



The Buddhist Temple of Chicago BULLETIN



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Resident Minister

Rev. Patti Nakai

President

Bill Bohlman

Translating *Hongan* with His Life

When I joined this temple in the late 1970s, I felt a personal closeness to Rev. Gyomay Kubose. I attended his weekly study class and the Sunday morning meditation that he led. At that time the meditation group was very tight-knit and we had social gatherings where we got to be with Rev. Kubose in a relaxed setting. On my days off from my banking job, I would hang out at the temple and visit with Rev. Kubose and from time to time he and his wife Minnie would invite me to their apartment for dinner.

So while I felt close to Rev. Kubose, Rev. Gyoko Saito was a distant figure to me at BTC. I thought some of his Dharma talks were interesting, but he seemed to speak as a “pedestrian,” just another man on the street, not from the lofty heights of transcendent wisdom as Rev. Kubose did. Then one time on the day of the study class, Rev. Kubose fell ill and it was too late to contact everyone to cancel the class so he asked Rev. Saito to fill in for him.

Instead of showering us with knowledge about Buddhist history and concepts as Rev. Kubose did, Rev. Saito spoke not to our heads but aimed for our guts. “What is your highest wish?” he said to our class and he paraphrased Soren Kierkegaard, “If you have ordinary wishes, there are no problems, but if you have the highest

General Membership Meeting 2018

On Sunday, January 28, approximately 50 people attended the annual general membership meeting. Officers and various temple groups reported about their activities during 2017 and their plans for the coming year. The past year had been one of challenges and successes; the reports touched on both.

Once again in 2017, Natsu Matsuri was our largest fund raiser with a net profit in the \$13,000 range. As chairman, I thanked all the volunteers who put in many hours of hard work to make it successful. It is only thru the hard work of the sangha that we can have this event. With regard to the Sunday services, once again the members stepped up. Lay leaders took some of the load off Rev. Patti by assisting with the service and also helped with memorial services. As in past years, BTC was the “go to” place for students researching Buddhism and for those taking their first steps on the Dharma path. Books donated by members allowed us to fill information requests from prisoners in various parts of the country.

It was not all good news at the meeting. Last year we projected a budget deficit for 2017; the deficit proved to be worse than expected. The final number was a deficit of over \$40,000;



Rev. Patti Nakai
Resident Minister

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

This article continues on page 7 at column 1.



Bill Bohlman
BTC President

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

This article continues on page 6 at column 2.

MARCH 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).**

. Prevents table merging. Keep

➤➤➤ Special Temple Services and Events ◀◀◀

- March 12—Rev. Gyoko Saito Memorial.
- March 19—Spring O-Higan.
- March 26—Rev. Gyomay Kubose Memorial.

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: March 23.
- **Bulletin submissions**—Deadline for notices and articles: every month, 6 pm, the Thursday 15 days prior to mailing. This month: March 8.
- **Temple Board Meeting**—Once a month, Sunday, 12:30 pm. This month: Mar. 25.
- **Upaya Helpers** (refreshment service, community outreach, ping pong, etc.) Call
- **Cook It Forward** (feeding unhoused persons)—Mary Harvey <https://www.facebook.com/groups/CookItForward/>

Meditation & Buddhist Education

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

Sundays, 11 am. This month: Mar. 12 and Mar. 26.

- **Introduction to Buddhism**—offered periodically throughout the year. E-mail Nancey Epperson: 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

- **Aikido** (“cooperation, not competition”)—Sundays, 5-7 pm. Email DJ Lortie at djaikibudo@gmail.com for info.
- **Asoka Society** (refreshment service, social club, outings, etc.)—3rd Saturday every month, 1 pm. This month: March 17.
- **Iaido** (Japanese Swordsmanship)—Mondays, 7-9 pm. Call Jerry for info.
- **Kumihimo** (Japanese braiding). March 17. Email Nancey Epperson: naepperson14@gmail.com
- **Qigong** (Chinese Movement)—Tuesdays, 11-12:30pm. 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 pm. Email Ruth: fabbianti@sbcglobal.net

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 & suggestions are welcome. Submissions are encouraged—articles, essays, book reviews, photos, poetry, news items, announcements, drawings, etc. Submissions will be reviewed for suitability and space availability. Anonymous submissions will not be published, but author’s names may be withheld from publication upon request.

