



# The Buddhist Temple of Chicago

## March 2022

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Michio Iwao was recognized at the Eitaikyo service for his involvement in setting up the Eitaikyo fund and the many construction projects he did as a volunteer. Ruby Tsuji accepted the Certificate on his behalf. Later in the day the Certificate was delivered to Mr. Iwao.



### Global Teachings of Shinran by Rev. Patti Nakai

In the month of March we have the memorials for our temple's first two ministers: Rev. Gyomay Kubose (1905-2000) and Rev. Gyoko Saito (1927-2001). The two had much in common, but here I'd like to highlight one difference between them.

Rev. Kubose deserves much credit for welcoming people from outside of the Japanese community to our temple from early on in our temple's history. He spoke and wrote about making Buddhism more appealing to Americans, primarily by using everyday English to explain concepts. But Rev. Kubose's image of "Americans" seemed to be those people who looked like cast members of "Leave It To Beaver." Though he spent part of his childhood in Japan, by being born and educated in the U.S., Rev. Kubose like most Japanese Americans was subjected to the indoctrination that our country was built by and is governed by only men whose ancestors were born in Europe.

Rev. Saito arrived in Chicago fired up by the proclamation that Shinran's teachings of nembutsu were meant for the whole world, for people in countries far and wide – a proclamation made by his teacher Haya Akegarasu when he was chief administrator of the Higashi Honganji denomination. So Rev. Saito came with the vision of people of many languages and cultures encountering the nembutsu and finding spiritual liberation. In Rev. Saito's talks and writings there is an awareness that America, and Chicago in particular, is made up of people other than only those of European heritage. He greatly admired Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. for his brave efforts promoting equal rights

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and peace. Through temple member Larayne Black, a supporter of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians, Rev. Saito met Joseph Jarman, the virtuoso jazz musician. In the 1990s Rev. Saito arranged for Jarman and his wife Thulani Davis to receive *tokudo* (initial ordination) from Higashi Honganji in the hopes that they would encourage other Black Americans to learn about Shinran's teachings.

At our temple we need to be careful about falling into the notion of Buddhism in America should only be for English-speaking European heritage people, a notion prevalent at many Buddhist centers today. We should be inspired by Rev. Saito's vision of Shinran's teachings for the world – for the indigenous peoples and for those with roots in Asia, Africa, Central and South America and the Middle East. Unlike other forms of Buddhism that have hierarchies of enlightenment have versus have-nots, the essence of Namu Amida Butsu is to remind us that we are all interconnected, participating in the dynamic life of awakening. As Shinran often emphasized, *sesshu fusha* – all are taken in and none are abandoned. 🌸



#### **Scheduled activities – subject to change**

Weekly services – Sundays 11am - in-person, Facebook Live only March 6 and 20

Second Sunday Children's Dharma School service - on Zoom and in person

Qigong (Chinese exercise) – Tuesdays 11am - online Zoom and in-person

Iaido (martial art) – Mondays 7:00pm – 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) – 1pm third Saturday March 19th

Kokyo Taiko (drums) – Friday evenings, Sunday afternoons

Craft Class – 10am Saturday March 19th

For more information, see our website or contact BTC



## **The Challenges Ahead** **By Bill Bohlman, BTC President**

Contact Bill at [budtempchi@aol.com](mailto:budtempchi@aol.com)



As we emerge from the pandemic, the challenges ahead of us come into focus. The past two years have not only shown us new ways to share the teachings, it has also brought into focus some of the issues we must face. Thanks to the efforts of Rev. Patti and Gary Nakai, and a core group of volunteers, we were able to continue Sunday services online with a return to in-person services as soon as it was permitted by the city. One challenge now is how do we get more people to return to Sunday service?

A second challenge we now face is the impending retirement of Rev. Patti Nakai as resident minister prior to the end of 2023. The first meeting of the ministerial succession planning committee will be held after service on March 6. This committee will hopefully have the participation of temple members of all ages. Since its founding, BTC has always had a minister qualified to fill the role of resident minister; now we have to look outside for a successor. The challenge will be great and alternatives may need to be explored.

Another challenge is who will carry on some of the BTC traditions? Our Natsu Matsuri festival was cancelled in 2020 and 2021. We hoped to bring it back this year, even if it needed to be scaled down from its usual form. However, the question is arising as to who will do many of the aspects of the festival. Over the past two years, many of the people who were in charge of the various parts are no longer able to physically do the job or have passed away. Unless a new group of members step forward Natsu Matsuri will cease to exist as we knew it.

The good thing is that all of these challenges, and any others that may arise, can be met with the help of the Sangha. The challenges we face now pale in comparison to the challenges faced by the early members of BTC. Facing great hardship and discrimination they persevered and built the strong foundation upon which BTC now stands. For over 77 years, BTC has provided a place for people to find a path to liberation from their suffering, a place to share the teachings with others. With gratitude to those who came before us we will face today's challenges.



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March 2022 Calendar		Events may be canceled or moved: Check <a href="http://www.facebook.com/budtempchi">www.facebook.com/budtempchi</a> for the most up-to-date changes.				
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 11am Qi-Gong	2	3 Facebook Live Meditation 7:15pm	4 Taiko 7pm	5
6 9:30am Meditation 11am Monthly Memorial Service 3pm Aikido	7 Iaido 7:00pm	8 11am Qi-Gong	9	10 Facebook Live Meditation 7:15pm	11 Taiko 7pm	12
13 11am Children's Service 3pm Aikido	14 Iaido 7:00pm	15 11am Qi-Gong	16	17 Facebook Live Meditation 7:15pm	18 Taiko 7pm	19 10am Crafts 1pm Asoka
20 9:30am Meditation 11am Spring O-Higan Service 3pm Aikido	21 Iaido 7:00pm	22 11am Qi-Gong	23	24 Facebook Live Meditation 7:15pm	25 Taiko 7pm	26
27 9:30am Meditation 11am Founders Day Service 12:15 Board Meeting 3pm Aikido	28 Iaido 7:00pm	29 11am Qi-Gong	30	31 Facebook Live Meditation 7:15pm		