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**Resident Minister**

Rev. Patti Nakai

**President**

Bill Bohlman

# The Buddhist Temple of Chicago

# BULLETIN

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## BTC 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reflections

### *The Liveliest Group at the Temple: The Senryu Poets*

Whenever Rev. Gyoko Saito would reminisce about his twenty-five years at the Buddhist Temple of Chicago, he would say the senryu poetry group was the liveliest group at the temple. And some ministers who visited Chicago told me that spending time with the BTC senryu group was the most fun they had at any temple.

What is senryu and why would it bring people together for a thoroughly good time? Although there are some research papers published about the significance of senryu in Japanese American culture, the only book I know of that features poets in the U.S. is *Modern Senryu in English* by Shuho Ohno (Seattle: Hokubei International, 1987). In it, Dr. Ohno explains senryu, "Unlike haiku, senryu does not emphasize seasonal expressions, but rather human psychology in daily living and relationships [and to] emphasize



Rev. Patti Nakai  
Resident Minister

This article  
continues  
on page 6  
column 1.

## Thank You

After my second four-year stint as temple president, I decided not to run again for this office. At the recent general membership meeting a new president was elected and will introduce himself to you next issue. As I write this, the result of the election is unknown. I hope to remain on the board of directors in my other role as VP Religious Affairs.

As we prepare for our upcoming 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in October we look back on how far the temple has come. From simple beginnings on the Southside of Chicago, to our home in Uptown, to the new building we dedicated in 2006 all we have is the result of the dedication of our Sangha. Doing their best to lead BTC through all the trials and tribulations has been a series of dedicated boards of directors. During my time as president there have been times of disagreement, some of which led to some very unBuddhist arguments. The one constant is the desire of all the board members, throughout the years, to do what they felt was best for BTC. At times people will disagree with board actions; at times people will feel hurt by board actions but the board has always been comprised of a cross-section of the membership trying to do what they feel is right.

I want to thank all the board and all the temple members who have helped me during my time as president. It is only with this support that I, or any president, can do the job to its fullest. I am certain that the new president will need the support of everyone so that BTC can continue to be a place where all can come to hear the teachings. Once again, my thanks to all who have supported me during my time as president. Namu Amida Butsu.



Bill Bohlman  
BTC President

Contact Bill at  
*budtempchi*  
*@aol.com*  
or find him most  
Sundays after  
service at the  
information desk  
& bookstore.

## FEBRUARY 2019 Temple Events & Activities Guide

- See Calendar (page 8) for specific dates.
- Up-to-date details/last-minute changes are available on Facebook:  
[www.facebook.com/budtempchi](http://www.facebook.com/budtempchi)
- **ALL EVENTS ARE FREE, OPEN TO THE PUBLIC, and held at the Temple (unless otherwise noted).**

### ➤➤➤ *Special Temple Services and Events* <<<

- February 10—**Nirvana Day**
- February 17—**Pet Memorial**
- February 24—**Interfaith Sunday**

#### Regular Temple Services

- **Religious Service** (in English)—Sundays, 11 am.
- **Lay Speaker Sunday**—Usually 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday every month, 11 am.

#### Temple Meetings & Community Service

- **Bulletin mailing**—2<sup>nd</sup> to last or last Friday every month, 10 am; volunteers welcome. This month: February 22.
- **Bulletin submissions**—Deadline for notices and articles: every month, 6 pm, the Thursday 15 days prior to mailing. This month: February 7.
- **Temple Board Meeting**—Once a month, Sunday, 12:30 pm. This month: February 24.
- **Upaya Helpers** (refreshment service, community outreach, ping pong, etc.)
- **Cook It Forward** (feeding unhoused persons)—  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/CookItForward/>

#### Meditation & Buddhist Education

- **Buddhism Study Class**—Wednesdays, 1:30 – 3:00 pm. No meeting Feb. 6, Feb. 27.

- **Dharma School** (for school-age children)—Sundays, 11 am. This month: Feb. 10 and Feb. 24.
- **Introduction to Buddhism**—offered periodically throughout the year. E-mail Nancey Epperson at [naepperson14@gmail.com](mailto:naepperson14@gmail.com).
- **Meditation**—Sundays, 9:00 am and Thursdays, 7:30 pm. First-timers: come 10 minutes early for instruction.
- **Sutra Study Class**—2nd or 3rd Sunday of the month, 12:30 to 2 pm. No previous Buddhism study required.

