



Blessing and Okagesama



The translation from English to Japanese or vice versa is always problematic. On the recent annual Thanksgiving Day, someone asked me if there is a word equivalent to “Blessing” in Japanese or Buddhist context. For many people who were born and raised in the west, the word “blessing” has Judeo-Christian connotations. Therefore, they think there is no such word expressing “blessing” in Buddhism. I think it is true in a sense. However, even in the west, the word has many meanings. For example, one of the meanings of “blessing” is the gift of connection.

An immediate question could be “Connection with what?”. People in the west would say “Connection with God, Supreme being.” They say that everything is created by God, so only God is able to bless. I think this is a vertical way of understanding; the connection between above and below. In Buddhism (Buddha Dharma) there is no concept of God as a creator. In Buddhism we talk about the universal law (Dharma) which prevails in the world. Buddhists are

taught that everything is interconnected, interdependent and nothing exists by or for itself. In this sense, “blessing” means the gift of connection with everything. This is not a vertical way of understanding but rather a horizontal one. Buddhists think that they are connected with seen and unseen blessings which surround us every day and each moment. We receive light, air, water, food. We also receive kindness, help, concern and love... We receive not only material but also spiritual nourishments. The once-a-year event of Thanksgiving is a reminder that everyday is a “Thanksgiving” day.

In order to express our acknowledgement and deep gratitude to these nourishments, Japanese have a beautiful word, “okagesama-de” which is often translated in English as “with or by many blessings.” The word is so common and popular that I hear it almost every day in Japanese communities, even in Canada. A key word of “okagesama-de” is “kage” meaning “shade” (“o” and “sama” are honorific prefix and suffix and “de” is conjunction in this case). Just imagine you are walking on very hot day for a long time without a rest. Suddenly you see a big tree ahead of you. You are so happy and relieved and take a rest under the “shade” of the tree. You have been walking on the same path many times but never noticed the tree. “Okagesama-de” is a joyful expression of gratitude and relief finding something which you often do not notice or overlook. Indeed, whether we notice or not, appreciate or not, seen and unseen blessings make our lives possible. This kind of spiritual awakening is brought and nurtured by the working of the Buddha

Dharma. The working of the Dharma gives us a spiritual eye to see the invisible as visible.

In Gassho,
Yasuo Izumi, Minister of BTSA

「合掌」ということ

幸せそうな若いカップルがお寺を訪ねました。女性は、本堂の前まで来ると、静かに手を合わせました。それを見て男性も合掌しました。しばらくして、その男性は「君は今、仏様に何をお願いしたの」と訊ねました。「何もお願いしていません。ただ、今の幸せに、仏さまありがとう、とお礼を申したのです。」とその若い女性は答えました。短い会話ですが大事なことが、この会話から教えられます。神仏の前で何かをお願いしたり、頼んだりする風景はよく見ます。家内安全、無病息災。。。と。人間の自然の感情と言えばそれまでですが、その祈願がかなえられなかったりすると、つまり、思い通りにいかなかったりすると、神も仏もあるものか!と悪態をつくこともよく見るところです。これが問題です。神や仏は、人間の限りない欲望に答えようとするものではありません。むしろそのような人間のあり方に反省を促し、正しい智慧と、温かい慈悲の光をあて、自己中心的な殻から広く、明るい、おらかな世界へ導こうとするものでしょう。合掌している姿は同じでも、「祈願する心」と「感謝する心」とでは、人の生き方においてまったく違っているのです。宗教は、反省と感謝の心を養っていくものでしょう。合掌 いずみ

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BTSA NOTES

What is the sound of 30-plus knives chopping? Sweet music, regardless of the varying rhythms. Their single-minded purpose of putting together a successful fall chow mein supper rang out melodiously. Members worked laboriously and long, preparing ribs, vegetables, rice and other ingredients, and cleaning up after the major fund-raiser on Oct. 17. Thanks to everyone who helped out in so many ways.

Numerous patrons expressed pleasure with the no-wait (for the most part) drive-through take-out procedure we tried. Several also asked whether we might hold the suppers more frequently.

