



The Buddhist Temple of Chicago

February 2023

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PLEASE NOTE:

New membership
2023 rates are
noted in the insert



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Stan Oda rings in the New Year while Miriam Solon documents the kanzo ringing for our Facebook page.

Let the Time Be Near by Rev. Patti Nakai

In February we observe Nirvana Day, the commemoration of the historical Buddha's passing. Although most ministers talk about the Buddha's final words, I think the fact alone of his dying is a great teaching for us.

One question usually asked by students for their paper on Buddhism is: "According to what Buddhists believe, what happens to a person when they die?" Of course we first have to say, "Different Buddhists believe different things about the afterlife." For example in the Tibetan tradition there are texts describing in detail how the self comes out of the dead body and wanders through various realms before reincarnating in another body or bodies. But my answer to the student's question is, "I don't know."

I will then tell the student how the historical Buddha was asked about past and future lives and he would tell the questioner to focus on the present life because everything else is only speculation. The Buddha did not dismiss reincarnation but he made it clear that doing good acts and avoiding bad acts just to earn a "better" reincarnation (e.g. be reborn as a rich, beautiful person) was ego-based and not about helping others in a selfless way.

When I talk to families who have lost a loved one and are planning a memorial service, I might agree with them that the loved one is "in a better place" and is "now free of pain." But I don't feel I should go into a spiel about the wondrous Pure Land of jeweled trees and musical breezes. If I talked about some paradisiacal place, I would feel like the Ricky Gervais character in the movie "The Invention of Lying," where he makes up a story about an afterlife in heaven to ease his mother's anxiety about dying.

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What we call the Pure Land is a metaphor for a state of awakening to the wondrousness of Life – the Life that has been flowing before our birth and will continue flowing after our death and that our finite life is and will be a part of that boundless Life. It is difficult, but not impossible, to be aware of living in the Pure Land because of the ego-bound delusions of our mind and unceasing desires of our bodies. It makes sense that many Jodo Shinshu teachers, such as Nobuo Haneda, say that true birth in the Pure Land happens at the moment of death when we are finally freed from our finite body and self-serving mind.

It is that birth in the Pure Land that is inevitable for everyone according to the Larger Sutra. As much as I fear death like everyone else does, it helps to be reminded that even with the end of my individual body and mind, my finite life will continue to flow with Unbounded Life.



Scheduled activities – subject to change

Weekly services – Sundays 11am - in-person, Facebook Live February 5th,
Nirvana Day February 19th on Zoom (contact temple for sign-in info)
Second Sunday Children’s Dharma School service – February 12th
Qigong (Chinese exercise) – Tuesdays 11am - online Zoom and in-person
Thursday Meditation 7:15pm – Facebook Live and in-person
Sunday Meditation 9:30am – in-person only
Aikido (martial art) – Sundays 3:30pm – in-person only, no class on Feb. 5
Asoka Society (social gathering) – no meetings until March 2023

The above activities are open to the public and free (donations appreciated).

If you are interested in the two activities below, please leave your contact information and the group will set up an appointment for you to visit them.

Iaido (martial art) – Mondays 7:00pm

Kokyo Taiko (drums) – Friday evenings, Sunday afternoons

DEEPEST SYMPATHY

To the family and friends of

Fumiko Kuwada December 27, 2022

Josephine Sagami January 13, 2023

Mutsue Horikoshi January 13, 2023

In lieu of the President's Message, Bill Bohlman has asked us to publish this report:

Minister Succession Committee

Status Report - January 29, 2023

In March, 2022, following Rev Patti's stated desire to retire in 2023, an ad hoc group began meeting monthly to discuss a minister succession plan. The group's initial focus was on identifying what characteristics we would want in a new minister and how best to recruit candidates for the position. A key consensus emerged from the start of discussions that any new minister be Higashi trained and certified, preferably at the kaikyoshi level. Higashi Honganji North America ("Kantoku-bu") was notified of Rev Patti's anticipated retirement and of our need to recruit a minister to succeed her.

In October, a 12 member committee was established to formalize the search. That group continues to meet monthly, with other BTC members welcome to participate. In November, the committee adopted a general compensation and benefits package in addition to a previously developed resident minister job description. At the same time, Rev Patti informed the committee and the Board that she would like her retirement date to be no later than September 30, 2023, although she will still be available for consultation on a limited basis after that date.

To date, no candidate has emerged who might replace Rev Patti. Although a few possibilities have come up, they are currently committed elsewhere and, in any event, would need more training and experience to qualify for resident minister status. Kantoku-bu is aware of Rev Patti's September 30 deadline and will work with BTC to identify potential candidates as they arise.

Because of the possibility that a suitable replacement may not be found before Rev Patti retires, the search committee has increased its focus on developing a Plan B - i.e., how will BTC operate in the absence of a resident minister? Concerns around Plan B include finding and developing more lay leaders, increasing volunteer activity and how to address the many administrative matters currently being handled by Rev Patti. The committee's goal is to have a recommended Plan B in place by early summer for submission to the Board. In the meantime, we will continue to investigate and meet with any qualified minister candidates as they are identified.

Respectfully submitted,

Russell Hirai

Chair, Minister Succession Committee



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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



February 2023 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	2 7:15pm Meditation	3 Taiko* 7pm	4
5 9:30am Meditation 11am Monthly Memorial	6 laido* 7:00pm	7 11am Qi-Gong	8	9 7:15pm Meditation	10 Taiko* 7pm	11 10am Eastern Buddhist League
12 9:30am Meditation 11am Dharma School service 3:30 Aikido	13 laido* 7:00pm	14 11am Qi-Gong	15	16 7:15pm Meditation	17 Taiko* 7pm	18
19 9:30am Meditation 11am Nirvana Day Service 3:30 Aikido	20 laido* 7:00pm	21 11am Qi-Gong	22	23 7:15pm Meditation	24 Taiko* 7pm	25
26 9:30am Meditation 11am Pet Memorial 12 noon Board Meeting 3:30 Aikido	27 laido* 7:00pm	28 11am Qi-Gong				

*laido and Taiko require appointments made in advance