#### Social & Cultural Activities

- **Aikido** (“cooperation, not competition”)—Sundays, 5-7 pm. Email DJ Lortie [djaikibudo@gmail.com](mailto:djaikibudo@gmail.com).
- **Asoka Society** (refreshment service, social club, outings, etc.)—3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday every month, 1 pm. No meeting in February.
- **Iaido** (Japanese Swordsmanship)—Mondays, 7-9 pm.
- **Qigong** (Chinese Movement)—Tuesdays, 11-12:30pm. Call Dennis Chan 312-771-6087 for info.
- **Taiko** (BTC Kokyo Taiko Drum Troupe)—**Adults**, Fridays, 7-9 pm. Email [kokyotaiko@yahoo.com](mailto:kokyotaiko@yahoo.com) to confirm. **Children**, 1st, 3rd, and 5th Sundays at 11. Email [sanghacomod@yahoo.com](mailto:sanghacomod@yahoo.com) for appointments.
- **Ukulele Group**—Tuesdays, 1 pm. Email Ruth Abbinanti: [fabbianti@sbcglobal.net](mailto:fabbianti@sbcglobal.net)

### MISSION STATEMENT

Founded in 1944 as an administratively independent temple, The Buddhist Temple of Chicago aspires to the following:

- To present and explore the Three Treasures of Buddhism – the Buddha (teacher), the Dharma (teachings), and the Sangha (community).
- To be guided and inspired by the historical Buddha, Gautama Shakyamuni, and the teachers who have followed – Shinran Shonin, Manshi Kiyozawa, and Haya Akegarasu.
- To present the Buddha-Dharma in a language and manner relevant and understandable in contemporary America.
- To welcome all who seek the Dharma without any exceptions.
- To be a positive presence in our local community working to enhance the vitality of our neighborhood.
- To honor and continue the traditions of our founding members.
- To always live the Nembutsu – Namu Amida Butsu.

### BTC BULLETIN

**Team** Rev. Patti Nakai, Nancey Epperson, Ann Yi

**Feedback & Submissions** Questions, comments, corrections & suggestions are welcome. Submissions are encouraged—articles, essays, book reviews, photos, poetry, news items, announcements, drawings, etc. Submissions will be reviewed for suitability and space availability. Anonymous submissions will not be published, but author’s names may be withheld from publication upon request.

**Contact** E-mail [BTCbuledtr@hotmail.com](mailto:BTCbuledtr@hotmail.com) or speak with anyone on the BTC Team

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## Temple News December 2018

- 12/2 Monthly memorial service
- 12/9 Bodhi Day service and Ti-Sarana confirmation ceremony. \*\*\* Dharma School on field trip.
- 12/15 Asoka Society met
- 12/16 Regular service. \*\*\* Mochi-tsuki (rice cake pounding).
- 12/21 Bulletin/calendar mailing preparation.
- 12/23 Regular service. \*\*\* Chanting class met.
- 12/30 Year-end service. \*\*\* Board of directors met

### THANK YOU!

Understanding the Nembutsu through recognizing the Paramitas in others. Send in your recognitions!

#### Service & Hospitality

- **Sunday Service Participants:** Bill Bohlman, Nancey Epperson, Wendy Fawcett, Glenn Fujiura, Mary Harvey, Ed Horiuchi, Lynnell Long, George Mizuki, Peter Mizuki, Diana Schoendorff, Miriam Solon, Ann Yi.
- **Lay Leaders:** Bill Bohlman, Nancey Epperson, Wendy Fawcett, Lynnell Long
- **Musicians:** Drea Gallaga, Ukulele Group
- **Audio Controls:** Wendy and Jacob Fawcett, Gary T. Nakai
- **Bulletin Mailing:** Dennis Chan, Noreen Enkoji, Masa Nakata, Antoinette d'Vencets, April Kellman, Alice Murata

- **Sunday Service Refreshments:** Asoka Society, Noreen Enkoji, Bill Gallaga, Haru Ito, Peter Mizuki, Alice Murata, Jan Saiki, Ti-Sarana participants, Ruby Tsuji, Joyce Yamamoto

