

The Buddhist Temple of Thicago

BULLETIN



Volume 67 Number 6 March 2011 (2554 B.E.)

Scheduled Events

(call 773-334-4661 or see www.budtempchi.org)

Dharma Sunday School - Sunday 11:AM - 12:00pm for March, the 13^{th} and 27^{th}

Religious Services

Sunday at 11:00AM - 12:00PM in English Sunday at 1:00PM - 2:00PM in Japanese (only on day of Monthly Memorial)

Monthly Memorial Service - Shotsuki Hoyo, 1st Sunday of each month, except where noted.

Buddhist Studies/Practices

Discussion Group – Open to All, Sangha Q & A, 2nd Sundays, 12:30PM – 2:00PM

Introduction to Buddhism – call temple to confirm dates and time

Meditation Classes - Sundays 9:00AM - 10:15AM, Thursdays 7:30PM-9:00PM - use parking lot entrance.

Sutra Study Class - 3rd Sundays, Open to All, 12:30PM - 2:00PM

Weekly Study Class - Wednesdays, 7:00PM - 8:30PM

Special Observances/Events

Koshu-ki - 13th Sunday, Observance of Rev. Gyoko Saito's Memorial.

O-Higan Service & Luncheon – 20th Sunday, A time to reflect on crossing Over to the Other Shore.

Founder's Day – 27th Sunday, Observance of Rev. Gyomay Kubose's Memorial.

Activities

Asoka Society – 3rd Saturdays, 1:00PM

Calligraphy – Japanese brush writing class 1st & 3rd Tuesdays 7:00PM

Crafts Class - 1st & 3rd Saturdays, 10:00AM - 12:00PM, Open to All (call temple for confirmation)

Fencing – Introduction to Kendo, Dojo sessions, Tuesdays, 8:00PM – 10:00PM at Bethany United Church (Bob Kumaki, 847-853-1187)

Japanese Language Instruction – Saturdays, 10:00AM – 12:00PM, children and adult classes, call 773-334-4661 to register

Japanese Swordsmanship – Iaido, Mondays 7:00PM – 9:00PM

Taiko Drumming – BTC Kokyo Taiko Drum Troupe, Fridays, 7:00PM – 9:00PM

Taiko Drumming – Isshin Daiko Group, Saturdays 7:00PM – 9:00PM, call for appointment

BOU-CHU KAN

By Rev. Yukei Ashikaga

In Japanese, we say "BOU-CHU KAN", translated as "Leisure in a Busy Life." Sometimes we unexpectedly find such moments in the midst of a busy life. One day in midsummer, a friend of mine was on a business trip in Michigan. He contacted me and we arranged to meet in Chicago before he returned to his home in Japan. I arrived at the hotel a little before the appointed time and stopped at the front desk to check on his arrival. No, I was told, he had not yet arrived. While I was waiting, I found a refined Japanese garden in the back of the hotel. There was a walking path with stepping stones and a few benches amongst the shrubbery along the Chicago River. On the opposite side of the river, I could see many high-rise buildings. After rush hour was over, the traffic slowed and it was so quiet that I could not figure out what had happened to the hustle and bustle of the day-time traffic. The hotel was located in the midst of downtown Chicago, yet I enjoyed the guiet surroundings in meditation for a while.

I noticed a middle-aged Caucasian couple sitting on a bench opposite me. The husband walked up to me and asked, "Are you on the tour?" He probably thought I was a visitor staying at the hotel. "No, I live here in Chicago," I answered. Before hearing my last word he said, "Kyoto is very nice. The gardens in Kyoto are very beautiful and I love them." So saying, as if he were reminiscing about his last trip to Japan, he returned to the seat next to his wife. A little later, a young couple who was passing by said to me in greeting, "Konban wa." I felt so good, because they were so friendly to greet me, acknowledging that I was Japanese. It was an unthinkable phenomenon fifty years ago when I came to Chicago. I thought of the words of Rev. Dr. Daiei Kaneko, "There is gratitude in living your life in tradition." These thoughtful American people respected the traditional culture of Japan.

