



Hikari – The Light

Newsletter of the Buddhist Federation of Alberta

December 2007 Edition

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The Practice of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism

When I was still a student in Japan I had an opportunity to meet a Buddhist monk named Hagami. He was a well known figure among Buddhist world in Japan at that time, because he had just accomplished a rigorous Buddhist practice called “1000 days Kaihogyo” at Mt. Hiei, the center of the Tendai Buddhist monastery. ‘Kaihogyo’ literally means “the practice of walking around the peak”.

Monk Hagami walked over 40 km around Mt. Hiei every day for 1000 days continuously, which include the last 9 days of special practice. The special practice required him not to drink, not to eat food, not to sleep lying down. This rigorous practice is beyond human imagination. The monk Hagami did it. Looking back at what he had achieved, however, he simply and humbly said, “It was due to the Absolute Other Power that I was able to accomplish it.”

Generally speaking, there are two paths in Buddhism to attain Enlightenment (the Pure Land): One is to rely on one’s own effort. This path is called self power or the gate of sages which is extremely difficult to accomplish. The other is to rely on Amida Buddha’s Compassion or His Working Power. This is called other power or easy path for ordinary



people. These divisions, however, were merely set for the sake of our convenience to understand about Buddhism.

Whichever path we take, if we have even a speck of ego attachment

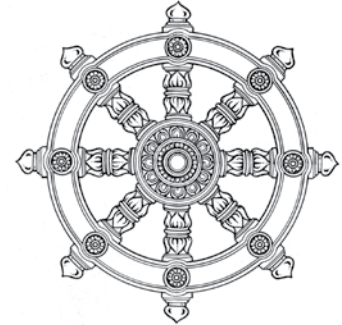
on what we are doing, we will not be able to discover the realm of true awakening. Renny of the Hongwanji (1414-1499AD) said, “The path of Buddha Dharma is non-ego.” This means that only by means of Amida’s Absolute Other Power which transcends our calculation of self and other, are we able to discover the true awakening.

I have been thinking of the meaning of “practice” in the context of Jodo Shinshu these days. There is a phrase, “endure oneself in practice”. In other words, “practice” means something we must endure. In this case, there are many things we must endure in our everyday lives because our life does not go as we want. Our everyday life itself is the “practice” for Jodo Shinshu followers.

There is an interesting Japanese poem that goes like this: “When being alone we want company. When having company we want to be alone”. How true it is! For Jodo Shinshu followers, everyday life itself is our dojo, the place to learn ourselves. We do not necessary need to leave our secular life and do rigorous practice. We do not need to be a super man or a super lady to experience Enlightenment.

The “practice” of Jodo Shinshu is the constant listening to our hearts and minds in the working of Amida Buddha – Absolute Other Power which is embracing us. To be aware of the Absolute Other Power alone is necessary for discover Enlightenment.

—Yasuo Izumi, Minister



「頭を下げる」と「頭が下がる」

子供さんをお寺に連れてこられるお母さんが、本堂の入り口で、子供さんに「頭を下げなさい」と言っています。子供はお母さんに言われた通りに「チョコン」と頭を下げています。ほほえましい姿です。

日本語には「頭を下げる」と「頭が下がる」という二通りの言い方があります。よく似ていますが、この二通りの言い方は全く違ってきます。子供さんが小さい頃には「頭を下げなさい」と何度も教えていくのです。何も分からない子供に、こうして習慣をつけることは大切だと思います。ところが、子供が大きくなってくると、必ずしもお母さんの言うことを聞かなくなってきました。「なぜ？」という気持ちが起こってきます。その時に、お母さんなり、周りの人が、なぜ頭を下げるのかを、教えていく必要があるのです。これが、まことに大切な教育(おしえ、育てること)であると思います。本堂とは、み教えに遇うところ。私達の人生において大切な場所。仏像は仏様の温かい、優しい心をあらわしたお姿、そして、その仏様は、私たちを常に見守り、まことの世界へとみちびいていくくださる尊いお方、など等。このように「頭を下げる」意味が分かってくると、もう、お母さんが「頭を下げなさい」と言わなくても、やがて、頭が自然に下がってくるのでしょう。毎日の生活の中で、「頭が下がる」世界があることを、親子共々気づかせていただきたいものです。合掌(泉)

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Smile for You

I received this email from a friend and thought I should share and pass this along. Just enjoy thinking of how your smiles can create a positive chain reaction.