#### Temple Keepers

- **Maintaining Temple inside and out:** Tomio Tademoto
- **Cleaning Hondo & Nokotsudo:** Michael Yasukawa
- **Extensive landscape maintenance:** Tomio Tademoto
- **Cleaning washrooms:** DJ and family
- **Emptying trash, putting it out for disposal:** Sue Balsam, Adam Kellman
- **Sweeping and mopping:** Gary Nakai, Michael Yasukawa
- **Restocking paper towels and toilet paper:** Miriam Solon
- **Watering plants, laundering kitchen towels and aprons:** Alice Murata
- **Clearing trash from temple exterior spaces:** Wendy & Jacob Fawcett
- **Cleaning minister's residence:** Dharma School
- **Administrative Office Volunteers:** Ruth Abbinanti, Nancey Epperson, April Kellman
- **Maintaining and updating Temple website:** Ann Yi
- **Maintaining and updating Temple computer:** John Kelly, Gary T. Nakai
- **Setting up and taking down chairs & tables:** Too many to thank—thanks to all!



On Sunday, January 13<sup>th</sup>, the Dharma School visited the Children's Museum of Art and Social Justice. They saw the current exhibit, "Activism from A-Z." They also enjoyed an interactive experience tailor made to the varied ages of the group.

Photo: Diana Schoendorff



## Mochitsuki Report

By Gary T. Nakai

Mochitsuki 2018 was a combination of contrasts: same dedicated help and some new faces, same fun and tasty mochi experienced by all, proven vintage and newly dedicated and experimental equipment, young participants and record-setting seniors.

First to mention are two new kine (mallet) heads. The one made out of Keyaki wood stock sent to us from Japan and dedicated to the late Sakaye Morinaka. The other made out of White Oak and dedicated to the late Haruko "Harky" Tademoto. Additional two heads were experimental, made with High Density Polyethylene (HDPE) so the rice wouldn't stick to it. All mallets performed well in the skilled hands.

As usual, there were the exuberant participation of youngsters who come forward at seemingly younger ages each year. On the other end of the age spectrum was the "challenges" made and answered by the two eldest pounders, esteemed ladies

Chiyeiko Yoshida (94) and Betty Yoshioka (96). They showed us all how it's done to the delight of all the onlookers and were given a hearty round of applause.

We thank the following dedicated members and friends that made this community oriented event such a success: Chairman Tomio Tademoto and his crew for taking care of everything from before the event to after cleanup; Mike Tanimura for compassionately running the kitchen operations with Michael Kudo, Jr., Greg Lambros, Worlynn Ow; Susan Kim for expert mochi turning and managing the action at the Usu; skilled perennial pounders Alan, Eric, Mitchell Kato, Mark Keehan, Bob Kumaki, Stanley Oda, Tal Rosen, Gary, Tyler Shimomura; key support staff Nancey Epperson, Ed Horiuchi, mochi forming artists Haru Ito, Sadae Kasamoto, Gwen Kato, April Kellman, Jane Morishige, Jeanne Shimomura, Ruby Tsuji, Mieko Yoshida, Betty Yoshioka. My apologies if I forgot you.



Chiyeiko Yoshida pounds mochi.  
(photo: Mieko Yoshida)



Betty Yoshioka pounds mochi.  
(right) Susan Kim turns mochi.  
(photos: Rev. Patti Nakai)





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### Remembrances of Reverends Sunnan (Koyo) and Gyomay Kubose

By Francine Rattenbury

When my mother fell into a coma seven months after a liver transplant and was suddenly dying a month later, I sought the presence of a Buddhist minister. Born Shizuko Kojima of Fukuoka Japan, our mother rarely spoke of Buddhism but always maintained an altar in our home, and I believed that a familiar spiritual presence would be a comfort. I phoned BTC and left what must have been an alarming message – my Buddhist mother is dying! Come quick! There was no call back - those were the days before cell phones – but Rev. Sunnan Kubose just showed up, satchel in hand, ready to give whatever was needed. As he readied for a pillow service, I felt compelled to mention that – in case he was just “off the boat” – no incense or candles would be allowed in the ICU. I found out later that he had a Ph.D. from Berkeley, but he was never indignant, just calm and caring and alert to the needs of our family, who were literally strangers, nobody to him.

Fast-forward several years to my first time helping with a BTC event, and here comes Rev. Sunnan’s father, Rev. Gyomay Kubose, to my booth, bowing and thanking me – a nobody! – for volunteering. What wonderful introductions to the spirit of BTC and American Buddhism.