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Our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of:

Mr. Kinji Sugano

(Please see Temple News for details)

TEMPLE NEWS

January 2011

01/01 Shu-sho-e (New Year's Day Service) was observed. Rev. Ashikaga and Rev. Patti Nakai delivered New Year's Day message. After the service, volunteers rang the bell 108 times, and the New Year's Day special food, prepared by Mrs. Ashikaga with the assistance of Shizuko Akitomo, Michio Iwao, April Kellman, Dennie Okuhara, Akiko Sugano and Ruby Tsuji was enjoyed by all.

01/02 New Year's First Sunday Service was observed. Rev. Ashikaga and Rev. Patti Nakai delivered New Year messages. Everyone exchanged greetings with each other and enjoyed Social Hour with refreshments.

01/08 Japanese Language Classes winter term began.

01/09 Shotsuki Hoyo (Monthly Memorial Service) was observed. Elaine Siegel gave a talk to Dharma School students and Rev. Ashikaga delivered Dharma message for the morning service in English and in the afternoon service in Japanese. * * * Rev. Patti Nakai was invited to speak for Ho-On-Ko Service at Midwest Buddhist Temple.

01/12 The 49th Day Memorial Service of the Late Osamu "Sam" Honda was conducted at the Temple. Mr. Honda passed away on November 24, 2010. He is survived by wife Lily and children Rev. Patti (Gary) Nakai, Nancy Honda, and Mark (Andrea) Honda.

01/14 Rev. and Mrs. Ashikaga left for Southern California, Orange County Buddhist Church.

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The Buddhist Temple of Chicago Bulletin The Buddhist Temple of Chicago 1151 W. Leland Avenue Chicago, IL 60640-5043 Phone: 773-334-4661, Fax: 773-334-4726 www.budtempchi.org Rev. Yukei Ashikaga. Head Minister, Rev. Patti Nakai, Associate Minister Gary T. Nakai, President Edited and produced by Gary T. Nakai, Rev. Patti Nakai, Contributors: R. Adams, Rev. Ashikaga, Dave Leshuk, Gary Nakai, Rev. Patti Nakai, Wen Qing, Yu Lian corrections. questions, Note: Comments. suggestions are encouraged. Submitted material will be reviewed for suitability and availability of space. Anonymous submissions will not be published, but authors' names may be withheld from publication upon request. month. the Friday of Deadline: first btcbuledtr@hotmail.com

Highlights of the 2011 Annual General Membership Meeting

This year's Annual General Membership Meeting was again hosted by Kokyo Taiko, and what a grand toban they performed. Aside from the delicious variety of foods served for just about any palate, they presented cute flower arrangements for the tables that became surprise keepsakes for some lucky attendees. Despite the challenging weather, 45 earnest members and friends were in attendance. As the meeting progressed, the attendees were often praised for having braved the cold to partake and keep abreast of the state of affairs of the temple, its operations and activities.

BTC continues its involvement in the greater midwest Buddhist community, sometimes serving as a host site to the various events that occur during the year. Our membership strength for 2010 was up slightly from the previous year due to a noted increase in reminders being mailed out. The new attendees for Sunday service have averaged 25 people per month owing to our website, and the spillover from the introduction classes, and the friendly, open-door of BTC. We again ended the year in the black although we were under budget in both income and expenditures.

The Annual Operating Budget was presented with explanations of changes to line items both on the income side and expense side. The obvious difference in the magnitude of this year's budget is due to the increases projected as a result of committing to acquiring a new Resident Minister, the search for which had been approved last year and begun late last year. If and when BTC welcomes the new minister in 2011, BTC will be postioned to move forward. A motion was made and seconded to approve the budget as presented, and the question carried by voice vote. An open invitation will be made to all interested members when the next budget is formulated towards year's end.

The first of two new social groups to give their annual reports for the first time was the Shin Sangha, 18-40 Group. All throughout last year they have been planning social events and achieved a large turnout at their most recent pot luck dinner, whose picture was featured in a recent temple bulletin. The second newly formed group is The Middle Way group, a social group representing an age group somewhere between the Shin Sangha group and the elder Asoka Society.

Already this group has assumed tobans and enjoyed outings to view Buddhist exhibits at museums. With this hearty young and younger talent resource forming amongst us, perhaps they can resurrect the White Elephant Sale, under the watchful guidance of the Asoka Society?

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU

Understanding the Nembutsu through recognizing the Paramitas in others – send in your recognitions!

