



The Buddhist Temple of Chicago BULLETIN



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Resident Minister

Rev. Patti Nakai

President

Ann Yi

BTC 75th Anniversary Reflections

The Quiet Gateway: Meditation at BTC

When I was finishing my studies at Otani University I was interviewed for the Higashi Honganji magazine and at one point the reporter said to me, “Don’t you think Rev. Kubose was a heretic for having zen meditation at the Chicago temple?” I told him it was my experience with the meditation group at BTC that led me to Shinran and his teachings. I’m grateful that Rev. Gyomay Kubose had the meditation group at BTC and I hope it continues even if it isn’t the gateway to Jodo Shinshu for other people as it was for me.

Now within a few blocks of our temple you can find various sorts of meditation centers – Tibetan, Zen, Theravada etc. but back in the 1960s when Rev. Gyomay Kubose began the meditation group at BTC, there were only a few Buddhist centers in the Chicago area. Rev. Kubose was aware of the growing interest in Zen among Americans and he took it upon himself to learn the Soto style of meditation, characterized by sitting facing the wall and slow walking meditation.

When I joined the group in the late 1970s, there was a zendo (meditation room) on the third floor of the annex building (it was the mirror image of the minister’s residence). In the summer the



Rev. Patti Nakai
Resident Minister

This article continues on page 7 column 1.

Sunday in May

[Editor’s request—
Space at premium this month
Please write something brief.]

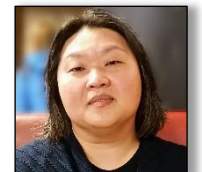
Lilac bushes bud
Seven five three kansho rings
Now come as you are

Our Teacher’s slim hands
Left palm to right palm *Nam’ ‘da*
Gassho to Oneness

Ko gen gi gi pause
Vibrating voices unite
Amida meets us

Incense trails our chant
Pinch to join the mingled swirls
Wisps in the trusses

Our Sangha breaks bread
Sips tea of emerald leaves
Itadakimasu



Ann Yi
BTC President

Contact Ann at
annyiBTC@
gmail.com

MAY 2019 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* ◀◀◀

- May 19—**Hatsu Mairi**
- May 25—**Seminar with Rev. Peter Hata**
- May 26—**Tanjo-e (Shinran Shonin's Birthday)**

Regular Temple Services

- **Religious Service** (in English)—Sundays, 11 am.

Temple Meetings & Community Service

- **Bulletin mailing**—2nd to last Friday every month, 10 am; volunteers welcome. This month: May 24.
- **Bulletin submissions**—Deadline for notices and articles: every month, 6 pm, the Thursday 15 days prior to mailing. This month: May 9.
- **Temple Board Meeting**—Once a month, Sunday, 12:30 pm. This month: May 26.
- **Upaya Helpers** (refreshment service, community outreach, ping pong, etc.) Email Albert Gonzalez: albertgbtc@gmail.com
- **Cook It Forward** (feeding unhoused persons)—<https://www.facebook.com/groups/CookItForward/>

Meditation & Buddhist Education

- **Buddhism Study Class**—Wednesday afternoons, 1:30 – 3:00 pm. Currently the class is reading “River of Fire, River of Water” by Taitetsu Unno. No previous Buddhism study required.
- **Dharma School (for school-age children)**—Sundays, 11 am. This month: May 12, May 26.
- **Sutra Study Class**—2nd or 3rd Sunday of the month, 12:30 to 2 pm. No previous Buddhism study required

- **Introduction to Buddhism**—offered periodically throughout the year. Next session starts May 7. E-mail Nancey Epperson at naepperson14@gmail.com
- **Meditation**—Sundays, 9:00 am and Thursdays, 7:30 pm. First-timers: come 10 minutes early for instruction.

Social & Cultural Activities

- **Aikido** (“cooperation, not competition”)—Sundays, 5-7 pm. Email DJ Lortie djaikibudo@gmail.com. No meeting May 26.
- **Asoka Society** (refreshment service, social club, outings, etc.)—3rd Saturday every month, 1 pm. This month: May 18.
- **Iaido** (Japanese Swordsmanship)—Mondays, 7-9 pm. No meeting May 27.
- **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. **Children**, 1st, 3rd, and 5th Sundays at 11. Email kokyotaiko@buddhisttemplechicago.org to confirm.
- **Ukulele Group**—On hiatus in May. Email Ruth Abbinanti: fabbinanti@sbcglobal.net.