*[Editor’s note: this is the first in what we hope will be a series of remembrances submitted by members of the sangha. See note on page 7.]*

### New Year’s Day at BTC



photo: Rev. Patti Nakai

On the first day of the new year, it is the custom to ring a bell 108 times, to symbolize ridding oneself of the 108 kleshas (or defilements) of human existence. At BTC, members take turns ringing the bell, and the whole family gets involved. After ringing the bell, the sangha shared a sake toast and a delicious pot-luck lunch.

#### *In search of ...* **BTC’s Founding Members!**

The newly-formed BTC Historical Society is looking for people who were there at the beginning, who formed and gave direction to our sangha. The aim is to collect photos, oral histories, letters, or any other artifacts that can be used to create a tangible resource for preserving and promoting the history of our temple.

If you are a founding member, or know of someone who helped build BTC, please email [BTCHistoricalSociety@gmail.com](mailto:BTCHistoricalSociety@gmail.com) or contact

Dr. Ken Addison    Susan Balsam  
Adam Kellman      Candy Minx

## BTC 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reflections

(continued from page 1)

humorous aspects.” Whereas haiku is associated with the austerity of Zen Buddhism and the elite intellectuals, senryu developed as an expression by, for and about the common working people. For a form of poetry that looks clearly at our own faulty human nature and helps us to be able to chuckle about it, a Jodo Shinshu Buddhist temple such as ours was an appropriate place for the poets to gather.

My grandparents like many Japanese-speaking people in North America were taught how to write senryu while in the wartime camps. As most of you know, after working so hard for years on farms and in small businesses, the adults in camp were forced into idleness, and so many of them started to take up arts and crafts to keep themselves busy. Senryu became a creative way of coping with the frustrations of incarceration and picking up on the small details of life to smile and laugh about.

After the war, senryu poets formed groups in most of the large Japanese communities on the west coast and some of those groups are still active. In Chicago, as evidence of how senryu poetry brought people together to share in laughing at themselves, all three ministers – Rev. Gyomay Kubose, Rev. Saito and Rev. Yukei Ashikaga – were involved in the group and they (and their wives) got along swimmingly despite the occasional disputes they had among themselves regarding temple matters. One of the longtime leaders of the group was Mr. Nobuo Nojiri. He and a few others were able to keep the group going for decades with its own magazine (some of the covers depicting Chicago scenes were drawn by the then young Gary Nakai), two books and frequent contributions of poems to national and international publications and competitions. Yes – competitions! Senryu in North America and in Japan is a sort of sport with winners awarded giant trophies that tower over any bowler’s or golfer’s prizes. At our temple’s



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(continued from previous column)

annual summer festival, Natsu Matsuri, the big event full of drama and suspense was the senryu contest with judges poring over entries from near and far.

In Dr. Ohno’s book are translations of many of the Chicago poets. Here are two poems by Mr. Nojiri that give you a taste of senryu’s wry expressions:

*Jitsuroku no nai kanashisa, kuchi o toji*

Sadly, the actual situation is that I’m powerless, so I keep my mouth shut.

*Waga tsuma wa nan to ittemo, sekai ichi*

My wife, no matter what she says, is still the best in the world.

Everyone who wrote senryu had a pen name. I remember Rev. and Mrs. Ashikaga always calling Mr. Nojiri “Nankai-san,” and referring to my grandparents by their pen names. Although eventually the Chicago group dissolved as members moved or passed away, Mr. Nojiri continued to be active at the temple, serving as the chairperson at the Japanese services, starting off with poetic words of welcome.

In reflecting on how the senryu gatherings made it “the liveliest group at the temple,” I wonder if something similar can be developed now or in the future. Quite a few of the people attending our Sunday services and weekly activities are involved in the arts and could be tapped as instructors. There could be activities for participants to be creative – writing poems or prose, improvising music, collaborating on visual pieces, etc. A few years ago our temple hosted the Treasures of Uptown Interfaith Coalition’s gathering to work in small groups on expressing spirituality through constructing mandalas and rock structures. If anything, nothing could be more Buddhist than art – working through changes with flexibility and harmonizing our differences through sharing verbal and non-verbal insights. As the senryu group experienced, the self-examination called for in Buddhism can be a source of delight, enjoyed as individuals coming together to appreciate this interdependent, dynamic Life.





