



The Buddhist Temple of Chicago

January 2021

IN THIS ISSUE

- Minister's message**
By Rev. Patti Nakai.....1
- President's message**
By Bill Bohlman.....3
- Acknowledgments.....4**
- Monthly Memorial.....5**
- Calendar.....6**



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At the Bodhi Day service, Fred Babbin, Robert Kikuchi and Miyoko Nozawa were honored for their work in Buddhism education at our temple. Pictured are their family members who received the certificates of appreciation (L to R): Jan and Jon Babbin, Mary Getty and Jim Kikuchi with son David Kikuchi between them, Kiyoko Omachi, Bill Bohlman, Arlene and Donald Nozawa, Rev. Patti



Light at the Middle of the Tunnel by Rev. Patti Nakai

Early in 2021 people were saying, “We can now see the light at the end of the tunnel,” as the availability of vaccines made the end of the pandemic seem near. Now people are saying what we see is “the light at the middle of the tunnel,” that is, this COVID-19 pandemic may be going on for another year or two because of variants causing spikes in our country. The truth of impermanence that we are taught in Buddhism reminds us that while things keep changing, they rarely change in ways that we desire. I expect in 2022 there will be a lot happening to people that will not fit their definition of “happiness,” so it’s hard to say “Happy New Year!”

But the phrase “light at the middle of the tunnel” is an apt image of what the Buddhist teachings bring us so that we can go forward with our lives. The “tunnel” is what our life seems like sometimes – dark and narrow, with an exit that is far off. If it’s not one thing, it’s several things going wrong for us and our families and friends, and for our communities – so much illness, injuries, injustices and insufficiencies. Yet even in the midst of these depressing circumstances there is a “light” that shows us where we are and the road ahead. That is what the wisdom in the Buddhist teachings does – help us look realistically at our situation and get up on our feet to move ahead to a future which is uncertain but full of opportunities for us to contribute constructively to the great Life we share with all beings. There may not be opportunities for us as individuals to “succeed” (get rich, find fame, catch an attractive partner etc.) but each person in their own way can help others find more joy and less suffering.

Continued on Page 2

Continued from Page 1

The nembutsu reminds us that no matter how dark life seems, there is the Unobstructed Light (*mugeko*) that embraces us and the Immeasurable Life (*muryoju*) that supports us. Both are the translations that Shinran often used for the name “Amida,” so our bowing down (Namu) to that realization of being helped is all we need for awakening (Butsu) to life as it is. I am grateful to the teachings of Jodo Shinshu because no matter how badly “Life Stinks” (title of the Mel Brooks movie about homelessness) we are continually receiving the refreshing breezes of enlightenment. 🌿



Scheduled activities – subject to change

Weekly services – Sundays 11am - in-person, Facebook Live only January 2 and 23
Second Sunday Children’s Dharma School service – on Zoom, no in-person classes
Qigong (Chinese exercise) – Tuesdays 11am - online Zoom and in-person
Iaido (martial art) – Mondays 6:30pm – in-person only
Thursday Meditation 7:15pm – on Facebook Live only
Sunday Meditation 9:30am – in-person only
Aikido (martial art) – Sundays 3-5pm – in-person only
Asoka Society (social gathering) – on break until March
Kokyo Taiko (drums) – Friday evenings, Sunday afternoons
For more information, see our website or contact BTC

NOTICE TO MEMBERS: Nomination of Officers and Cancellation of General Membership Meeting

Nominations are being accepted now for the offices of President, 1st VP Religious, 2nd VP Membership, 3rd VP Temple Relations, Treasurer and Auditor. Please send to the current Auditor, Stan Oda.
Email: lonewolf17@sbcglobal.net (or mail to the temple)

The in-person General Membership Meeting that was scheduled for Sunday, January 31 has been cancelled due to concerns over COVID-19. Voting for officers and the 2022 budget will be done by mail. Only those (age 16 and up) with **2021** paid memberships are eligible to vote.

Thank You for Help with BTC 2022 Calendar

Dates and proofreading: Anna Idol, Jenae Sommerville

Mailing preparation (Qigong and Asoka):

Sue Balsam, Dennis Chan, Noreen Enkoji, Sadae Kasamoto, Alice Murata, Arlene Nozawa, Helene Rom, Gene Skala, Ruby Tsuji, Antoinette d’Vencets

Delivery to post office: Gary Nakai

Deepest Sympathy to the families of:

Yatsue Iwatake November 27, 2021

Donald Tanagi November 29, 2021



A New Beginning **By Bill Bohlman, BTC President**

Contact Bill at budtempchi@aol.com



A new year brings a new beginning. This is the time when we reflect upon the past year, the good times and the bad. Hopes for the future become resolutions; so easy to make, so hard to keep.

A common sentiment at New Year's is to let bygones be bygones. Too often, we cling to what we perceive as the insults, slights and abuse done to us by others. We remain attached to these negative thoughts and prolong our misery. The New Year is a perfect time to look at how we are a cause of much of our suffering. Then, when we are aware of these attachments, we can resolve to let them go. We find this idea expressed in the Dhammapada.

"He abused me. He defeated me. He robbed me. Live with such thoughts and you live in hate." Who suffers when these thoughts consume you? Is it the person at whom they are directed? On the other hand, is it yourself, as distress, anger and plans for revenge fill your day? Anger is a natural human emotion. It is inevitable. The Buddhadharma recognizes this and stresses that it is what you do when you become angry that is important.

Shortly after the death of the Buddha, a young novice asked a question of Ananda, the Buddha's cousin. He asked, 'Did the Buddha ever become angry.' Ananda replied, 'Of course he did, he was only human. But he forgot it immediately.' Too often we react in anger, only to make the situation even worse. This immediate letting go of anger eliminates self-caused suffering.

Letting go is not limited to anger. We also need to let go of unfulfilled hopes and wishes. This does not mean we should not have plans and dreams. The desire of all living things is to be happy. Our plans and dreams are the means by which we move along the path to this happiness. However, clinging to these dreams, when we know they cannot come true, only leads to misery. More and more we feel cheated and resentful. Sometimes, if our dream goes unfulfilled, we become jealous of others who seem to have succeeded. Our ego tells us that we are more deserving. Rather than feeling sympathetic joy for the good fortune of others, we let their happiness cause us misery.

This year, resolve to look within. Search within yourself to find the cause of your happiness and suffering. As you discover the source of your happiness nurture it, build upon it. Likewise, as you uncover the cause of your suffering, move beyond this attachment. Only when you truly move beyond the old will you be able to ring in the new.

On behalf of the board of directors I wish you a happy and healthy New Year. Namu Amida Butsu.



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January 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 New Year's Day service
2 9:30am Meditation 11am Monthly Memorial 3pm Aikido	3 No laido	4 11am Qi-Gong	5	6 Facebook Live Meditation 7:15pm	7 Taiko 7pm	8
9 9:30am Meditation 11am Dharma School Service 3pm Aikido	10 laido 6:30pm	11 11am Qi-Gong	12	13 Facebook Live Meditation 7:15pm	14 Taiko 7pm	15 10am Crafts
16 9:30am Meditation 11am Lay speaker service 3pm Aikido	17 laido 6:30pm	18 11am Qi-Gong	19	20 Facebook Live Meditation 7:15pm	21 Taiko 7pm	22
23 9:30am Meditation 11am Regular Service 12:30 Board Meeting 3pm Aikido	24 laido 6:30pm	25 11am Qi-Gong	26	27 Facebook Live Meditation 7:15pm	28 Taiko 7pm	29
30 9:30am Meditation 11am Eitaikyo Service 3pm Aikido	31 laido 6:30pm					