Sunday Service Participants: Sue Balsam, Bill Bohlman, Dennis Chan, Diego Delatrios, Glenn Fujiura, Joshua Garcia, Anna Idol, Neil Kanemoto, Robin Kanemoto, Adam Kellman, Elaine Siegel, Leroy Wiley, Justin Woodward and Mrs. Hisayo Ashikaga, our pianist.

Sunday Refreshments: Shizuko Akitomo, Mrs. Hisayo Ashikaga, Rodel de Ocampo, Jackie Denofrio, Noreen Enkoji, Merry Hirata, Anna Idol, Haru Ito, Michio Iwao, Ruby Izui, Karen Kanemoto, April Kellman, Wendy Lau, Alice Murata, Dennie Okuhara, Kay Schroeter, Akiko Sugano, Harky Tademoto, Ruby Tsuji, Jennie Watanabe

For the BTC Kokyo Taiko Drum Troupe that provided luncheon for the Eitaikyo service.

Temple Bulletin Mailing: Rev. Ashikaga, Noreen Enkoji, Haru Ito, Chuck Izui, Gary and Rev. Patti Nakai, Yone Shimomura, Tak and Tommi Tomiyama, and Ruby Tsuji.

Taking care of the Temple inside and out – Tomio Tademoto.

Cleaning the entire Temple every week - Harky Tademoto.

For manning the Temple office every Thursday – Tak Tomiyama.

For emptying the trash bins, filling them with new bags and putting them out for disposal – Joshua Garcia, Adam Kellman, April Kellman, Shawn Lyte, and Rev. Patti Nakai.

Spring O-higan Service and Luncheon

On March 20 we will be observing the spring equinox O-higan service followed by a light Japanese-style luncheon. O-higan is observed at the beginning of spring and fall because the change of seasons evokes the sense of crossing over from one "shore" to the "other shore" (higan); that is, from the cold of winter to the warmth of spring, or from the heat of summer to the coolness of autumn. O-higan is a time to reflect on the six Paramitas (in Sanskrit, paramita, means "cross over"). The teachings of generosity, considerateness, forbearance, striving, contemplation and wisdom guide us towards the "other shore" of spiritual awakening.

Dharma School Students' Reviews of January Field Trip

Here are a couple reviews from students of the recent Dharma School field trip to the Old Town School of Folk Music to see a children's world music concert by a group called Funkadesi.

"Funkadesi" by Yulian

Have you ever been to a real, live, concert? Well, I have and the name of the group that we saw is called Funkadesi. Read on to find out more!

On Sunday the Dharma school went to a really cool concert. There we listened to a music group called Funkadesi. My favorite piece of music was the Indian rap. It was kind of quick and really rocked! They also had singing. There was only one lady in the group, but I guess you could count when Funkadesi invited a mom up to sing. The show was really fun and I wanted it to go on forever. The concert was held in a building called Old Town School of Folk Music, where also happens to be where Bea has her violin lessons. After the show, we went to the bakery and got some food. After that, we went back to BTC and watched the game on TV they had where the Bears played the Green Bay Packers live. But before it ended, we had to go home. I listened to the rest of the game on the radio. So as one can see, I loved the extraordinary performance Funkadesi put on. I wonder if you might see them someday. And now, time to end this composition. Hope you enjoyed it! Bye!!

"Funkadesi" by Wen Oing

On Sunday, Yulian, Anna, Bea, Wen Qing, and Alisa went on a field trip to a show called Funkadesi. One reason why I liked it is because they had an oval shaped drum. It looked very interesting to me. Since Bea was up near the stage dancing I went up there to see a closer look. I also liked that they felt good to be up there and did not feel shy. A boy named Ovie went up and played a drum and when he played it sounded very clear. Hence, I really liked the show.

Founders Day and Gyomei-ki

March 27 is our annual Founders Day service and observance of Gyomei-ki, the memorial for founding minister, Rev. Gyomay Kubose (1905-2000). With his friendly, energetic manner, Rev. Kubose won the good will of the neighbors to the temple in Hyde Park and later in our current location in Uptown. He contributed much to inter-faith relations in Chicago and promoting Buddhism throughout the United States and the world.

