



The Forest of Blind Passions



Over two years ago, before we built our new temple (Buddhist Temple of Southern Alberta), I asked the building committee to make sure to put two columns or pillars at the entrance of the Hondo (the main hall) and also beside the statue of Amida Buddha. The committee members thought about what kind of the material they should use for the columns. Eventually they decided to use large metal pipes cut in half vertically. Now we can see beautiful brownish-gold columns attached side by side on the wall of the Hondo entrance and two more columns, much taller than the ones at the entrance of the Hondo but of the same color, beside the Buddha. When we visit our mother temple, Hongwanji, in Kyoto, we see several tall columns, using genuine trees, standing up to the cross beams in the Hondo. So why do we use these columns? These columns symbolize trees representing “the forest of blind passions”. Our life is likened to be the forest of blind passions of our greed, anger and ignorance. It is the garden of birth-and-death based on our ego-mind and self-love.

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Entering the Hondo is a reminder for us of our life. We quietly walk through the forest and sit before Amida, true and real. In the midst of the forest of blind passions we are able to meet and hear the voiceless voice of Amida who is moving into our life out of the great wisdom and compassion. Amida and we are not separated. Those who see and cry over the darkness of their own delusion take refuge in Amida's light and life, wisdom and compassion.

Buddhism (Buddha Dharma) is not for the dead but always for the living, you and me. The Dharma (universal truth) which was discovered by Sakyamuni Buddha nearly 2500 years ago is not static but actively working in the name of Amida in the midst of our daily lives, full of blind passions.

Venerable Master Shinran (1173-1263) wrote in his writing, Shoshinge, Song of True Entrusting: “When people enter the ocean of Amida's world, they'll immediately be assured to become enlightened beings (Buddhas). Then sporting and playing in the forests of blind passions, they manifest transcendent power to guide other sentient beings in delusion.”

We, the follower of Shinran, have a great mission for ourselves as well as for others. The goal of Buddhism is “to benefit oneself and benefit others”. We hear the Dharma, the voice of Amida in the midst of blind passions. Although we who are full of blind passions are not able to truly work for the sake of others in suffering, the working of Amida – the calling of true and real - transforms our “forest of blind passions” to the “forest of enlightenment of oneness”, from our ignorance and

selfishness to wisdom and compassion. Then, and only then, are we able to universally enlighten all sentient beings who are mired in delusion.

In Gassho,
Yasuo Izumi, Minister of BTSa

「1プラス1」

み仏のみ教えを学ぶとは、自己を学ぶこと、自分とは何かを学ぶこと、とされています。つまり、み教えを聞いても、「自分」が問題にならないような聞き方は、み教えに遇っているとは言えないこととなります。私たちは、とかく、この大切なことを忘れてしまいます。このことが忘れられると、仏教は単に知識の領域だけになってしまいます。その意味では、お寺という場合は学校とは異なる、ということです。「1プラス1 = 2」と教えるのが学校です。そして、「2」と答えるのが正解です。ところが、お寺では、私たちは「1プラス1 = 1」と教えられ、育てられるのです。仏様と私を「2」と考えるのは、仏様の心に遇っていないからです。

仏様は「真実」を表わした言葉です。真実から私たちのために顕現された方です。真実は裏切りません。真実は二枚舌をえません。真実は嘘をつかないのです。この真実の仏様が、我執、我欲で造り上げられたこの世の中に働きかけて下さっているのです。私たちに近づいて、包み込み、支えて下さるのです。その仏様の働きに出会った方にとっては、「仏様」と「私」はいつも一つです。そこに、変わらぬ喜び、安らぎが生まれるのです。知識、分別の世界では味わえない静かな喜び、安らぎなのです。

合掌 いずみ

BTSA NOTES

It is with a great deal of pleasure and gratification to announce that the Coaldale Buddhist Church has joined the BTSA with the signing of a merger agreement on Nov. 18. This agreement, for which further legal work is expected to be completed in December, means all the former Jodo Shinshu temples in southern Alberta are now part of BTSA. We warmly welcome the new members and look forward to their support.

Our thanks to Ken Yamada sensei for his enlightening and entertaining talks during the 31st annual (and inaugural at our new temple) Alberta Buddhist Conference in November. (See elsewhere in the newsletter for a separate story.)

Thanks, too, to all the committee members and temple members who helped plan, support and took part in the three-day conference.