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

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- ❁ 1/01 New year's day service and pot luck
- ❁ 1/07 January memorial service conducted by lay leaders
- ❁ 1/14 Lay speaker Sunday service. Wendy Fawcett gave the Dharma School talk and Sandra Adams gave the lay talk.
- ❁ 1/20 Rev. Nakai attended 100th birthday party for Mr. Toshio Joji.
- ❁ 1/21 Regular Sunday service. *** Board of Directors met.
- ❁ 1/25 Rev. Nakai attended the Buddhist-Catholic dialogue meeting at Misericordia.
- ❁ 1/26 February bulletin mailing.
- ❁ 1/28 Eitaikyo and Dharma School service. *** General membership meeting.
- ❁ 1/31 Rev. Nakai attended January birthday lunch at Bethany Retirement Home for Ben Enta's 102nd birthday.
- ❁ Our former temple board member, Lawrence "Larry" Weisman, passed away on January 25 in Katy, TX. He is survived by his wife Ellen and sons Mike, Jonathan and Bram and daughter Tova (spouse of Mary Harvey).
- ❁ The temple was recently informed of the passing of James Matayoshi on October 23 of last year in Honolulu, HI. Mr. Matayoshi served many years as treasurer at BTC. He is survived by wife Nora and sons Wayne and Steven.

Our deepest sympathy to
the family and friends of:
James Matayoshi
Lawrence Weisman

THANK YOUs

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

Service & Hospitality

- **Sunday Service Participants:** Bill Bohlman, Sue Balsam, Sandra Adams, Darryl Shishido, Diana Schoendorff, Wendy Fawcett, Elaine Siegel, Susan Grace, Lynn Maruyama, Russ Hirai, Martha Fujimoto, Glenn Fujiura, Gabriella Spencer, Anna Idol, Kestal, Isla, Henry
- **Lay Leaders:** Karen Baier, Sue Balsam, Bill Bohlman, Nancey Epperson, Wendy Fawcett

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Thank Yous

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- **Audio Controls:** Wendy and Jacob Fawcett, Gary T. Nakai
- **Bulletin Mailing:** Nancey Epperson, Noreen Enkoji, Haru Ito, Sadie Kusamoto, Ruby Tsuji, Mary Samson, Alice Murata, Dennis Chan, Masa Nakata, April Kellman, Lindy Korner
- **Sunday Service Refreshments:** Upaya Group, Kokyo Taiko, Elaine Siegel, Izui and Kanemoto families, Jan Saiki, Jane Fujiyoshi, Tademoto family

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
- **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!

NEW MARTIAL ARTS GROUP



Aikido at BTC!

Sundays 5-7pm

Everyone is welcome – especially children, teens and beginners.

Aikido is a non-violent martial art that focuses on improvement through cooperation, not competition.

DJ Sensei is a fifth degree black belt instructor who has trained for over 25 years in Aikido with Shihan (master teachers), including eighteen years at the Japan world headquarters at the Aikikai Hombu Dojo in Tokyo.

For more information, please contact DJ Lortie: djaikibudo@gmail.com

An Offer I Can't Refuse

by Sandra Adams

Everyone has real life stories to tell which may illuminate Buddhist terms and concepts. I've been thinking about the accumulation of changes in my lifetime and how I noticed it happening. Specifically, I re-read a book I had read before and it seemed like a different book. Because the book itself hadn't changed, I have to think that I have been constantly changing since I first read it.

Herman Hesse's *Siddhartha* is such a book for me. Picking it up when I was 17, I thought I would be let in on the enigmas of Eastern religion, so big in Pop Culture then. In fact, I got nowhere with it. But 45 years later, I re-read it and it was a whole new book. It made sense. My life had caught up with the story of a young seeker who left home to explore life and who, years later, experienced his own young son doing the same thing. Hesse's telling of Siddhartha's story and my own life story had coincided. The full circle of life's experiences was stunningly obvious to me when I closed the book, but I also felt understood and comforted to realize the universality of my feelings.

In this way, I see that my perception and my understanding have been changing all along. But some things don't seem to change. There are emotional reactions I feel stuck with because they happen repeatedly over time, making me wonder how much I am learning from experience. Since I live in a big old house where mice like to shelter in Chicago winters, I think of these recurrent delusions as karmic glue traps, lurking in dark corners waiting to stick to my ongoing experiences. I am the mouse in the dark scurrying along the same path and becoming stuck in the same ignorant delusions, not recognizing I am repeating the same experience.