Thanks, too, Renae and everyone who helped to host the Funeral Fair on Oct. 24. The turnout was great, despite overcast skies, and the exhibitors were positive enough to ask about a repeat next year. Both the chow mein supper and the Funeral Fair showed that many hands lighten the workload and contribute to sangha solidarity. Please see elsewhere in this newsletter for accounts.

The Alberta Buddhist Conference will be held for the first time in our new temple on Nov. 13 to 15. The ABC committee has been working since the beginning of the year to put together a meaningful program. We encourage your attendance to listen to Ken Yamada sensei whose personal background emphasizes the significance of Jodo Shinshu. His first talk on Nov. 13 (Friday) begins at 7 p.m. and is open to the public.

The postponed town hall meeting having to do with a BTSA membership policy will be rescheduled soon. Please watch the next Hikari for the date.

Decisions made at the October board meeting include:

- a temple policy to provide flowers only for the shrine when a funeral is held in the temple;
- not to hold a mochitsuki this year because of the poor quality of the equipment and lack of maintenance help. However, if there is a demand for mochi and we are able to purchase a mochi-making machine, we will look into a possible session for next year;
- with the exception of minutes and reports of the annual general meeting, the cessation of uploading board meeting minutes and all reports onto the website because of sensitive material that need not be accessible to the general public. A set of minutes and reports from monthly meetings will be available in a binder at the temple to all interested members.

Izumi sensei confirmed that Patricia Usuki sensei of the San Fernando Valley (CA) Temple has accepted BTSA's invitation to be the 2010 Obon guest speaker next July. Usuki sensei is a Toronto-born Jodo Shinshuist.

Akira Ichikawa

CHAIR SCHEDULE Nov/Dec 2009

Nov 1/09 SHOTSUKI

Chair: Pat Sassa
Audio: Akira Ichikawa

Nov 8/09 REGULAR

Chair: Jack Nagai
Audio: Renae Barlow

Nov 15/09 ABC

Chair: John Dubbelboer
Audio: Roy Sassa

Nov 22/09 REGULAR

Chair: Brenda Ikuta
Audio: Dave Kunimoto

Nov 29/09 REGULAR

Chair: Mac Nishiyama
Audio: John Dubbelboer

Dec 6/09 SHOTSUKI

Chair: Flo Senda
Audio: Akira Ichikawa

Dec 13/09 REGULAR

Chair: Harry Sugimoto
Audio: Sway Nishimura

Dec 20/09 REGULAR

Chair: Mas Terakita
Audio: **Volunteer needed**

Dec 27/09 NO SERVICE

TOBAN UPDATE

Toban Rotation Schedule

Toban 2 - November

Toban 1 - December

October started off with the Dharma Class dedication of Lumbini Garden which was topped off with a Chow Mein lunch by Toban 4 and a celebratory cake courtesy of the Dharma class. Thanks to Maya Ichikawa and Brenda Ikuta for all the planning and organization. Thanks to Roland Ikuta and crew, Marko Hilgersom and Andrew Ichikawa for the preparation and final touches to the garden.

The Chow Mein Supper, our first Drive-Through Take-out was a resounding success thanks to the many volunteers and the leadership of Jan Okamura and the Chow Mein Committee.

The first Bazaar Crafts & Sewing Bee in preparation for the December Bake Sale and Bazaar was held on October 20 with a great turnout and will continue under the leadership of Pat Sassa and a number of skilled members

Toban 4 facilitated the refreshments and catered lunch for the Funeral Fair, another successful event coordinated by Renae Barlow.

Mein Making for the Bazaar and Bake Sale rounded out the highly active month of activities.

THE FUNERAL FAIR held at the temple Saturday October 24 was a resounding success. There were 13 exhibitors including Generations Funeral Home as our lunch sponsor (catered by Carmichael's) and Southern Monument as our refreshment break sponsor. There were door prizes galore including beautiful gift baskets and a major door prize donated by Cornerstones Funeral Home for a trip for 2 to Edmonton with Integra Air valued at over \$1000! The Funeral Fair received great publicity with an article in the Sun Times on the Wednesday before the event followed up by an article on the day after in the Lethbridge Herald with a picture of our own Betty Taniguchi and one of our Exhibitors from Remco Memorials. Everyone who participated encouraged us to have another one next year. I think we might just do that! On behalf of the Funeral Committee, I would like to thank everyone who helped out in the set up and tear down, greeters at the door, looking after the information table, for helping out in the kitchen, baking goodies and for coming out to participate. How wonderful to be part of such a vibrant and active Sangha.

