



# The Buddhist Temple of Chicago

## APRIL 2020

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## HAPPY BIRTHDAY BUDDHA!

**“One moment can change a day, one day can change a life and one life can change the world.” - Buddha**



### “When Life Begins”

**By Rev. Patti Nakai, Resident Minister**

The session was held in a large room ...filled with elegant white leather chairs. The crowd was young, mostly junior employees. They had the look of people who are living without rising to the level of being alive.

--- Anand Giridharadas, *Winners Take All*

There are various answers to the question: when does life begin? For conservative Christians, life begins at conception, while for some in the Jewish faith, the fetus must develop to a certain point before the soul enters the body.

For the Buddha there are two answers – your life began a long time ago and your life has yet to begin. The first answer refers to the fact it took centuries of causes and conditions to bring your birth parents together – myriad factors that may include wars, immigration, extreme weather, festivals and dance parties. The second answer refers to the difficulty in coming fully alive – for some it occurs well into adulthood and perhaps during the very last moments before their physical death.

*(Continued on page 2)*





In April, we follow the Chinese custom of celebrating the birth of the historical Buddha with the Hanamatsuri (“flower festival”) service. But although April 8 represents the date of the Buddha’s coming out of his mother’s body, he would say his real birth as a human being came at the moment of his awakening at age 35. When asked about that experience, he probably described it as like a birth, with “Above the heavens and below the heavens, I alone am most noble” as his shout of coming alive as a being dignified in his uniqueness. But somehow this description of his awakening became part of his birth legend that has the newborn walking and talking.

Before our spiritual birth we are spending our lives inside the hard thick shell of the ego. Shinran called this being inside the “womb-palace,” feeling comfortable in our cocoon and as long as our desires are met, there’s no need to care about what goes on outside our cocoon. Even for people who consider themselves “religious,” their sense of the spiritual is still confined to within the cocoon – being with “my” family, “my” friends, “my” church etc. And those people may believe that after death they will go on to live eternally within another much nicer cocoon as a reward for being a good person.

The Buddha taught the truth of dependent arising to awaken us to the vast and intricate web of causes and conditions that affect all lives. The comfortable cocoon is an illusion because our every thought, word and deed affects all other lives just as we are being affected by the things that bring them their sorrows and joys. To ignore the truth of our interdependence is to be living in a self-centered dream, to miss out on feeling alive in this world. So like the junior executives described in the above quote, too many people are “living without rising to the level of being alive.”

How can we break out of the shell of ego? Listening to the Dharma, we hear the voices of lives beyond our self-concerns. And the teachings remind us that the winds of impermanence can easily take away the nice things we cling to, including our own health and life. Why blindly follow a life of self-gain within a cocoon of falsity when there is a brilliant, refreshing world of sharing life with all lives in a wide-open universe? As Shinran and many other teachers are telling us, we are already in the “pure land” and will appreciate it when we let go of our impure attachment to self.

To hear “Above the heavens and below the heavens, I alone am most noble” coming from all beings is when life begins. It is the birth that Namu Amida Butsu keeps prodding us towards.

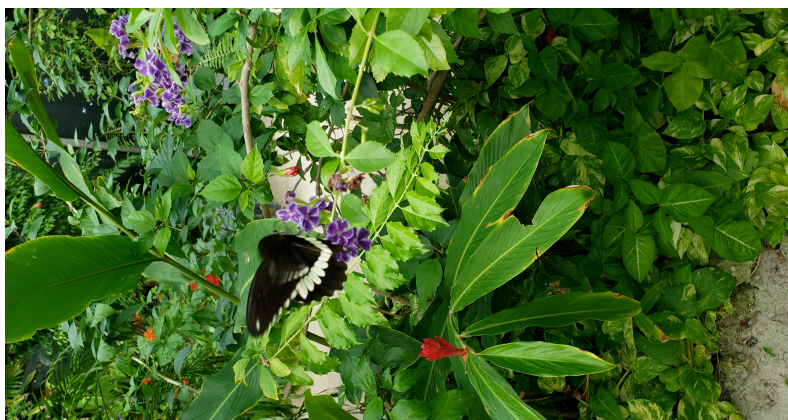


Photo by Dennis Chan

## First Know Yourself

By Bill Bohlman, BTC President

“First know yourself and your path will become clear”.