The Senryu Poetry Group (1987 photo):  
 Standing from left to right: Nobuo "Nankai" Nojiri, Rev. Ashikaga, Edward Bivenski (rear), Rev. Kubose, Yutaka Bob Oshita, Mr. Arai.  
 Sitting left to right: Yutaka Kanemoto, Mr. Matsumoto, Mrs. Sakamoto

(photo: Temple archives)

### *Dharma Friends: The Hoyukai*

At almost all temples there is the "fujinkai," the women's group and at BTC, some of the Japanese-speaking ladies tried to keep the group active to this century. A shorter lived group at our temple was the "hoyukai," which meant "Dharma friends" but served as the Japanese-speaking men's group.

I really don't know what the hoyukai actually did. We know the fujinkai was the core of the kitchen crew until the Asoka Society members took on those responsibilities and the fujinkai stayed involved with crafts. But while the fujinkai did the traditional "wife" work for the temple, how did the hoyukai serve as the "husbands"?

The vestige of the old hoyukai group was kept in contact with the temple through the efforts of Yutaka "Bob" Oshita. Most of the elderly men he visited were widowers or lifelong bachelors and a few kept physically active playing golf together. Mr. Oshita made sure each year that the men paid their annual membership dues since he knew how easy it is to lose track of such things without family members reminding you.

Sadly, Mr. Oshita had to say goodbye to each of the hoyukai members. Since some of them did not have descendants, Mr. Oshita made donations in their memory year after year and even contributed to the Eitaikyo fund as a tribute to his Dharma friends. Of course, Mr. Oshita had his

own large family of children and grandchildren that he deeply cared for, but he demonstrated a long-lasting affection for the men of the hoyukai, showing that he would always appreciate the contributions they made to the temple in the past.

Mr. Oshita is gone but I'm glad there are still temple members who go out of their way to keep in contact with the elderly and disabled members. In particular I'm grateful to Dr. Alice Murata who's been visiting and calling many of the homebound members and letting me know how they're doing. Visitation should be the minister's duty but my time and energy has been limited these past couple years by my cancer treatments, so I'm glad there are those who are willing to visit our members in hospitals and nursing homes. It shows the caring spirit of our sangha that those who can no longer come to the temple are continued to be appreciated for their support.

Dear Members: During this 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, we hope you'll be inspired to write about the devoted volunteers of the past – your old friends or dear family members. Please share with our current members, the stories of those who were crucial to our temple's ongoing development.

**Send your stories and photos to:**  
**[btcbuledtr@hotmail.com](mailto:btcbuledtr@hotmail.com)**



# The Buddhist Temple of Chicago

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## FEBRUARY 2019 CALENDAR



See page 2 for details on specific events. Events may be canceled or moved.  
Check [www.facebook.com/budtempchi](http://www.facebook.com/budtempchi) for the most up-to-date changes.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					<b>1</b> 7 pm Taiko	<b>2</b>
<b>3</b> 9 am Meditation 11 am Monthly Memorial  5 pm Aikido	<b>4</b> 7 pm Iaido	<b>5</b> 11 am Qi Gong 1 pm Ukulele	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> <b>6 pm Bulletin Submissions Deadline</b>  7:30 pm Meditation	<b>8</b> 7 pm Taiko	<b>9</b>
<b>10</b> 9 am Meditation 11 am Nirvana Day / Dharma School 5 pm Aikido	<b>11</b> 7 pm Iaido	<b>12</b> 11 am Qi Gong 1 pm Ukulele	<b>13</b> 1:30 pm Study Class	<b>14</b> 7:30 pm Meditation	<b>15</b> 7 pm Taiko	<b>16</b>
<b>17</b> 9 am Meditation 11 am Pet Memorial  5 pm Aikido	<b>18</b> 7 pm Iaido	<b>19</b> 11 am Qi Gong 1 pm Ukulele	<b>20</b> 1:30 pm Study Class	<b>21</b> 7:30 pm Meditation	<b>22</b> <b>10 am Bulletin Mailing</b>  7 pm Taiko	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b> 9 am Meditation 11 am Interfaith Sunday / Dharma School 12:30 pm Board Meeting 5 pm Aikido	<b>25</b> 7 pm Iaido	<b>26</b> 11 am Qi Gong 1 pm Ukulele	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> 7:30 pm Meditation		