Gassho,
Renaee Barlow



Galt Museum to Exhibit Taber Buddhist Church Artifacts

The Taber Buddhist Church was closed in 2007 as part of a regional initiative to establish an amalgated Buddhist Temple (BTSA) in the City of Lethbridge . Prior to the Church's closure, 217 artifacts, including the Church's Butsudan, were donated to the Galt Museum & Archives in Lethbridge .

For the past two years, the Museum has been hard at work, documenting and cataloguing the Shrine – work which included the interviewing of Church members and the acquisition of photograph and archival records related to the Church's history. The Galt additionally began the job of cleaning and repairing the Shrine, contracting an Objects Conservator from Calgary to perform technical "treatments". This work is still ongoing.

The Museum will open a small exhibition of artifacts original to the Church's 1940-era founding on November 28, 2009 at 10:00 a.m.. As part of the opening, Reverend Izumi of the BTSA will provide a blessing with a reception to follow. All members of the Temple are invited to attend.

For more information please contact Wendy Aitkens, Curator at 403-320-3907



Taber Buddhist Church Fujin-kai Members, c. 1953

The Fall 2009 Chow Mein Supper Committee would like to express our "thank you" to all our Temple members who worked so very hard and diligently for the three days preparing for and finally producing a massive 1,965 meals to the many people who purchased tickets and drove to our Take Out area. The "Runners," Charlotte, Mariko, Lisa, Natalie and Kynan were so energetic and so gracious to all who came. The success of this fund raiser is due to the combined efforts of all the workers who gave of their time and energy. Thank you also to the many businesses that donated goods, supplies at cost and monetary donations to assist our fund raising supper.

Jan Okamura





Memorial Donations

October 2009

Jim & Atsu Hagihara
Akira & Lorita Ichikawa
Molly H. Ito
Gene & Shannon Kawade
Ken & Sue Kitagawa
Allan & Lillian Leavens
Tak & Jean Oga
Mrs. Toshio Oga
Frank & Kimi Ohno
Roy & Pat Sassa
Fuji Takeda
Sam & Betty Taniguchi
Keiko Tsukishima
Casey & Yuriko Yoneda

Donations

October 2009

Larry Elford
Mary Huuonen
Dr. Roland & Brenda Ikuta
John & Alice Kanashiro
Kiyoshi & Irene Katsumoto
D. T. Nishimura
Kimiko Oseki
Florence Senda
Teruko Tokitsu

Shotsuki Hoyo

October 2009

Roy Asato
Judy Fukushima
Shirley Higa
Marie Hirashima
Tomi Hisaoka
Rumiko Ibuki
Yuse & Chiyomi Matsuno
Tak & Jean Oga
Kaz & Setsuko Ohno
May Ohno
Tom Ohno
Mrs. Fujiko Okamura
Yumiko Osaka
Bob & Eiko Shigehiro
Joe & Mary Shigehiro
Tom & Mitsuko Shigehiro
Fumi Sugimoto
Nobs & Kaz Sugimoto
Tomiko Sugimoto
Fuji Takeda
Joe & Sumi Tomiyama
Tak & Yoko Tsujita
Fujio & Yoshiko Tsukishima
Keiko Tsukishima
Sumie Tsukishima



BUDDHIST TEMPLE OF SOUTHERN ALBERTA

PLEDGE FORM

I wish to support the BTSA Building Fund

Official tax receipts can be issued by the BTSA for any charitable donations. Anyone wishing to donate to the building fund can make a one time donation or pledge their donation over the next 3-5 years. The donor levels are as follows:

DIAMOND	\$25,000 or greater	GOLD	\$5,000 to \$9,999
EMERALD	\$17,500 to \$24,999	SILVER	\$2,500 to \$4,999
PLATINUM	\$10,000 to \$17,499	BRONZE	\$1,000 to \$2,499

Name _____

Company _____

Address _____

City _____

Province/State _____ Postal/Zip Code _____

Phone _____

Email _____

TOTAL CONTRIBUTION _____

I wish for my pledge to remain confidential

Monthly Instalments of \$ _____ for _____ years

Yearly instalments of \$ _____ for _____ years

One-time Donation of \$ _____

Notation (eg. *In memory of*) _____

Signature _____

Date _____

OBITUARIES

The Buddhist Temple of Southern Alberta expresses heartfelt sympathy to those who have lost loved ones.