Hatsu Mairi Sunday May 19

The Hatsu Mairi (“first visit”) ceremony is the official welcoming of children to our temple. The child can be any age from infant to high schooler and they can be those who've come to our temple before. Please contact the temple for an application.

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, Nancey Epperson, April Kellman, 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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- ✿ 3/02 Duncan Ryuken Williams, author of *American Sutra*, visited BTC to view our nokotsudo altar that was constructed in the Heart Mountain camp.
- ✿ 3/03 Monthly memorial and Rev. Gyoko Saito memorial service. *** Chanting class met.
- ✿ 3/08 Rev. Nakai conducted workshop for Hawaii district Higashi Honganji ministers at the Honolulu Betsuin.
- ✿ 3/09 Rev. Nakai conducted public seminar at the Honolulu Betsuin.
- ✿ 3/10 Dharma School chaired service and Wendy Fawcett was lay speaker. *** Rev. Nakai conducted public seminar at Hilo Higashi Honganji temple.
- ✿ 3/16 Asoka Society met.
- ✿ 3/17 Regular service. *** Sutra study class met.
- ✿ 3/21 Rev. Nakai attended Buddhist-Catholic dialogue meeting at the Midwest Buddhist Temple. *** Rev. Nakai attended Chicago Japanese American Council meeting at Skokie Public Library.
- ✿ 3/22 April bulletin mailed. *** Rev. Nakai conducted memorial service for Takeyoshi “Joe” Kanno at Lakeview Funeral Home. Mr. Kanno is survived by daughter Naomi and sons Ken and Jiro.
- ✿ 3/23 Rev. Nakai conducted memorial service for Fumiko Takata at Lakeview Funeral Home. Mrs. Takata is survived by daughter Fran Patzwaldt and sons Allen and Dennis. *** Rev. Nakai conducted one-year memorial service for Michael Gallaga at BTC.
- ✿ 3/24 Spring Ohigan and Dharma School service.
- ✿ 3/25 Rev. Nakai conducted ashes burial service for Sally Nishi at Montrose Cemetery. Mrs. Nishi is survived by niece Kathleen Kono and nephew Michael Kono.
- ✿ 3/31 Founder’s Day service. *** Board of directors met.

Our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of:

Takeyoshi Kanno
Sally Nishi
Fumiko Takata

THANK YOU!

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

Service & Hospitality

- ✿ **Sunday Service Participants:** Ruth Abbinanti, Bill Bohlman, Wendy Fawcett, Glenn T. Fujiura, Ed Horiuchi, Anna Idol, Stanley Oda, Diana Schoendorff, Betty Segal, Miriam Solon, Ann Yi, Dharma School students, Esther, Isla
- ✿ **Lay Leaders:** Nancey Epperson, Wendy Fawcett, Mary Harvey, Lynnell Long, Miriam Solon
- ✿ **Musicians:** Drea Gallaga, Ann Yi
- ✿ **Audio Controls:** Wendy and Jacob Fawcett, Gary T. Nakai
- ✿ **Bulletin Mailing:** Dennis Chan, Noreen Enkoji, Haru Ito, Sadae Kasamoto, April Kellman, Alice Murata, Ruby Tsuji
- ✿ **Sunday Service Refreshments:** Dharma School Parents, Noreen Enkoji, Anna Idol, Haru Ito, Sadae Kasamoto, Candy Minx, Yasuo & Etsuko Mizuuchi, Jane & Jerry Morishige, Alice Murata, Stanley Oda, Ruby Tsuji, Upaya Group