The Shining Light By R. Adams

What a beautiful day, huh? This is the first day the temperatures have been above freezing after some 14 days of below freezing temperatures. The sun is streaming through the windows and the plants are all lit up. Outside in the white glistening snow sparrows are chirping gaily. My mind is lit up also. The thought comes to my mind on the subject of identity and how one's identity changes from one's limited self-identity to the huge and real universal identity, the expression of the infinite through its boundless compassion. Then I thought as a question, what is a name or word that I can give this brilliantly lit up scene that I was witnessing and enjoying? Then the name or word popped up in my mind as "Amida" (as in Amida Buddha) that best described this beauty of mind. You see, we have words to describe this boundless life in which brilliance becomes its main feature that matches an organic "onceness" that occurs within my mind. The eternal light that shines throughout the universe has been given Spiritually, we can have a name that best describes it, or that opens us up to a set of teachings that have value to our lives. Indeed, from here I can have a whole palate of words, expressions, and teachings that I can use to describe this essence. But keep in mind - life comes first and then come the words to describe it. Scholars are the ones who set out to describe things a priori so as a result there is no life behind what they say. Life is not an abstraction. To catch words just as they come jumping out is the best way to express life. Even the thoughts I have, if they are fresh insights to what it is that I'm studying, then I'm okay with it. I can love words, but they have to be living words that create sparks. It's like making a painting, you have to have living brush strokes or otherwise the painting appears dead. Our thoughts and words may be just chit chat without any real content. Words and thoughts just strung together like so many building blocks. So it is not easy to come up with one's life, just as it is not easy to be human. If my being is alive, why then is there a difficulty? Somehow, when I get into thinking for the sake of thinking I get caught by mere head knowledge of many dead and useless thoughts. The teacher was the one who insisted on the fact that we should express our very own life, and warned us not merely to use quotations from other people as an easy way out. At the moment when living truth opens or unfolds is the very moment when the words I use are living and create life in others as well. Dead subjects are just the same as thoughts that are lifeless; they give us nothing, and do not add anything to our spiritual life. Here, it is the very spirit itself that is my concern, not to accumulate knowledge merely for the sake of accumulation - that would keep me from going the way of Amida Buddha, which is, among other things, being open and fresh.

Giant Teachers and Petty Pontiffs by Rev. Patti Nakai

Our trouble is that when we perceive our differences, we fight with each other. Gautama Buddha's discovery was that, differing from other people, he was able to find himself in different people. ... Whenever Gautama Buddha had a chance to meet other people, he never asserted what he believed, he never preached what he thought, but instead he found his life in others' lives. And instead of being king in his country, he found all of human life within himself. In fact, he was such a giant that he could find himself in the life of trees, even the life of stones...

-- Rev. Gyoko Saito *

When I was recently going through my late father's files, I saw in one file he saved many articles and pamphlets on Buddhism. For me it was dull reading. full of platitudes on peace and harmony. But one piece struck me - it happened to be the Dharma talk I gave for the Father's Day service in 1990 in Los Angeles. I had sent it to my father because I started out saying how I admired my father and other Japanese American men of his generation for their brutal honesty. But then I went on to talk about Rev. Saito's Dharma talk where he differentiated "honesty" from the mind that is based on truth, shi-shin, a Buddhist term usually translated as "sincerity." Rev. Saito said many people are honest, speaking what they really feel, but they fail to face up to the truth. They see things a certain way through their own judgment and deny anything that challenges and contradicts that judgment. A clear example is a racist who is being honest when he says he believes all people of a certain race are inferior to his race. But he is far from recognizing the truth that individuals are vastly different from each other in talent and skills, so there is no endeavor in which everyone of one race surpasses everyone in the other groups.

Coming upon that old Dharma talk of mine, I was able to hear the voice of Rev. Saito and learn from him again. Rev. Saito passed away in March 2001 but my appreciation of him continues to deepen. In that Dharma talk I was reminded of how Rev. Saito lived what he taught – or rather, he taught us through how he lived. He strove to discover the truth by observing and listening to others and letting go of reliance on his own opinions. I see his teaching by example in the Dharma talks he gave in Chicago (until 1981) published in our temple's bulletin, and I heard it for myself when I served under him for eight years at the Los Angeles

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The Tanakas Today
On a recent visit to California (see "Temple News"), Rev. and Mrs. Ashikaga called on
Masato and Haruko Tanaka and daughter Marjean.