The idea of karmic glue traps is funny, but not so funny when one is embarrassed or ashamed for making the same mistake yet again. Each of us may have our own repeated variation, whether it is being late for things, or being a control freak, or not trusting someone else to do things the way you would do them, or having a temper tantrum. These repeated delusions cause frustration, and maybe tears, of being at one's wit's end, of not knowing how to stop being ignorant. It seems an impossible thing to overcome, this human business of not being able to count on oneself. At such

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An Offer I Can't Refuse

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a moment I think that if I can't trust myself, I can trust no one. And then it's a good thing to have heard of the nembutsu.

We say the nembutsu repeatedly in our services. Namu Amida Butsu. "Namu" has been translated as "bowing" and also as "entrusting." After a dark moment of getting caught in a karmic sticky trap, I found comfort in rereading Dr. Taitetsu Unno's introduction to Shin Buddhism, *River of Fire, River of Water*. In his chapter on "Faith As True Entrusting," Dr. Unno asks, "If one cannot trust even oneself, if the self is so unreliable, how can the so-called faith of such a person have any meaning?" He goes on to say that, "In daily life, trusting is the foundation of any kind of meaningful relationship. This is true whether the trust is between individuals, nations, ethnic, social or religious groups. Without this trust, we cannot work together and society cannot function. With this mutual trust, however, we keep promises, make appointments, observe rules and regulations, and uphold the law.

How well this works depends on our resolve, but it is also subject to human frailties, Dr. Unno reminds us. Indeed, trusting can be a stumbling block. One's karmic endowment may be one of mistrust, due to events of childhood or to an ancestral lineage of behaviors which continues into our own lifetime. Human experiences generate responses and emotions which repeat through time and generations. Therapists make their living from such human endowments. Our humble teacher of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism, Shinran Shonin, also suffered from delusions. He said, "For the foolish and ignorant who are ever sinking in birth-and-death . . . the genuine difficulty is true entrusting."

But thankfully, as Shinran also discovered, the other part of the nembutsu is "butsu," Amida Buddha, The Buddha of Infinite Light and Life. This is the name standing for the infinite wisdom and compassion that is never far away. In everyday life bodhisattvas are everywhere, helping me in human form, comforting me in animal form and embracing me, despite my ignorance, by offering me their experiences of enlightenment in words written in books. "Namu Amida Butsu" is the meeting of the deluded human being with the infinite wisdom and compassion of life. The human being is being offered everything one

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An Offer I Can't Refuse

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could ever hope for, but still remains wary. As a fallible and unenlightened human being I too remain wary but at the same moment I am grateful for the nembutsu. It simultaneously reminds me both of my ongoing karmic delusions and of its readiness to embrace me with infinite wisdom and compassion.

According to Shinran Shonin, entrusting is the hard part. I think that entrusting is easier said than done and by now I consider the nembutsu an offer I can't refuse. My lay dharma talk necessarily became a karma talk. Thanks for reading, and look out for the karmic sticky traps! Namu Amida Butsu

The Benefits of Belonging

by Wendy Fawcett

When I was a young girl, my parents taught me that every week when we attended church, I should donate or "tithe" at least 10% of my earnings to the church. At the time I didn't grasp the benefits of giving to the church my hard earned allowance for doing my weekly chores. As I grew older it became obvious to me that that the church had bills to pay such as electric, water, mortgage and the salary I assumed we paid our pastor. But even as a teenager I never really learned the benefits of supporting my church.

As an adult I've finally learned what my parents were trying to teach me. When my husband Jacob and I first started attending BTC we immediately became regulars at the Wednesday night study classes and we attended Sunday services. Of course, we felt we were a part of the Sangha and a part of the community. But when we started to make room in our budget for membership, I started to feel something deeper about being a part of the Sangha.

I started to feel a sense of satisfaction that I was helping to support the Temple and the education programs that are offered. I thought about how I was once a new student at the Introduction to Buddhism class. I was so grateful to the temple members who came before me and made those classes possible. If those classes were not offered, I doubt that I would have ever started attending the Sunday services. By becoming a temple member, I am gratefully giving

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The Benefits of Belonging

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back to the temple and Sangha.

As we look to the future and wonder how our temple membership will look, I encourage you now to become a member. Perhaps your family has been temple members from the "early days" but you've never become an official member—become a member to honor your loved ones and gratefully acknowledge what they helped to support. Perhaps you have been coming to the temple for a while and know that the Dharma is being taught for everyone to hear—become a member and help ensure that the next newcomer will have a place where they can hear the Dharma and they too can become a part of our Sangha.