✿ Temple Keepers

- ✿ **Maintaining Temple inside and out:** Tomio Tademoto
- ✿ **Cleaning Hondo & Nokotsudo:** Michael Yasukawa
- ✿ **Extensive landscape maintenance:** Tomio Tademoto
- ✿ **Cleaning washrooms:** DJ and family, Ann Yi
- ✿ **Emptying trash, putting it out for disposal:** Sue Balsam, Karen Baier, April Kellman, Adam Kellman, Candy Minx
- ✿ **Sweeping, mopping, vacuuming:** Candy Minx, Mary Harvey, Gary Nakai, Michael Yasukawa, Ann Yi
- ✿ **Restocking paper towels and toilet paper:** Miriam Solon
- ✿ **Watering plants, laundering kitchen towels and aprons:** Alice Murata
- ✿ **Clearing trash from Temple exterior:** Mary Harvey
- ✿ **Cleaning minister’s residence:** Dharma School
- ✿ **Administrative Office Volunteers:** Ruth Abbinanti, Karen Baier, Nancey Epperson, April Kellman, Candy Minx
- ✿ **Maintaining and updating Temple website:** Glenn T. Fujiura, Ann Yi
- ✿ **Maintaining and updating Temple computer:** John Kelly, Gary T. Nakai
- ✿ **Setting up and taking down chairs & tables:** Too many to thank—thanks to all!

BTC's Living Legacy

by Gary T. Nakai

A very popular folk legend at BTC is about its first altar. It has garnered attention from a variety of groups since the beginning of our existence as a temple but even more so in recent years. It seems as more people learned about the story behind this artifact, word spread and more interest was generated. We've entertained inquiries from a range of researchers, historians, writers and exhibitors with camp injustice themes including distinguished scholars of Buddhism, all wanting to view this special religious object. Notably, the story of our first altar receives much positive reviews from the visiting public during our temple's yearly participation in Open House Chicago. Everyone is curious as to why our altar is so special.



The altar, presently installed in the Nokotsudo.

photo: Rev. Patti Nakai

Our first altar was built in the Heart Mountain (Wyoming) Relocation Center in 1944 and served the needs of the incarcerated people of Japanese ancestry, for holding Buddhist services. It is older than BTC (or Chicago Buddhist Church as BTC was called back then) itself. It was built by craftsmen interned in Heart Mountain, and the short version of

its history was: it was built in "camp" out of scrap lumber and there was a dedication inscribed "on the back;" this according to Rev. Gyomay Kubose. I was one of many who heard this first-hand. There was much that made this account a legend, as over the years there was no documentation that an inscription was ever seen or read, and the installations of the altar in our Hondo and subsequent Nokotsudos didn't allow for easy access to confirm. And when the altar *was* moved on occasion, there was nothing "written on the back" that would catch the attention of the casual observer.

But what we could attest to is the claim that of having been built out of rough, scrap lumber. The artful, skilled craftsmanship executed in the design and construction is beautiful; but the telltale, lack of smoothness of the wood beneath the paint was just as evident. Nevertheless, the overall finished-look and assembly are striking upon closer inspection. The precise repetition of the intricate forms and delicate ornamentation could not have been possible if the altar were not crafted by skilled hands from a family whose background had been making altars for generations. The assembly was all tongue and groove, mortise and tenon joinery using no nails, and every connection match-fitted. The original statue of Amida-sama disappeared long ago and was briefly substituted with a sitting Buddha statue in our second Nokotsudo, replaced now by a scroll depicting Amida Buddha.

Fast forward to 2005 - came the razing of our old temple building to make way for construction of our new temple. Every large furnishing to be saved had to be dismantled and protected for storage. During disassembly of this altar it was seen how its pieces had warped and joints loosened due to shrinkage. Thus, it was very wobbly. Lifting the Go-kuden (altar house) off of the Shumi-dan (base), voila! Right before our very eyes, not "on the back" but on the base's interior, an inscription! Great care was taken to lift the veil of decades of settled dust to reveal the dedication written in sumi-e (calligraphy) over 61 years ago. The surface was not disturbed, merely swept clean in order to just make out the writing. Reassembly as a restoration project was out of the question; metal fasteners had to be used

BTC's Living Legacy
(continued from page 4)

sparingly, for strength as again, it was too unstable. For installation into our new Nokotsudo, some parts of the roof, fencing, and intricate carvings were refinished also.