The first annual Bodhi Day Bake Sale and Bazaar will be held on Dec. 5 from 2 to 4 p.m. Co-chairs Brenda Ikuta and Debbie Friesen have been planning with their committee for this fund-raiser. As with all our other fund-raisers throughout the year, we look forward to everyone's donations, assistance and support.

A reminder that it was on Dec. 18, 2006 that the inaugural meeting of the BTSA was held. With 20-20 hindsight, it hardly seems possible we've gone from a fledgling organization to a new temple in three years. Thanks to everyone.

We will be ending the year with the New Year's Eve bell-ringing ceremony at the Nikka Yuko Garden, then heralding 2010 with a New Year's Day service at the temple. There will not be a regular service on the first Sunday in January. The monthly memorial service will be held on Jan. 10, combined with Ho-onko. Please refer to the schedule for further information.

The board approved Nov. 18 a payment plan on the bridge financing BTSA has with the Alberta Treasury Branch. The outstanding balance is \$477,000. The amount of \$275,000 will be paid toward that balance from the Capital Account which stood at \$358,113.39 on Nov. 30, leaving \$202,000 owing on bridge financing. A balance of \$83,113.39 in the Capital Account should cover any eventuality. BTSA also will pay \$2,000/month from the Capital Account for principal and interest, further reducing the bridge financing balance. GICs scheduled to mature by Nov. 8, 2010, will be \$256,363.57. At this point, the financial prospects appear healthy for the temple.

In other board action at its meeting on Nov. 18, the following were decided.

- Reschedule the town hall meeting on membership for Jan. 16, 2010, with David Major to facilitate.
- Send a cheque of \$625, the amount collected from Jodo Shinshu Day solicitations, to the Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temples of Canada.
- Award Summit Construction the snow removal contract for the temple this winter.
- Further investigate installation of acoustic paneling for the temple.
- Purchase the headset microphone used during the Alberta Buddhist Conference.
- Check out contractors about yellow striping the exterior temple steps for safety.

Several other maintenance issues were raised. A set of minutes is available in the temple board room to all members interested in learning more about these matters.

Akira Ichikawa

TOBAN UPDATE

Toban Rotation Schedule

December	Toban 1
January	Toban 2

November was another active month which saw BTSA organizing and hosting the Alberta Buddhist Conference. Thanks to Toban 2 for taking on an extra rotation. Even with the catering of meals, there was plenty of activity with registration, hosting tea and coffee breaks as well as the regular housekeeping.

Thanks to Katie Nakagawa, Choir President, for heading up another successful Bottle Drive. She extends appreciation, on behalf of the choir, for all those who donated and hauled bottles to the Rehabilitation Recycling site.

Thank you to the volunteers who worked at the Soup Kitchen November 23: Lilly Oishi and Kim Ohno, Coordinators, Harry Sugimoto, Akira Ichikawa, Flo Senda, Sumie Tsukishima, Roy Sassa, Sam & Betty Taniguchi, and Heidi & Stan Peters.

The Bazaar Crafts & Sewing Bee in preparation for the December Bake Sale and Bazaar has been continuing most Tuesdays under leadership of Pat Sassa and a number of skilled members

Yamada Sensei Speaks at ABC

Jodo Shinshu is not a matter of belief or faith, but discovering truth through self-reflection, Ken Yamada sensei told the Alberta Buddhist Conference during its 31st annual meeting last month. Yamada sensei, guest speaker from the Berkeley (California) Higashi Hongwanji Temple, said being a spiritual seeker is the beginning of self-reflection.

The ABC, held Nov. 13-15, heard sensei speak three times on the theme, “Dharma Energy – Tranquility.” Dr. John Harding, associate professor, Department of Religious Studies, University of Lethbridge; and James Martin sensei, resident minister of the Calgary Buddhist Temple, also spoke.

Socho Orai Fujikawa of the Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temples of Canada and Dr. Leslie Kawamura, professor in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Calgary and director of the Living Dharma Centre, were also in attendance.

Yamada sensei’s message built on life experiences of Manshi Kiyozawa (1863-1903), widely credited with bringing Jodo Shinshu into the modern era, whose reflections led him to value a power beyond self (tariki) following a series of setbacks.

The other two talks, “My Path to Buddhism” which recounted Yamada sensei’s own experiences that led him to abandon a successful career in journalism and to become a Jodo Shinshu minister and “Shakyamuni and Shinran” focused on similar reflections touching on the Buddhadharma as ultimate reality.