Perhaps you're unsure if you have the financial means to become a member. There are several levels of membership and an easy "payment plan" that my family takes advantage of. I just learned that we are only one of a few families that take advantage of the ability to pay the membership dues on a quarterly basis. Don't forget that you can become a member at any time of the year—such as now! By becoming a member, you are ensuring that the Temple remains a place where everyone is welcome to hear the Dharma.

In Gassho . . .



SAVE THE DATE

2018 Eastern Buddhist League
Conference

Pursuit of
TRUE HAPPINESS...
The Shin Buddhist Path

August 31 - September 2, 2018
Toronto Buddhist Church
Toronto, ON - Canada

Featuring Guest Speakers
Reverends Bob and Patti Oshita

MORE DETAILS TO FOLLOW

REMINDER:
Passports are required to cross the border.

BTC Scholarship News

Are you a high school senior? A college senior? Looking for help in paying for school? Apply for the BTC Scholarship!

Young people who have been active in Dharma School, or other temple group, and whose families are paid members are eligible to apply.

You have to fill out a form, write a 1-page essay, submit a transcript, and get a recommendation from someone other than your mother or the minister.

The application deadline is May 27, 2018.

Get the details from:

BTC
SCHOLARSHIP
COMMITTEE
1151 W. Leland
Avenue
Chicago, IL 60640



General Meeting 2018

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the 2018 budget projects a deficit of \$23,000. The membership report gave a look as to why we have this deficit; total membership is down and this is reflected in lower total membership dues. In addition, unlike past years, we did not receive any large donations or bequests. For 2018 there will be a concerted effort to reach out to the younger generation of the legacy families to encourage their support of the temple. For now, our financial position is strong; however, we must face our present reality.

In an effort to contain costs, the hope is to switch most of the Bulletin distribution to the online edition. Not only will this lower printing and postage costs, it will also allow us to ask for advertiser support which is not allowed in non-profit bulk mail. As part of public and community relations, BTC is active in various local and interfaith groups. Many of our members participate in outreach activities to help the homeless and less fortunate in our city.

Our Dharma School is thriving with classes for three age groups. A few times each year, the Dharma School children act as chairperson for Sunday service and perform all the parts except for the minister's part. For Halloween the children had a party with children who are Rohingya refugees.

Various temple groups reported on their activities. As the membership ages, some of the groups are seeing declining participation. However, other groups are growing and a new Aikido class is starting.

Rev. Patti thanked temple members for their support during her health issues. As a show of our appreciation for all she does for the temple and her clear presentation of the teachings we gratefully presented her with an orei.

As we look to the future the only thing that is certain is the need for the continued support of the sangha. In 2019 we will celebrate our 75th anniversary. BTC has provided a place of support and community throughout all those years; it is up all of us to make sure BTC can continue well into the future. Namu Amida Butsu.



**Heartland**
Blood Centers PART OF MEDTRONIC

**The Gregg & Robyn Oshita Foundation
Blood Drive**

**Saturday, March 24, 2018
8:00 am - 12:15 pm**

**Japanese American Service Committee
4427 N. Clark Ave., Chicago, IL 60640
Nutrition Room**

Visit www.heartlandbc.org or
call 1-800-786-4483 to schedule your appointment.

Drink plenty of water prior to donating.
Photo ID required.

 **Give the Gift of Life. Give Blood.**

Translating *Hongan* With His Life

(continued from page 1)

wish, the problem of living arises.” In my case at the time, I felt I had lots of problems, but I realized those problems coming from my “ordinary wishes” couldn’t be the problem of life that Rev. Saito said Kierkegaard and Shinran struggled with. To know that wish that comes from beyond our selfish material desires, Rev. Saito said it was important to encounter the teacher who attacks our shallow egoistical view of ourselves and awakens us to the path leading to the discovery of who we really are.

There is the Buddhism that makes us feel comfortable when we hear phrases like “come as you are” and “everyday suchness.” But at that study class, Rev. Saito reminded me that there is the Buddhism that is about earnest seeking and not plopping down into a complacent state. It is the Buddhism that kicks us out of the bubble of associating only with people similar to us and makes us discover the magnificence of lives very different from ours. That is the Buddhism of *hongan*, what Rev. Saito and Dr. Nobuo Haneda translated as “innermost aspiration” instead of using the misleading term “Original Vow.” That deep wish to awaken to the oneness of life is in each life – it’s not some particular “vow” (promise) originating with a specific being, as thought by those who read the Larger Sutra too literally.