- "Temple News" continued from page 2 -

01/15 Asoka Society met. Installation of the new officers was conducted by Rev. Patti Nakai. * * * Rev. Ashikaga gave a lecture on Shinran's teachings in Japanese at Orange County Buddhist Church.

01/16 Regular Sunday Service was observed. Lay speaker was Dennis Chan. * * * Rev. Ashikaga delivered Dharma message at Orange County Buddhist Church Ho-On-Ko Service.

01/19 Rev. and Mrs. Ashikaga returned home from California.

01/21 February issue of BTC Bulletin was mailed.

01/22 The 49th Day Memorial Service of the Late Sachio Macda was conducted at the Temple. * * * * Rev. Ashikaga conducted Makura-Gyo (Bedside Service) for Kinji Sugano at Weiss Hospital.

01/23 Regular Sunday Service was observed. Elaine Siegel gave a talk to Dharma School Students, and Rev. Ashikaga delivered the Dharma message. * * * The Temple Board of Directors met.

01/26 Rev. and Mrs. Ashikaga attended monthly birthday party for Ben Enta at Bethany Community Auditorium.

01/30 Eitaikyo Special Service was observed. Rev. Ashikaga gave the welcome words and explanation of the Eitaikyo Fund. Rev. Patti Nakai gave the Dharma talk. After the service, BTC Kokyo Taiko Group served a delicious luncheon. The Annual General Membership Meeting was held, with election of officers for the new term.

- "Bou-Chu Kan" from page 1 -

Time passed while I was thinking on these matters. Again I went to the the front desk to inquire if my friend had arrived. The answer was still "No," so I returned to the same bench in the garden, buried in deeper thoughts. My daily life is too busy in Temple activities and other manifold duties to have much time for relaxation. However, on this day, I was able to relax in this garden by the riverside. I was content being able to experience some leisure time in a busy life.

Once again, I went to ask at the desk. Again, the answer was "No." I then asked if there was a message. Then, another clerk said to me, "Yes, there was a message: Due to a severe thunder storm in the Detroit area, the departure time was delayed. Therefore, our dinner meeting would have to be cancelled." Ordinarily, I would have been upset and said, "Why didn't you tell me earlier?" However, I was not angry at having "wasted" a few hours. Rather, I started my trip home with a feeling of contentment and happiness, having found some quiet moments.

- "Giant Teachers" from page 4 -

Higashi Honganji temple. Instead of telling stories as many ministers do of how they set some misguided person straight, Rev. Saito often spoke of how people and situations taught him to see the errors of his ways. In Los Angeles he was constantly studying from early morning to late at night, reading sutras and the writings of Buddhist teachers from Shinran to Shuichi Maida to currently published writers. Even from newspaper articles and television shows on the most worldly subjects, he would receive spiritual insights.

In many ways Rev. Saito did not fit people's idea of a "sensei." (He might not have become a minister in America, but ended up at our temple because the man Rev. Gyomay Kubose chose to be his assistant tragically died before coming to Chicago and Rev. Kubose had to rely on his friends in Japan to find a replacement.) Rev. Saito declined to act as the stereotype "spiritual master" whose pronouncements of wisdom have disciples eagerly hanging on to each word as a precious jewel. Unfortunately, I've seen too many men and women fall into that mode, so pleased to be looked up to as a "venerable."

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Hatsu Mairi in April This Year

Hatsu Mairi ("First Visit") is the annual ceremony to formally introduce children to the temple. Usually the ceremony is held in the month of May in accordance with the Jodo Shinshu tradition of having Hatsu Mairi in conjunction with the birthday of Shinran Shonin. This year due to the special activities for the 750th Memorial for Shinran Shonin in Japan this May, our temple is scheduling Hatsu Mairi on April 24.

The ceremony is performed for children of any age from newborn to teenagers. If you are interested in having your child participate this year, please contact Rev. Ashikaga at the temple office. Following the Hatsu Mairi Sunday service, photographs will be taken and there will be a reception hosted by the families of previous years' Hatsu Mairi participants.