—Denise Takao

Everyone Needs a Smile

*Smiling is infectious; you catch it like the flu,
When someone smiled at me today, I started smiling too.
I passed around the corner and someone saw my grin
When he smiled I realized I'd passed it on to him.
I thought about the smile, then realized its worth,
A single smile, just like mine could travel round the earth.
So, if you feel a smile begin, don't leave it undetected
Let's start an epidemic quick, and get the world infected.*
—author unknown



BTSA Groundbreaking

More pictures on Page 6



Alberta Buddhist Conference 2007

Some said that the 2007 Alberta Buddhist Conference held in Lethbridge Nov 9 – 11 was the best yet. Three speakers with very different backgrounds spoke on their perspectives on and experiences with Buddhism. Dr. John Harding, professor at the University of Lethbridge told about 125 attendees that the growing interest in Buddhism at universities has resulted in students broadening their travel, practice and experience with Buddhist traditions.

Reverend Koyo Kubose, son of well-known minister Gyomay Kubose, emphasized the dynamics of change and the interdependency of all living things. He pointed out the importance of understanding karma to understand Buddhism. Rev. Kubose caught everyone's attention at the Sunday service when he told us that everything is OK. Even in the ups and downs of life, no matter what happens, it is OK.

James Martin, assistant Minister of the Calgary Buddhist Temple, used the metaphor of Kermit the Frog from the Muppets to relate his experiences with Buddhism. He said it's not easy being different in our society. However, it is okay to be outwardly different because it doesn't stop one from finding peace and harmony.

On Saturday afternoon the attendees split into small groups to discuss 10 essays from 'Encountering the Buddha'. Lively discussions and interesting insights into what the participants got out of the essays and the discussions followed during the reporting session.

The Saturday program was capped by a delicious banquet and Charlotte Ikuta's singing debut. Charlotte was accompanied by the Southern Alberta Buddhist Choir, Jennifer Koba on piano and Andrew Ichikawa on flute.

—Robert Hironaka

Bake Sale

— Saturday, Dec. 8, begins at 1pm
— Honpa Temple

All ladies are asked to donate 2 items (or more). Please have the baking at the temple by 10am.

All funds will be donated to our Dream Kitchen "Building Fund."

We thank each family in advance for your contribution towards your new temple.

Vision

The Buddhist Temple of Southern Alberta is dedicated to being an open Jodo Shinshu Sangha organization that appreciates, promotes, preserves and practices the Buddha Dharma teaching.

Mission

The mission of the Buddhist Temple of Southern Alberta is to gratefully promote and practice Buddha Dharma teaching through:

- ✦ Communication
- ✦ Community
- ✦ Tradition
- ✦ Education
- ✦ Resource Development

Guiding Principles

A response by the BTSA must always involve the following key factors:

- ✦ Ensure that our motivation is a sense of gratitude and compassion.
- ✦ Take into account the widest possible perspective.
- ✦ Be vigilant in ensuring that we remain honest, self-aware, unbiased and trustworthy; the danger otherwise is that we may fall victim to self-delusion.
- ✦ In the face of any real ethical challenge, respond in a spirit of humility.
- ✦ Ensure our interaction with the community by promoting dedication, commitment and involvement.
- ✦ Strive to keep in mind the primary goal of the wellbeing of humanity as a whole and the planet we inhabit.



Artist's rendering of new temple

BTSA Fundraising Update to mid-November, 2007

The BTSA now has an official status as a charitable organization. Official tax receipts can now be issued by the BTSA for any charitable donations. Any one wishing to donate to the building fund can make a one time donation or pledge their donation over the next 3-5 years. A plaque with the donors name will be included in our donor wall. The target for the fund raising committee is \$450,000. The donor levels are as follows:

- Diamond = \$25,000 or greater
- Emerald = \$17,500 to \$24,999
- Platinum = \$10,000 to \$17,499
- Gold = \$5,000 to \$9,999
- Silver = \$2,500 to \$4,999
- Bronze = \$1,000 to \$2,499

Please note that we have added an Emerald Level

Diamond Level Donor

- ♦ Rev. and Mrs. Yasuo Izumi

Emerald Level Donor

- ♦ Hideko Oishi and family in memory of Yoichi Oishi

Platinum Level Donors

- ♦ D.J. Major and the Hamabata family in memory of Kamasuke Hamabata and Cheryl Prins
- ♦ Noris Taguchi
- ♦ S.K. Ikuta and Family
- ♦ Tak & Jan Okamura
- ♦ Fujiye Kariatsumari and Family in memory of Tokiyoshi and Katsuo Kariatsumari
- ♦ Mas and Miyo Sunada
- ♦ Mrs Sadae Kanegawa in memory of Stan Kanegawa

Gold Level Donors

- ♦ Pat and Roy Sassa in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Tomomi C. Okutake and Mr. and Mrs. Tsuneki Sassa
- ♦ Kaz and Setsuko Ohno
- ♦ Tomiko Kobayashi

The BTSA greatly appreciates the contribution from the above in starting the fund raising drive.

