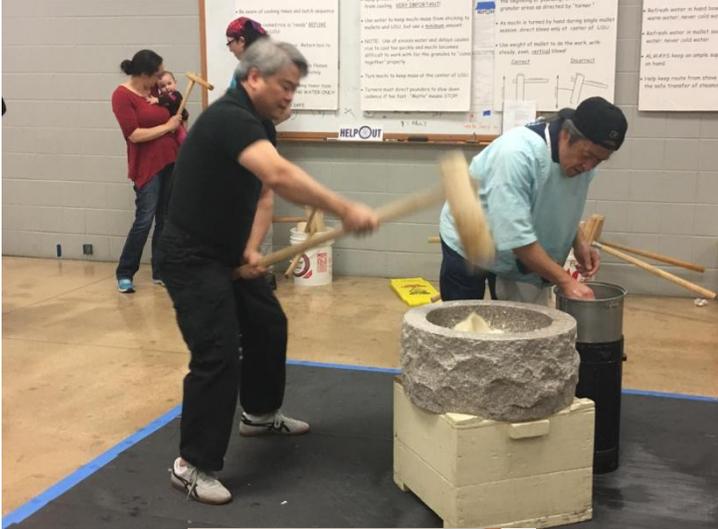


Dharma School Bake Sale

February 11th, the “teens group” of the Dharma School will host a bake sale to raise money for water purifiers for Flint, Michigan. Flint still does not have clean water and our teens want to show our support for the Flint community. Please stop by after service on February 11, 2018 to buy a treat (for your Valentine!).



MOCHITSUKI 2017



(photos courtesy: Rev. Patti Nakai and Sandra Adams)

Selection from *Suiren*
by Miyoko Gyoren Nozawa

[Editor's note: These are selections 6 through 14 from a pamphlet by Miyoko Gyoren Nozawa, a longtime temple member and student of Reverends Haya Akegarasu and Gyomay Kubose.]

If a person is trusted
By self,
He does not beg a
Stranger's respect.

The joy of seeing
The happiness of my friend
Is a great joy, indeed!

We do not wish to know,
We do not wish to hear,
We do not wish to see—
But the stern realities of life
Are there, nevertheless.

Truth, pointed out, hurts,
Resulting in anger;
Yet, it is immediately overcome,
When recognized in its true light.

To be overestimated is a greater
Hurt than to be severely criticized.

A person slanders you?
Do not give way to anger
Do not hate him.
His philosophy,
His outlook on life,
May simply be different from yours.

Yesterday's me
Is not the I of today.

Joy and sadness—
Together
They create a new you.
Not afraid of death
Suffering in illness
Still serene.

The Fear of the Loss of A Life
(continued from page 1)

It is hard to face the loss of someone dear to us, and in a different way, full of fear rather than sadness, it is hard to face the inevitability of our own death—which could come at any moment, a few hours or several decades from now. It's not much consolation to me to know my karmic actions will continue to have consequences—for the most part, I wish they didn't because I thought, said and did many more harmful things than helpful ones and there's never enough time for me to make up for those. It's not falling into the flames of hell that scares me but rather the idea of suddenly being nothing.

As Buddhism was introduced to the West in the 20th century, European and American converts wrote about “suddenly being nothing” as a good thing as opposed to the prolonged sufferings of being born and reborn into the world—it was their understanding of nirvana. But recent scholars who studied the Asian context of Buddhism's origin and development characterize nirvana as a state of liberation (such as Thanissaro Bhikkhu's translation of nirvana as “the unbinding”). What disappears is not my life, but the many self-centered delusions that were stifling and strangling my life. To me, Shinran was describing nirvana in this way back in the 12th century—he described what he witnessed (the liberated state of his teacher Honen and of many other nembutsu followers) and what he experienced himself.

Those who believe Buddhism is about pulling yourself up to nirvana by your own bootstraps have a hard time understanding what the Pure Land teachings are saying. To them it looks like we're all spiritual “welfare queens” collecting benefits from big daddy Amida Buddha instead of earning our way out of worldly defilement and into respectable purity. After twenty years as a monk on Mt. Hiei, Shinran realized that all the practices of striving for enlightenment only led to more entanglement in the ego-self. To awaken to one's total reliance on the reality of life in and around us (i.e., Amida, “the unbounded”) is to be free of the calculating ego-self. “Namu Amida Butsu” is the joyful shout of liberation, not the slave's plaintive wail to a divine master for mercy.

To live experiencing moments of nirvana does not take the edge off one's fear of death. After Rev.