What is now made clear from the inscription: the Heart Mountain Buddhist Association, who commissioned its creation, is the intent of giving the altar to Nisei minister Rev. Gyomay Kubose. Rev. Kubose also mentioned on numerous occasions his understanding of who built this particular altar. Any conjecture about the builders' identity is clearly dispelled with the written dedication. But the bigger picture of learning how truly historic this altar is, of the singular distinction of how it came to be, to whom it was entrusted, and for what purpose, etc., made for a joyous revelation. This hidden treasure within a treasure fully explained everything. (See *Heart Mountain Altar Inscription*, page 6)

But to conduct viewings of our first altar and tell its story would be totally disrespectful in our

Nokotsudo, a hallowed space. An alternate, but viable means needs to be created. A video about our first altar is being contemplated in commemoration of BTC's 75th Anniversary. Please watch for it on our website sometime this year.

This living legacy is a symbol of the perseverance of our Dharma forebears to achieve normalcy in the camps. It is a symbol of achievement by skilled hands that made it so. It is a symbol of the great responsibility of spreading the Dharma in America. For the past 75 years, it quietly remained "the jewel sewn into the lining of our garment." Revealed, it calls us to the path of pursuing deep, deep, deep listening; as often proclaimed by our ministers. From out of the bleak conditions of the camps arose an unimaginable good for posterity; a symbol-become-legacy to serve countless follow-on generations at BTC. What better legacy to reflect upon and appreciate in this our 75th year.



Professor Duncan Ryuken Williams visited BTC on March 2 and had a chance to view the inscription our altar, featured in his book **American Sutra**.

(inset)
The dedication inscription—transcribed and calligraphed by Rev. Yukei Ashikaga.

Photo:
Rev. Patti Nakai

Heart Mountain Altar Inscription

Translation by Rev. Patti Nakai

Go-kuden (altar house) Shumi-dan (platform)
Ue-joku (upper table)
Mae-joku (front table) Rin-to (circular lanterns)
Kyo-joku (sutra tables) four
Shoko-joku (Burning incense table) San-dan
(Miscellaneous platform)

Migi-yori (the items on the right are from:)

By commission of the Heart Mountain
Buddhist Association
From Higo (currently Kumamoto) province,
Masuki-gun, Tomochi-cho
Craftsman - Suetsuna Okajima
From Higo province, Yatsushiro-gun,
Kagami-cho
Craftsman - Naoki Wakae
From Hiroshima
Assistant - Tamiji Oshita

Production

Construction start - 1944, January 16
Finish - April 1
Dedication - April 2

Pledge:

**Buddha-Sun shines widely beyond the 3 times
(past, present, future)
Dharma-Water rises and flows flooding
beyond the universe**

Advising Buddhist ministers:

Rinban, Rev. Kankai Izuhara
Rev. Gyomay Kubose
Rev. Tatsuya Tsuruyama
Rev. Masamichi Yoshikami

It is the consensus of the followers in the Heart Mountain Buddhist Association that for the establishment of an American Buddhist center (dojo) this altar was built and is given along with the great responsibility of spreading Buddhism in America to Nisei minister Rev. Gyomay Kubose.

April 1, 1944

Heart Mountain Buddhist Association

O-higan Lunch

On Sunday March 24, the Upaya Team served up a delicious O-higan lunch. Upaya leaders Albert Gonzalez and Lynell Long celebrate with board president Ann Yi.



photo by L.S. Long

Contested Histories at MBT

The Japanese American National Museum (JANM) will be visiting Chicago May 17 - 19, displaying their traveling exhibit "CONTESTED HISTORIES" that includes arts & crafts made by Japanese Americans who were incarcerated during WWII. As part of the exhibit's visit, there is a weekend full of programs called "Finding Home - (Re)Building Community in the Second City". The entire Japanese American community is invited. Everything takes place at the Midwest Buddhist Temple, 435 W. Menomonee Street, Chicago, 60614. More info/complete schedule at <https://mbtchicago.org/2019-contested-histories/>. All programs are FREE.