More than that new way of translating *hongan* into English, Rev. Saito translated the “innermost aspiration” with his whole life. Remembering the talks he gave in Chicago and Los Angeles and reading his articles, I see how he identified with a wide variety of lives, not judging anyone as separate and inferior to himself. He could reverberate with the courageous dedication of Martin Luther King, Jr. and see himself in the scam artist walking down Broadway or the disturbed woman shouting on Leland Avenue. Animals and children were his teachers and like his main teacher, Akegarasu Haya, Rev. Saito learned from the great thinkers of diverse cultures and religions, not just Asian Buddhists.

Rev. Saito could have lived his life satisfying his “ordinary wishes” by continuing his studies to be an electrical engineer. Instead, inspired by Akegarasu, he entered the Buddhist ministry. In Chicago, the members really wanted a minister who helped people feel good about identifying as Buddhist, mixed in with

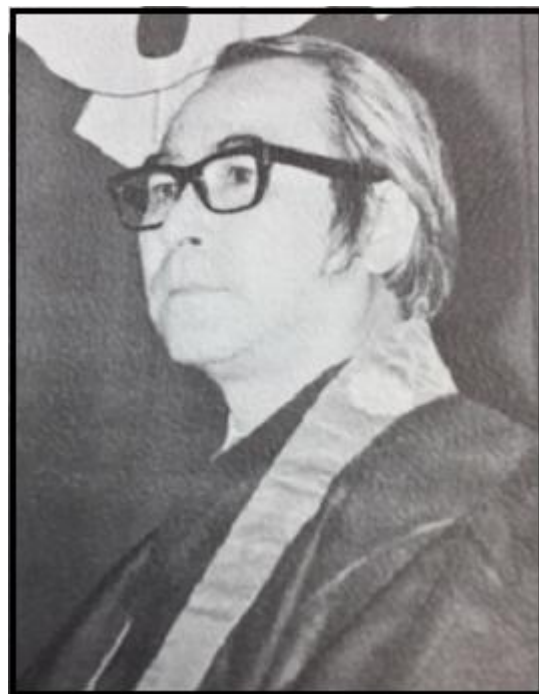
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Translating *Hongan* with His Life

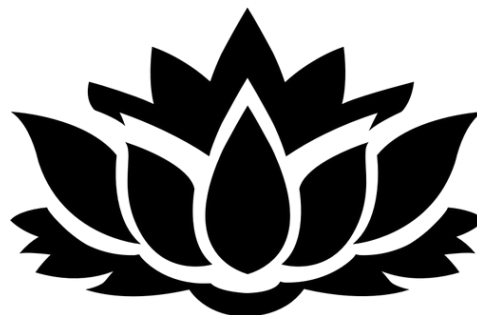
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pride and appreciation of Japanese culture. But Rev. Saito failed to be that kind of minister and instead strove to make each of us aware of the “highest wish” that goes beyond a Buddhist or Japanese identity. He did this in his talks, writings and most poignantly by example.

In this month of March for Founder’s Day, we will sing the praises of Rev. Kubose who is a significant figure in bringing Jodo Shinshu to English-speaking audiences as well as being important as our temple’s founding minister. But in March is also the observance of Koshu-ki, the memorial of Rev. Saito. Maybe if for no one else but me, it’s an occasion to reflect on how Rev. Saito is the true teacher by showing me how to be the true student of life, to open up and let go of my self-serving tribal views.



Rev. Gyoko Saito, 1927 – 2001





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MARCH 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 pm Aikido	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 Rev. Saito Memorial/ Dharma School 5 pm Aikido	12 7 pm laido	13 11 am Qigong 1 pm Ukulele	14 7 pm Buddhism Study Class	15 7:30pm Meditation	16	17 9 am – noon Kumihimo 1pm – 3pm Asoka Society
18 9 am Meditation 11 am Spring Ohigan / Children's Taiko 5 pm Aikido	19 7 pm laido	20 11 am Qigong 1 pm Ukulele	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 Founder's Day/ Dharma School 12:30 pm Board Meeting 5pm Aikido	26 7 pm laido	27 11 am Qigong 1 pm Ukulele	28 7pm Buddhism Study Class	29 7:30 pm Meditation	30	31