Understanding oneself through self-reflection is to understand a fundamental Buddhist truth that nothing exists by itself, that all things are connected and co-arising, sensei said. While individually, a person may be thought to be a zero, that person takes on meaning in relation to others. The circle (enso) depicted in this year’s theme might appear to be a zero, but it, indeed, signifies an inclusiveness without beginning or end, where everyone becomes meaningful in relation to everyone else. The teaching from Shakyamuni to Shinran is consistent in this truth, sensei said.

Co-arising may be observed in an orange as a seed, a blossom, a tree branch, a fruit at different times, with various causes and conditions producing a spherical-shaped object that is orange in color. Fire and wood depend on each other to exist. There is no parent without a child, no son or daughter without a parent. Comprehension of these relationships helps us to understand and appreciate the truth of inter-connectedness.

When life doesn’t go our way, our dream world is shattered and we’re lost, sensei said, adding that the light is Dharma, waking us to the truth. He emphasized that Namo Amida Butsu is Shakyamuni’s greatest teaching; it’s telling us to “wake up.”

Professor Harding spoke about the Jodo Shinshu movement in southern Alberta, a topic he said many Buddhist scholars are unaware of. His presentation was based upon his contribution to a forthcoming collection of articles for which he served as co-editor, *Wild Geese: Buddhism in Canada*.

Martin sensei took the famous Karl Marx’s statement that “religion is the opiate of the masses” and, in keeping with the theme, asked whether Jodo Shinshuists are tranquil, as a result of their teaching, or tranquilized because of the same teaching.

Renae Barlow chaired the breakout session, during which time the attendees were assigned to small groups to discuss what they learned from the talks and to list important points they will take away from the conference.

Lorita Ichikawa and Katie Nakagawa led a music session on learning new gathas in English or translated into English. They introduced to the conference some of the knowledge they acquired at a Buddhist music workshop they attended at the Jodo Shinshu Center for Education in Berkeley in February.

Following the Saturday night banquet, the Southern Alberta Buddhist Choir entertained the conference with several songs. Nathan Ikuta gave a video presentation of his Japan youth tour trip, sponsored by the JSBTC in July.

There were more than 100 registrants, including children who participated in Dharma class activities. It was tentatively agreed to have the Calgary Buddhist Temple host the 2010 ABC.



ABC guest speaker Ken Yamada sensei with Izumi sensei.
-Photo courtesy of Tomiko Sugimoto.

What is Membership?

Last September our planned Town Hall meeting about membership was unfortunately postponed due to a conflict. Our new date for this meeting will be Saturday, January 16 at 1:00pm.

Temple membership is an important topic on which the board needs feedback from the members. Here are some questions I ask about membership:

- Why do we have membership? Is it to keep track of who is actively involved?
- Is the primary purpose of membership to determine how much we need to pay to the Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temples of Canada?
- Should we have different kinds of membership? For example, there is a proposal to have (a) full membership, (b) associate membership for those who are interested in keeping up with the BTSA but live too far away or are otherwise too busy to be active members, and (c) affiliate membership for Buddhists or others who want to participate in the BTSA but who are not committed to Jodo Shinshu.
- How much should membership cost? Should it be a nominal amount like \$10? Or should it reflect the cost of running the temple divided by the number of members (about \$500)>

I hope and trust that you will think about these questions and other questions I have not thought of and come to the Town Hall meeting to express your opinion.

Please mark January 16 on your calendar and plan to share your ideas and opinions. This open meeting is not a forum for board members to talk to you. It is a forum for you to give feedback to the board members. Everyone in attendance will have an opportunity to speak. If you need any background documents or information, please contact me and I will provide them to you.

David Major

Feel great about raising funds while you shop!

GIFT CARDS are available for sale to raise funds for the Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temples of Canada (JSBTC) Women's Federation (WF) of which the Buddhist Temple of Southern Alberta is a member. The WF will be hosting the 2015 World Buddhist Women's Conference (WBWC) which will be held in Toronto, Canada. When you purchase gift cards, you get the full value of the card and the WF will automatically receive a percentage from the sale of each card. Use the cards for your everyday shopping, special occasions and holiday gift giving!

We all have to shop anyway, so why not help the WF raise money while you're at it? To get us started, the BTSA has gift cards/certificates for Sobeys, SuperStore, Esso, Shoppers, Shell, Starbucks and Canadian Tire available for sale in varying denominations.