To date we have raised \$125,000 in donations or pledges.

To make a contribution or pledge please contact Jim Tsukishima (327-1279) mts-farm@telus.net, Roland Ikuta (317-0078) Rolikuta@shaw.ca or send cheques to Robert Takaguchi (P.O. Box 1249 Raymond, Alberta T0K-2S0).

PLEDGE FORM



I WISH TO SUPPORT THE BUDDHIST TEMPLE OF SOUTHERN ALBERTA

Name: _____

Company: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province/State: _____ Postal /Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

CONTRIBUTION

TOTAL CONTRIBUTION: \$ _____

____ Monthly Instalments of \$ _____ for ____ years

____ Yearly Instalments of \$ _____ for ____ years

____ One-time Donation of \$ _____

Notation: (Eg., In memory of) _____

Signature _____ Date _____

____ I wish for my contribution to remain confidential

Buddhist Temple of Southern Alberta
C/O Treasurer Robert Takaguchi, Box 1249,
Raymond, Alberta T0K 2S0



THE BUDDHIST TEMPLE OF SOUTHERN ALBERTA children & youth dharma classes



ABC

Mask-making and a music circle were the main attractions for youth at the Alberta Buddhist Conference in November. It was a young dharma group with participants ranging in age from 2 to 6 years. Older youth helped the kids create colourful masks and kept track of the scissors!

Congratulations to Charlotte Ikuta on a wonderful vocal performance at the evening banquet. Charlotte, a dharma student, was backed by the Southern Alberta Buddhist Choir.



BODHI DAY

The dharma class will celebrate Bodhi Day at the Honpa temple on December 9 after the 10:30am service. Children have been preparing to decorate the Bodhi tree by making Buddhist-themed ornaments. The Bodhi Day celebration will involve the tree, stories and cookie decorating.

If you would like to be added to the Dharma Class email list or need further information, please contact Brenda at 317-0078 or Maya at 380-4330.



RECIPES WANTED

The Children & Youth Dharma Class are planning their next fundraiser.

We ask all members to participate in a BTSA cook book with **personal recipes, stories, poems, artwork and photos.**

Please send your items to:

BTSA Recipes
c/o Maya Ichikawa
623 - 7 Street South
Lethbridge, AB T1J 2H2
or
btsarecipes@gmail.com



December - January Schedule

12月、1月 予定表

December

- 2 (Sun) Regular Service at ST / Coaldale
9 (Sun) Shotsuki Monthly Memorial Service
together with Hoonko and Bodhi Day at ST
12 (Wed) BTSA Meeting at ST (7:00pm)
16 (Sun) Shotsuki Monthly Memorial Service at NT
Mochi Making* at ST (12:30pm – 4:30pm)
31 (Mon) Joya-e (Year End Service) at NT (8:00pm)
Joya no Kane (Bell Ringing) at Nikka Yuko Garden

January 2008

- 1 (Tue) Shusho-e (New Year's Day Service) at ST
6 (Sun) Regular Service at NT
13 (Sun) Rev. Izumi is away (Jan. 10 – Jan. 15)
20 (Sun) Shotsuki Monthly Memorial Service and Hoonko at NT
and New Year's Party*
Coaldale (2:00pm)
27 (Sun) Shotsuki Monthly Memorial Service at ST / BTSA AGM*

*All services during month of February will be held at the North Temple.

*All services during month of March will be held at the South Temple.
(Detailed schedule will be announced through Hikari-The Light)

Unless otherwise indicated, all services starts at 10:30am

If you are unable to attend temple Services due to illness, please feel free to call Rev. Izumi at 382-7024. He is happy to visit you privately.

Calendar of Events

Dec. 16 Mochi Making (Mochitsuki)

Please come and help to make Kagami-mochi (mirror-mochi), offering to the Buddha on New Year's Day. Kagami-mochi is so named because of its resemblance to the traditional metal mirrors. It is also called Kasane-mochi since the mochi offering to the Buddha on New Year's Day is made up of two cakes of mochi, one piled on top of the other. South Temple

Jan 27 BTSA AGM

The Annual General Meeting will begin followed by pot-luck lunch. South Temple

Regular Events

Southern Alberta Buddhist Choir Practice

Every Thursday, 7-8:30 pm at south temple.
Starts in January

Japanese Language Class

Classes in Japanese language and Buddhism will be held every Sunday afternoon, 2-3 pm at north temple.
If you are interested please contact Izumi Sensei
Resumes in January

Taiko Practice

Tuesdays from 6:30-8:30 pm, south temple.
Dec. 18—Last practice before Christmas
Jan 8—New session & beginner orientation
Contact David Tanaka, ph. 330-1548
david@eyesquared.com