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The Fear of the Loss of A Life

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Gyoko Saito died, his family gave me a copy of the video of him in his hospital bed a couple weeks before his death speaking with Dr. Haneda. I thought I would enjoy hearing the two discussing Buddhism and reminiscing about people in the “old days” at our Chicago temple. They spoke in English because Rev. Saito’s son Shin was recording them, but at one point Shin had to leave the room. With the camera still recording, Rev. Saito began speaking in Japanese about how afraid he was to die and Dr. Haneda only acknowledged his words, not attempting to comfort Rev. Saito or make arguments for courage. It was a chilling scene to witness.

In his eulogy

(available at <http://bschawaii.org/shindharmanet/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2012/03/Saito-memorial.pdf>), Dr. Haneda calls Rev. Saito’s death a “pari-nirvana,” the ultimate nirvana. It is for us to see the whole of Rev. Saito’s life as complete fulfillment, no matter how much we wish he could have lived longer to give us more guidance. I imagine the historical Buddha as well as Shinran probably had moments of the utter fear of death similar to what I saw on the video of Rev. Saito. For them, the nembutsu was the reminder that the death they feared was only of one particular life, while life itself (Amida) would continue. The state of “suddenly being nothing” would apply only to the body and consciousness of an entity long slated for decay.

We can call Rev. Saito’s death “pari-nirvana” along with how we describe the Buddha’s passing on Nirvana Day. But what about any other life? What about my life? From the view of Amida, the overall universal life, perhaps each death is seen as pari-nirvana. Or not. It would only be my ego-self getting worked up about earning some prize and comparing my death with anyone else’s. And it is the ego-self that makes me agitated with fear about complete extinction. My life is and has already been a part of the greater life encompassed by what we call Amida, Life and Light Beyond Measure.

On Nirvana Day, we are reminded that though the life of one person ends, the life of all beings lives on, generation after generation. It’s not for me to be concerned about whether I’ve made contributions that will have positive effects in the future (although I

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The Fear of Loss of A Life

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worry about that a lot, seeing how little I’ve accomplished compared to Dr. Haneda, Rev. Saito and other teachers). It’s more important for me, especially now with my health problems, to honor and take to heart the teachings the historical Buddha left for us, the teachings of all so many great teachers who touch our lives.

Why I Sit

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Unfortunately, many westerners expect to quickly attain a breakthrough. When they do not see the results they hoped for, they give up. Zen meditation is not a fast track to enlightenment. Zen meditation also differs from other types of meditation. Unlike some forms of meditation that result in a deep, trancelike state in which the practitioner detaches from their surroundings, Zen focuses on becoming acutely aware of the physical environment. The key, however, is to not attach to these outside conditions. While sitting zazen, if a fire truck goes by, simply think, “Fire truck,” and let the thought pass. Do not attach by thinking, “Fire truck . . . I wonder where it is going? (I hope no one is hurt),” and other related thoughts. Let the thoughts pass and return to this moment; breathing in, breathing out, just sitting.

Although zazen is part of a Buddhist practice, the physical act of meditation is non-religious. In fact, meditative and contemplative practices are part of most religions. Zazen simply provides a framework in which to develop a meditation practice. I have found that the lessons learned from a zazen practice carry into my everyday life. My ability to clear the non-essential chatter of the mind when dealing with problems has improved thru zazen. I am better able to stop, breathe deeply and center my mind in the moment. With this clarity, solutions to problems seem more easily achieved. With a settled mind, one is better able to reflect upon the nembutsu teachings.

Zazen is not a cure-all. It is just another tool in the life of a person seeking answers. That is why I sit. Namu Amida Butsu.





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FEBRUARY 2018 CALENDAR



See page 2 for details on specific events. Events may be canceled or moved.
 .Check www.facebook.com/budtempchi for the most up-to-date changes.

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 7:30 pm Meditation	2 7:00 pm Taiko	3
4 9 am Meditation 11 am Monthly Memorial Service	5 7 pm laido	6 11 am Qigong 1 pm Ukulele 6:30 pm Intro. Buddhism	7 7 pm Buddhism Study Class	8 10 am Bulletin Submissions due 7:30 pm Meditation	9	10
11 9 am Meditation 10 am Children's Taiko 11 am Nirvana Day/ Dharma School	12 7 pm laido	13 11 am Qigong 1 pm Ukulele 6:30 pm Intro. Buddhism	14 7 pm Buddhism Study Class	15 7:30pm Meditation	16	17 1 pm Bake Sale
18 9 am Meditation 11 am Pet Memorial / Children's Taiko	19 7 pm laido	20 11 am Qigong 1 pm Ukulele 6:30 pm Intro. Buddhism	21 7 pm Buddhism Study Class	22 7:30 pm Meditation	23 10 am Bulletin Mailing	24
25 9 am Meditation 10 am Children's Taiko 11 am Interfaith Sunday/ Dharma School 12:30 pm Board Meeting	26 7 pm laido	27 11 am Qigong 1 pm Ukulele 6:30 pm Intro. Buddhism	28 7pm Buddhism Study Class			