Hana Matsuri April 8:
Alice Murata helps an
Ochigo parader to adjust
her crown.

photo: Stan Oda

The Quiet Gateway

(continued from page 1)

windows facing the street would be open, so instead of staring at the wall, you gazed at the neighbors across the street. (I freaked one time when a man appeared in a window – at first, he looked nude but then I realized he had on beige underpants.) Besides sitting and walking meditation, we chanted Hannya Shingyo (the Heart Sutra) and nembutsu, and Rev. Kubose would give a brief reflection. Afterwards we had tea and toast together and most people left but a few of us stayed for the regular Sunday service. A couple times a year, we would have an overnight meditation (sesshin). We meditated late into the night with a couple tea breaks, then slept a few hours – the men in the zendo and the women in the tea ceremony room at Rev. Kubose’s apartment. Then at dawn we got up to meditate until the regular Sunday session started.

Later in the late 1980s through the mid-1990s, the meditation sessions were led by Rev. Kubose’s son, Rev. Sunnan Koyo Kubose. Rev. Sunnan had practiced Zen in Japan at Daitoku-ji temple (where I also learned meditation instruction), so he introduced a Rinzai style, facing into the circle and a more brisk walking meditation. Later the group was led by Richard Brandon who brought his experience with Thich Nhat Hanh (Vietnamese Zen priest who accommodated Western sensibilities) to his style of meditation. One thing I admired Richard for was his dropping of the traditional Japanese practice of interrupting the sitting sessions with a loud shout and/or banging of a heavy object. He said for our Uptown neighborhood with its spurts of violence and for the participants coming from abusive upbringings, it was best to have the 15-20-minute periods of uninterrupted silence and not trigger people with sudden noises.

Currently our Thursday evening and Sunday morning meditation sessions are led by Carlos Meza and Albert Gonzalez, who continue in Richard Brandon’s low-keyed approach so that the sessions



Carlos Meza, leader of the Sunday meditation group.

See page 6 for Albert Gonzalez’ photo with the Upaya leaders.

photo: Rev. Patti Nakai

are comfortable and not daunting for newcomers. Knowing that many people come for the first time to our temple seeking inner peace through meditation, Carlos and Albert inform them that there is more to Buddhism than sitting on a cushion in silence from time to time and they have been encouraging the participants to join our regular Sunday services and study classes.

I like to think of our temple’s offering of meditation as a community service, to give people a space and precious time away from the stresses of society. Although there is no fee to participate, people have shown their appreciation for Carlos and Albert by making donations large and small, so meditation is an integral part of our temple’s functioning. As we celebrate our temple’s 75th anniversary, let us be grateful for the nearly fifty years of having this quiet gateway of meditation that so many hundreds of people have passed through.



The meditation group, led by Rev. Kubose (1st row, center). Photo from the 30th anniversary booklet.



SAVE THE DATE!
Sunday October 13

BTC’s 75th Anniversary luncheon will be held following the service on **Sunday, October 13, 2019**. Please look for more details as well as reservation form and fees in upcoming bulletins.



The Buddhist Temple of Chicago

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MAY 2019 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.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 1:30 pm Study Class	2 7:30 pm Meditation	3 7 pm Taiko	4
5 9 am Meditation 11 am Monthly Memorial 5 pm Aikido	6 7 pm Iaido	7 11 am Qi Gong	8 1:30 pm Study Class	9 6 pm Bulletin Submissions Deadline 7:30pm Meditation	10 7 pm Taiko	11
12 9 am Meditation 11 am Regular Service / Dharma School 5 pm Aikido	13 7 pm Iaido	14 11 am Qi Gong	15 1:30 pm Study Class	16 7:30 pm Meditation	17 7 pm Taiko	18 1:00 pm Asoka Society
19 HATSU MAIRI 9 am Meditation 11 am Regular Service 5 pm Aikido	20 7 pm Iaido	21 11 am Qi Gong	22 1:30 pm Study Class	23 7:30 pm Meditation	24 10 am Bulletin Mailing 7 pm Taiko	25 1:30 pm Seminar with Rev. Peter Hata
26 TANJO-E 9 am Meditation 11 am Regular Service / Dharma School 12:30 pm Board Meeting	27 MEMORIAL DAY	28 11 am Qi Gong	29 1:30 pm Study Class	30 7:30 pm Meditation	31 7 pm Taiko	