Please contact Donna Dubbelboer via email at jdubbelboer@shaw.ca if you have any questions or to place your order. More information regarding the over 250 other types of gift cards is also available (note: Safeway is not part of this program) – an example of participating partners include London Drugs, M&M Meat Shops, The Bay, Zellers, Shoppers Drug Mart, Sears, Future Shop and much, much more.

Gift cards are the new cash! Supporters, like you, purchase prepaid retailer cards (a.k.a. gift cards, shopping cards, gift certificates) and use them instead of cash for your purchases.

Thank you very much for your support.

Donna Dubbelboer



The following donations were made to the 2009 Fall Chow Mein Supper and greatly assisted the total profit for this fund raiser to \$14, 990.87:

Regent Restaurant (Wayne Kwan)	\$400.00 by cheque
Richardson Oilseed (Gary McIlroy)	four 16 litre pails of canola oil
Harwood Distributor (Jim Wallace)	230 lbs. bean sprouts
Gouw Quality Onions (Casey Gouw)	250 lbs. onions
Joe & Sumi and Wanda Tomiyama	Jars of Dill Pickles
Tom & Mitsuko Shigehiro	Jars of Dill Pickles
Wesbridge (Frank Beekman)	Traffic Cones

Thanks to all the Temple members who worked long hours on this Fund Raiser.

Special thanks to Glen Tanaka who so generously donated the deep freeze that was very much needed by the Temple kitchen.

BODHI DAY CRAFT & BAKE SALE

December 5, 2009

2-4 pm

BTSA Multipurpose Room



Dear Dharma Friends,

The Bodhi Day Bake and Craft Sale is fast approaching: Saturday, December 5, 2-4 p.m. You may begin to see posters and free media ads popping up in the next week. There is a group of people busy making aprons and bags. Sushi, manju and mein noodles will also be available.

If you would like to donate baking or crafts we would be thrilled to accept them. I have attached some suggestions for baking that were made by previous customers and volunteers. You can drop off your crafts or baking from 9am to 12 noon in the Temple multipurpose room.

If you would like to donate your time, it should be a fun, short event to participate in. Please contact us and we let you know what spots need to be filled.

If you have questions, concerns or would like to volunteer at the event, please contact either of the co-chairs:
Brenda Ikuta (403)317-0078 or email rolikuta@shaw.ca
Debbie Friesen (403)345-4767 or email debfriesen@yahoo.com

Last but not least, we always need customers! So mark the date on your calendar and come join us on December the 5th. *We would love to see you!*

Brenda Ikuta

Please bring your craft and/or bake sale donation to the multipurpose room on Saturday morning between 9am and 12 noon.

The following suggestions arose from concerns expressed by previous customers and volunteers:

- Please wash off all fragrances from hand soap or lotion before handling food products. Fragrance and taste of chemicals can transfer to the baking. Even latex gloves do not eliminate some fragrances.
- Bake sale items sell better when they are clearly labeled and ingredients are listed; particularly when they are good for diabetic diets or other health/diet restrictions. Presence of nuts, type of nut, and type of baking oil is commonly of high interest.
- Pack cookies by the dozen in your choice of clear ziploc bags or plastic wrap.
- Please pack as "one kind" rather than as an assortment.
- Smaller loaves appear to sell better than larger loaves.
- Pricing will be done according to grocery store prices. We will also be asking the donors for their recommended prices. Nothing will be priced for under a Loonie.

Thank you everyone for your contributions to this important fundraiser!



Images from the Alberta Buddhist Conference



Shotsuki Hoyo

November 2009

Janet Hinatsu
 Marie Hirashima
 Jim & Aya Hironaka
 Sway & Totsy Nishimura
 Roy & Pat Sassa
 Tom & Mitsuko Shigehiro
 Nobby & Michiko Sudo
 Fumi Sugimoto
 Harry Sugimoto
 Nobs & Kaz Sugimoto
 Mas & Miyo Sunada
 Kaz Takaguchi
 Robert & Judy Takaguchi
 Fuji Takeda
 Joe & Sumi Tomiyama