- "Highlights" from page 2 -

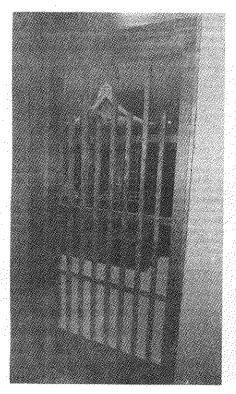
The meeting was also an election meeting for all officer positions. There were no nominations received other than the incumbents who expressed the desire to serve for another term, therefore, there essentially being only one member nominated for each position to be filled, the election was not conducted by ballot, and the nominees were declared elected by general consent. Such a motion was made and seconded, and passed. The results: Gary T. Nakai, President, Auditor, Bill Bohlman, 1st Vice President, Religious Affairs; Kiyo Omachi, 2nd Vice President, Membership; Dennis Chan, 3rd Vice President, Temple Relations; Glenn Fujiura, Treasurer; Margaret Waters. Corporate Secretary; Dave Leshuk, Dharma School Superintendent. Congratulations to all for their dedication and willingness to make BTC a priority in their lives.

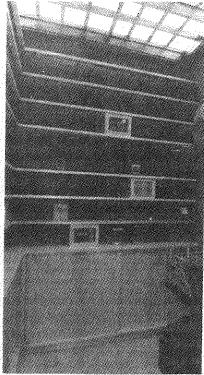
The May 2011 pilgrimage to Kyoto, Japan commemorating the 750th memorial of Shinran Shonin has changed in scope due to the less-than-expected interest. Tonko Doi described itinerary alternatives that were still possible. Anyone wishing to know more were encouraged to contact her directly.

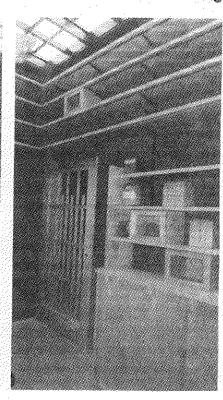
Lastly, Treasurer, Glenn Fujiura did the honors and presented temple appreciations to Reverends Ashikaga and Nakai, and to our service pianist, Mrs. Ashikaga. The beginning of the new year is a time when our sense of appreciation is most heightened as we look forward to a prosperous year together in the Dharma under their service.

Any member who wishes to received a copy of the minutes and/or the reports, please contact Board Secretary Peggy Waters: btcbrdsctry@hotmail.com.

Gary T. Nakai President







The BTC Nokostudo

The BTC Nokotsudo is fully operational. It is configured to accept varied sized urns in varied presentations, for storage periods to fit each family's need. The Nokotsudo will be open for regular inspection each Sunday immediately after service, and by appointment made with Rev. Ashikaga, Gary Nakai, or Kivo Omachi.

To inter cremains in the Nokotsudo, fill out the application form attached to the Nokotsudo Policy. These documents are available from the temple office or they can be mailed to you by

contacting any of the above persons.

Whether you have a definite length of time in mind for interment in the Nokotsudo, or whether the period of time is indeterminate while ultimate plans are being worked out, you can be rest assured that the beautiful design of the BTC Nokotsudo presents each applicant with a flexible, dignified storage accommodation. And as a further service, the BTC Nokotsudo policy permits the holding of burial certificates when accompanying the admitted cremains.

- "Giant Teachers" from page 6 -

Those self-proclaimed teachers pontificate rather than share the Dharma. Sometime ago they hit upon a formula and/or catch phrases that may have been true in particular situations, but they preach it over and over as the universal truth, unaware that real life has moved on and what they hold in their hands is just leftover crumbs. Their own words monopolize their attention and they lose precious opportunities to learn from others, such as the historical Buddha (known as Gautama or Shakyamuni).

Rev. Saito reminds us not to become a petty pontiff, or to vicariously follow one. The real teachings of Buddhism are to liberate us from the delusion of our cherished fixed ideas and awaken us to being part of the flow of ever-changing lives. Then in that awakening, as Rev. Saito says, every day becomes your day of birth into the truth: When I meet you – all different people – I find my life in your kingdom and I find my kingdom in your life. When I meet people, I discover myself; when I meet animals, I discover myself; when I observe nature, I discover myself. If I don't, then my life is stale, my life is getting old, my life is exhausted and I am no longer alive. ... If I don't find Gautama Buddha's life in me, if I don't find my life in the life of Gautama Buddha, then to me his birth day is of no significance. If I do discover this, then I will celebrate my birthday every day, every minute, wherever I go, whatever I see. *

*Both quotes are from "The Third Birthday" in *Meditations on Death and Birth* by Gyoko T. Saito, privately published by Joan Sweany, 1983.