



The Buddhist Temple of Chicago

August 2021

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Haya Akegarasu (1877 – 1954) whose memorial “Koso-ki” we observe this month. Rev. Akegarasu was the direct teacher of Rev. Gyomay Kubose and Rev. Gyoko Saito of BTC.



Called to Go Forth by Rev. Patti Nakai

At Obon time we express our gratitude for our loved ones by participating in the Obon service (Sunday, August 15 at 11am) and doing the joyful Bon Odori circle dances. But although Obon is an annual event, it serves to remind us of how we should feel everyday - grateful for what was done for us in the past. As I've often said, don't let gratitude become a dead-end street but let it open up the path ahead of you as you “pay it forward.”

In Rev. Ken Yamada's article “Protests, Patriotism, and Jodo Shinshu” (at the website HigashiHongonjiUSA.org), he presents Rev. Junsho Tamamitsu who says the teachings of Shinran and other Jodo Shinshu writers are a call to action. “True spirituality is lost when religion is viewed only as providing psychological peace. We must recognize the importance of ... connecting the past, present and future, for which we all share responsibility.” Rev. Tamamitsu says we shouldn't be closed off in our Buddhist practice – whether in isolation by ourselves or with a like-minded sangha – but Buddhism calls us to interact with others, especially those struggling with oppression and discrimination.

Your gratitude for receiving the nembutsu teachings is expressed by the donations and volunteer help you give our temple but also in your consideration towards people at your jobs and in your community activities. As Shinran and his teacher Honen tell us, “Do the nembutsu” (not merely “say the nembutsu” as most English translations have), our going outside our comfort zone to reach out to others is an expression of bowing down in respect to unbounded Life and Light. ☸



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Hatsubon 2021

Hatsubon means “first Obon” and below is a list (as of July 24) of the loved ones who have passed away since last year’s Obon.

08/17/2020	Alice Nojiri	04/05/2021	Fuki Terada
09/19/2020	Sadako Fujii	04/08/2021	Shuyo Matsumoto
10/14/2020	Hiroshi Kato	04/18/2021	Marion Ishii
10/18/2020	Kimie Sugano	04/24/2021	Hideo Motoike
11/25/2020	Howie Kuramitsu	05/12/2021	Sumiko Yamaya
12/08/2020	Robert Niimi	05/20/2021	Adrienne Kubose
12/14/2020	Ruth Kumata	05/22/2021	Tom Omachi
12/17/2020	Aiko Matsunaga	05/23/2021	Lillian Morimoto
12/26/2020	Mutsu Shishida	06/08/2021	Yone Fukuda
12/28/2020	Sayoko Oshiro		
01/04/2021	Terri Yamaguchi		
01/07/2021	Donald Kato		
01/07/2021	Lane Kometani		
01/08/2021	Mary Jane Duffy		
01/23/2021	Takanaga Urayama		
01/29/2021	Shoji Watts Uchida		
02/01/2021	Jean Okumura		
02/08/2021	Darrell Farley		



Scheduled activities – subject to change

Weekly services – Sundays 11am - in-person, some online Facebook Live
Second Sunday Children’s Dharma School service – on break for July and August
Qigong (Chinese exercise) – Tuesdays 11am - online Zoom and in-person
Iaido (martial art) – Mondays 6:30pm – in-person only
Thursday Meditation 7:15pm – on break until September (some pop-up events to be announced)
Sunday Meditation 9:30am – on break for July and August
Aikido (martial art) – Sundays 3-5pm – in-person only
Asoka Society (social gathering) – Saturday August 21 at 1pm
Kokyo Taiko (drums) – Friday evenings, Sunday afternoons
For more information, see our website or contact BTC



Misery is Optional

By Bill Bohlman, BTC President

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All life has dukkha. This is the First Noble Truth in Buddhism. The term dukkha is often translated as suffering, but that can be misleading. Its deeper meaning is discomfort, unease; the fact that things do not always go as we wish. The suffering can be large, as with the loss of a loved one, or it can be as small as being stuck in traffic. Unfortunately, the translation of dukkha as suffering leads to confusion for those who are not Buddhist.

I was told about an incident that occurred on a Chicago radio show over twenty-five years ago. Although ministers of other faiths had an awareness of Buddhism, sometimes their understanding of it was superficial. On this show a Protestant minister said that the problem with Buddhism is that it thinks all life is suffering. When asked to reply, the Buddhist monk said, "Suffering is inevitable; misery is optional."

The Second Noble Truth is that the cause of our dukkha is our ignorance. This is not an ignorance caused by lack of knowledge; it is an ignorance of oneself. We cling to things that are subject to inevitable change; we see the world not as it is but rather how we perceive it to be. Our ego drives our expectations; when they are not met we suffer. The Buddhadharma acknowledges this inherent nature and gives us the tools to break free of our illusions. If we cling to illusions that cause our dukkha we descend into misery; a continual state of suffering. Buddhism is not about eliminating dukkha from our lives; that is not possible. Rather it is about limiting the duration of our suffering, recognizing the cause and understanding what we can do to avoid a recurrence of that type of suffering whenever possible.

One cause of suffering is anger. When we react out of anger we often create a situation that prolongs suffering for ourselves and others; a cycle of suffering persists. A lesson on this subject is taught in a Buddhist parable:

Shortly after the passing of the Buddha, a new novice monk approached Ananda, the Buddha's cousin. The novice asked, "Did the Buddha ever become angry." Ananda replied, "Of course he did; he was only human. But he forgot it immediately." He forgot it immediately; this is the lesson of the Buddhadharma. All people are subject to human emotions, even the Buddha. The nature of his awakening was his ability to see the cause of suffering and overcome it; thereby ending the cycle of dukkha.

Our life is inevitably filled with dukkha, but it also filled with joy. When we wallow in our misery, we become blinded to the things that could bring us joy. We become consumed by our suffering; we live in darkness. The lessons of the Buddhadharma are there to be applied to our everyday life. Awaken to the cause of your dukkha; remember: misery is always optional.



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August 2021 Calendar		Events may be canceled or moved: Check www.facebook.com/budtempchi for the most up-to-date changes.					
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
1 11am Monthly Memorial 3pm Aikido	2 Iaido 6:30pm	3 11am Qi-Gong	4	5	6 Taiko 7pm	7	
8 11am Chanting Service (on Zoom, not FB live) 3pm Aikido	9 Iaido 6:30pm	10 11am Qi-Gong	11	12	13 Taiko 7pm	14	
15 11am Obon Service 3pm Aikido	16 Iaido 6:30pm	17 11am Qi-Gong	18	19	20 Taiko 7pm	21 1:00pm Asoka meeting	
22 11am Koso-Ki (Akegarasu Memorial) 3pm Aikido	23 Iaido 6:30pm	24 11am Qi-Gong	25	26	27 Taiko 7pm	28	
29 11am Regular Service 12:30 Board Meeting 3pm Aikido	30 Iaido 6:30pm	31 11am Qi-Gong					