Total - \$415.00

Memorial Donations

November 2009

Mitsuko Arizono
 Choju Kai
 Judy Fukushima
 Jim & Atsu Hagihara
 Chiduka Hamabata
 Janet Hinatsu
 Gaye Hironaka
 Tucker Hironaka
 Akira & Lorita Ichikawa
 John & Alice Kanashiro
 Richard Kanegawa
 Sadae Kanegawa
 T. Kawamoto
 Sachiko Kishimoto
 Tomiko Kobayashi
 Dave Kunimoto
 Shig & Katie Nakagawa
 May Nishikawa
 Noriko Oga
 Tak & Jean Oga
 Frank & Kimi Ohno
 Hideko Oishi
 Tak & Jan Okamura
 Kikue Osaka
 Jim & Daisy Oshiro
 Yoshiye Shirakawa
 Nobuko & Mary Shono
 Tomiko Shono
 Sonia Sitz
 Tomiko Sugimoto
 Mas & Miyo Sunada
 Noris & Sach Taguchi
 Fuji Takeda
 Sam & Betty Taniguchi
 Mas Terakita
 George Tokuda

Total - \$1,520.00

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 3rd 2 full years from death
2003 7th 6 full years from death
1997 13th 12 full years from death
1993 17th 16 full years from death
1985 25th 24 full years from death
1977 33rd 32 full years from death
1960 50th 49 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

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 _____

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

ABC Activities

Despite viruses going around and other sickness, the Dharma class had a good turn-out for ABC on Saturday and Sunday. The theme was interdependence. The group recited the Golden Chain and discussed how every link contributed to Amida Buddha's Golden Chain of Love. In the afternoon, the kids made costumes based on a movie they had watched. There were bees and flowers, beekeepers and bus drivers!



UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, Dec. 5 Bodhi Day Craft & Bake Sale

The Dharma Class will have a table set up selling a variety of items.

Sunday, Dec. 6 Presentation

Pat Sassa and guest have volunteered to present to the Dharma Class.

Sunday, Dec. 13 Bodhi Day Activities

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

December 2009 & January 2010 Schedule

十二月と一月（2010年）の予定表

Sunday Regular Service starts at 10:30am

*Study/Discussion group held after regular service

DECEMBER

05 SAT	10:30am	Bodhi Day Craft & Bake Sale ベークセール
06 SUN	10:30am	Monthly Shotsuki Memorial Service (祥月法要)
09 WED	7:00pm	Board Meeting
13 SUN	10:30am	Regular Service
20 SUN	10:30am	Regular Service
27 SUN	No Service	
31 THU	11:30pm	6th Annual Joya-no-Kane (New Year's Eve Bell Ringing) at Nikka Yuko Garden (if temp. is -18 or lower, or it is blizzarding, it will be cancelled)

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). New Year's Party (新年会)
16 SAT	1:00pm	Town Hall Meeting
17 SUN	10:30am	Regular Service
24 SUN	10:30am	Regular Service
31 SUN	10:30am	Regular Service

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

Obituaries

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

Moriguma Tokunaga (98)
November 07, 2009

To the Dharma Friends,

Thank you so much for a huge cake for the Birthday and Wedding Anniversary for us. It was really a surprise. We appreciate your thoughtfulness.

In gasho, Rev. & Mrs. Y. Izumi

Onenju (Ojuzu) For Sale

New Onenju from Japan are available. (\$15 for male onenju. \$18 and \$20 for female onenju)

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.

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 BTS member who has been hospitalized for a week or more.

Toban Changes: Harry Sugimoto and David Major will provide co-leadership of Toban 3, replacing Pat Sassa. Most Tobans would like to stay intact without major changes at this time.

Maintenance Memos:

The dishwasher must be fully drained after each major washing. Please check any of the Toban Leaders for instructions.

We have stopped soaking cups in the bleach solution as it adds unnecessary chemicals to the wash.

The previous solution in the washrooms is being replaced with non-scented soap.

Many thanks to Roy Sassa for cleaning the glass panels with the hanging wisteria logo.

PROGRAMS

Gentle Yoga for Seniors

Val Kunimoto will begin again January 12 for eight sessions. Registration is full and there is a waitlist.

REGULAR EVENTS

*Study/Discussion Group

Sundays after morning service and tea.

The purpose of meeting is to deepen our understanding and appreciation of Buddha's teachings, study the Dharma and facilitate discussion. Please contact Renae Barlow (renaeb@telus.net) or Rev. Izumi

Southern Alberta Buddhist Choir

Thursdays 7 - 9pm

Practices will be Dec. 3rd & 10th with a break until January 7.

lorita.ichikawa@gmail.com or 403.327.1668

Tonarigumi

Tuesdays 12 - 3pm

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 are welcome to join or just listen and enjoy.