Eigoro Osaka, 86 October 26, 2009

2009 Buddhist Memorial Service

仏教徒の年忌法要

Year of Death (死亡年)

2008 First annual memorial ...1 year from death
2007 3rd2 full years from death
2003 7th6 full years from death
1997 13th12 full years from death
1993 17th16 full years from death
1985 25th24 full years from death
1977 33rd32 full years from death
1960 50th49 full years from death

A memorial rite marking the death of the deceased not only calls for the adornment of the shrine and the reading of the sutra but also is a precious occasion for recalling the cherished memories of the beloved and the most of all to realize the blessings of the Light of Wisdom and Life of Compassion which embrace us all. (from Jodo Shinshu Handbook for laymen) On the first or near the first Sunday of every month, the BTSA observes a monthly memorial service in memory of those people whose date of death (meinichi-命日) falls in that month. Please bring a Homyo of your loved one.

Buddhist Temple of Southern Alberta
c/o Robert Takaguchi, Treasurer
Box 1249 • Raymond, AB T0K 2S0



THE BUDDHIST TEMPLE OF SOUTHERN ALBERTA children & youth dharma classes

The Story of the Giant Pumpkin

What a wonderful story of how our giant pumpkin came to be! The pumpkin plant was donated by Nobby Sudo. It was won at the church picnic by Dawn Takeda. She took care of it for a few weeks and then gave it to Donna and John Dubbelboer. Donna and John didn't have enough room in their garden so they grew it in Mr. Kounosu's very huge garden. Mr. Kounosu propped it up in a sling type apparatus so that the stems wouldn't break. The Dharma kids have now painted it. The plan is to compost the pumpkin and return it to the garden soil of our Lumbini Garden.



UPCOMING EVENT

Alberta Buddhist Conference November 13 - 15, 2009

A day of activities has been planned for the youth on Saturday, Nov 14 from 9am to 4pm. Maya Ichikawa will be responsible for the program and there will be babysitting available for younger children (under three). The theme of the day will be BUDDHA'S GOLDEN CHAIN. A detailed description of activities is available. Please contact Maya at scratchykawa@gmail.com.

Families are welcome to use the Dharma Room located at the Northside of the temple any time during the weekend.

The Golden Chain

I am a link in Amida Buddha's golden chain of love that stretches around the world. I will try to keep my link bright and strong.

I will try to be kind and gentle to every living thing and protect all who are weaker than myself. I will try to think pure and beautiful thoughts, to say pure and beautiful words, and to do pure and beautiful deeds.

May every link in Amida Buddha's golden chain of love be bright and strong and may we all attain perfect peace.

REGULAR EVENTS

Dharma Talk for Children Second Sunday of the month

Reverend Izumi will give a short Dharma talk to the children before regular service. Please be there at 10:20am.

Refreshments prepared by the Dharma Class Last Sunday of the month

Students will spend time in the kitchen preparing a snack or punch for after-service tea.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

The Dharma Class invites and encourages members who would like to present or read to the class, or do an activity with the class to sign up for an OPEN Sunday

Ideas and examples: a presentation about one's occupation, a craft activity, reading a story, teaching a song, making food in the kitchen, sharing a talent, bringing in a visitor to meet.

Open Sundays for the rest of 2009 are Nov 1, Nov 8 & Dec 6. Sign-up sheets are posted at the temple.

Please contact Brenda Ikuta or Maya Ichikawa for further information.

2009 November & December Schedule

十一月と十二月の予定表

Sunday Regular Service starts at 10:30am

*Study/Discussion group held after regular service

NOVEMBER

01 SUN	10:30am	Monthly Shotsuki Memorial Service 祥月法要
08 SUN	10:30am	Regular Service
13 FRI - 15 SUN		ABC (Alberta Buddhist Conference)
15 SUN	10:30am	ABC Closing Service
18 WED	7:00pm	BTSA Board Meeting
22 SUN	10:30am	Regular Service
22 SUN	2:00pm	Memorial Gathering at CRH
28 SAT	1:00pm	Buddhist Shrine Blessing Ceremony, Galt Museum
29 SUN	10:30am	Regular Service

DECEMBER

06 SUN	10:30am	Monthly Shotsuki Memorial Service 祥月法要
13 SUN	10:30am	Regular Service
20 SUN	10:30am	Regular Service
27 SUN	No Service	
31 THU	11:30pm	Joya-no-Kane (New Year`s Eve Bell Ringing)

JANUARY 2010

01 FRI	10:30am	New Year's Day Service 修正会
03 SUN	No Service	
10 SUN	2:00pm	Hoon-ko with Monthly Shotsuki Memorial Service 報恩講。祥月法要

ANNOUNCEMENTS

2009 Memsbship Fee is \$100 per person.
Let's expand a circle of the Dharma! We appreciate your support!

Toban Changes

Discussion and brainstorming is continuing. Toban 3 Meeting will be held November 6 at 10am. We invite your ideas.
lorita.ichikawa@g.mail.com
or 403.327.1668

Books For Sale

- The Buddha's Wish for the World by Monshu Koshin Ohtani (Please contact Rev. Izumi to order.)
- Bukkyo Tozen (History of Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temples of Canada) by Terry Watada
- The Life of Eshinni (Wife of Shinran Shonin) by Yoshiko Ohtani
- SHOSHINGE (the heart of Shin Buddhism) by Alfred Bloom

Onenju (Ojuzu) For Sale

BTSA has received new Onenju (for male and female) from Japan

Flowers are delivered to those in hospital. Please contact Kay Tsukishima, 403.327.9786 or Kaz Takaguchi, 403.328.3190 if you are aware of a BTSA member who has been hospitalized for a week or more.

Temple Scheduling Reminder

To avoid disappointments and conflicts in scheduling events at the temple, please insure that you check with Fudge Takeda (403-345-3171 or ktakeda@telusplanet.net) beforehand and ask her to reserve the appropriate facility.

Bottle Drive

The SAB Choir will have a bottle drive on Monday, Nov. 9 at 1pm. As well as bottles and cans, milk cartons (preferably crushed) are now being accepted at the bottle depot. Would you kindly phone 403-327-4296 or e-mail katieanak@shaw.ca if you are able to assist that day. You are also welcome to drop off "empties" at the temple prior to Nov. 9th. Thank you so much!

2009 COMING EVENTS

NOVEMBER

- 3 & 10** Bazaar Crafts Sewing Bee
- 13-15** Alberta Buddhist Conference
- 23** Lethbridge Soup Kitchen
(There will not be an udon noodle making session in November)

DECEMBER

- 5** Bake Sale & Bazaar
- 31** New Year's Service Bell Ringing, Nikka Yuko Japanese Garden

Any questions or requests? Please contact your minister (403)382-7024

PROGRAMS

Gentle Yoga for Seniors – Val Kunimoto
continues through Tuesday November 17

REGULAR EVENTS

*Study/Discussion Group

Sundays after morning service and tea. To study the Dharma and facilitate discussion. Please contact Renae Barlow (renaeb@telus.net) or Rev. Izumi

Southern Alberta Buddhist Choir

Thursdays 7 - 9pm
lorita.ichikawa@gmail.com or 403.327.1668

Taiko Class Tuesdays

6:30 - 6:55 Kids session (under 10 yrs old)
7:00 - 7:40 Beginners
7:45 - 9:15 Returning members
Please contact David Tanaka
403.330.1548 or david@eyesquared.com

The Lethbridge Karaoke Club

Wednesdays 1 - 4pm
All interested people are welcome to join or just listen and enjoy.

Tonarigumi

Tuesdays 12 - 3pm



The Buddhist Temple of Southern Alberta celebrates its first wedding in the new temple. Congratulations!