Bill Bohlman, BTC President  
Contact Bill at [budtempchi@aol.com](mailto:budtempchi@aol.com)



### First Know Yourself

For six years, Gautama Shakyamuni practiced rigorous meditative and ascetic ways of life seeking the answer to the overcoming of his suffering. Finally, in desperation, he sat in meditation under a pipal tree determined to find his answer or perish doing so. Visions of demons and temptresses assailed him until, as the sun rose on the morning of the seventh day, he attained his awakening. Legend says that at this moment he cried “Avidya”: “Oh, Darkness.” He realized the depth of his personal darkness. He recognized that the cause of his suffering was not out there, it was within himself. His ego, anger, greed and ignorance were the cause of his suffering. Shakyamuni Buddha had finally come to know himself.

How often have we felt that the source of our discomforts in life was based in things external to us? We become convinced that if only those things out there would change, we would finally be happy. Then, when they don’t change to our satisfaction we suffer even more. The Buddhadharma teaches that this is a fool’s path. Rather than expect that which is out of our control to change, we must look into ourselves to see why we are suffering.

Why do we become angry? The simple answer is that someone, or something, is not acting the way we want them to act. We never become angry when our expectations or desires are met. However, do our actions that arise in this state of anger usually resolve the problem at hand, or do they make things worse? When asked if the Buddha ever became angry, his cousin Ananda replied, “Of course he did; he was only human. But he forgot it immediately.” The Buddha’s ability to know himself, and the reasons he had become angry, allowed him to forget, or move past the anger immediately. By doing so, whatever actions he next took helped to alleviate suffering rather than exacerbate it.

Why do we have desires and attachments? Beyond the need for food and shelter, all else is the result of desire and attachment. The essential possessions of the Buddha and his disciples were two robes and a bowl; a summer robe, a winter robe, and a bowl for begging alms. Anything more was a luxury. Contrast this to our modern lives filled with a constant craving for more. Our desires are driven by our sense that the next new thing will bring us contentment. Even worse, on a global scale this constant striving for more leads to conflict and war. Shakyamuni Buddha awakened to this fact. We can never be happy until we find contentment with that which we already have. When we know ourselves, and our reasons for our attachments and desires, we can begin to see the path to overcoming suffering in our lives.

Like the Buddha, we need to find our own “pipal tree” and work thru the illusions and delusions of our mind. First know yourself and your path will become clear.





## 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.

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:

**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:** [bulletin.btc@gmail.com](mailto:bulletin.btc@gmail.com)

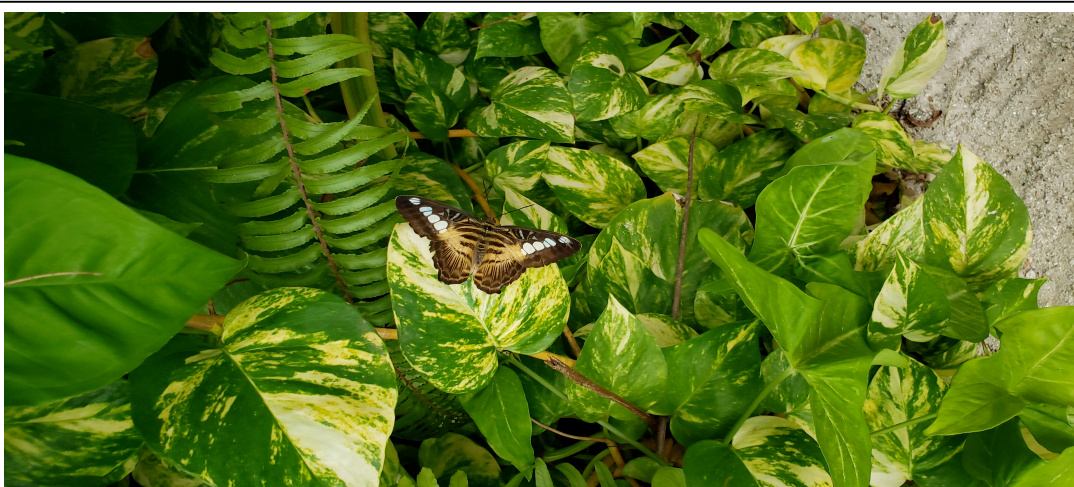


Photo by Dennis Chan

# DHARMA SCHOOL CORNER

Dharma School - Cookie Making January 2020



Photos by Diana Schoendorff



Photos by Wendy Fawcett (March 8th Service)





## THE 2020 BTC Scholarship

**ELIGIBILITY** – Applicant must be a high school senior or an undergraduate senior who has attended The Buddhist Temple of Chicago Dharma School and/or participated in one of the activities of BTC and is a paid member or listed on a family membership two years prior to the scholarship year according to BTC membership records.

**SELECTION** – The BTC Scholarship will be awarded on the basis of scholastic merit and personal dedication to the Temple with consideration given to individual need.

**PROCEDURE** – An applicant must complete the Scholarship Application, obtain one recommendation, and write a 200-word essay. All applications must be accompanied by a certified transcript of the student's high school grades (if available, or a letter given as to the reason why this was omitted). The responsibility for a completed application and submission by the time of the deadline rests solely with the applicant.

**OBTAIN SCHOLARSHIP FORM** – Contact Rev. Patti Nakai at 773-334-4661 for an application packet.

**DEADLINE** – Applications must be received by midnight May 30, 2020. All correspondence, forms, inquiries and applications should be sent to:

The BTC Scholarship Committee  
c/o The Buddhist Temple of Chicago  
1151 W Leland Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60640

**PRESENTATION** – The Buddhist Temple of Chicago Scholarships will be awarded during the Sunday Service on June 14th at 11 AM. Recipients will be notified by e-mail or telephone during the first week in June.



Photo by Dennis Chan

## BTC ACTIVITIES:

Aikido- [djaikibudo@gmail.com](mailto:djaikibudo@gmail.com)

Asoka Society-3rd Saturday: 1pm

Iaido- [chicagoiaido@gmail.com](mailto:chicagoiaido@gmail.com)

Qi-Gong- Dennis Chan 312-771-6087

Taiko- [kokyotaiko@buddhisttemplechicago.org](mailto:kokyotaiko@buddhisttemplechicago.org)



## TEMPLE NEWS FEBRUARY 2020

- 2/02** Monthly memorial service.  
**2/06** Movie matinee.  
**2/09** Dharma School and Pet Memorial Service.  
**2/15** Bishop Noriaki Ito conducted chanting workshop in morning and seminar on interreligious dialogue in the afternoon.  
**2/16** Nirvana Day service with guest speakers Rev. Ryoko Osa from Berkeley Higashi Buddhist Temple and Bishop Noriaki Ito from the Los Angeles Higashi Honganji Temple. \*\*\* Forum with Bishop Ito and Rev. Osa  
**2/19** Rev. Nakai participated in book discussion of George Takei's "They Called Us Enemy" at Oakton Community College, Skokie campus as part of the Niles Township "Coming Together" program.  
**2/20** Bon Odori exercise class.  
**2/21** March bulletin mailed.  
**2/23** Interfaith Sunday service with guest speaker Jon Shimabukuro from Christ Church of Chicago. \*\*\* Board of directors met.  
**2/29** Stan Oda attended police workshop on security.



## 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:** Adam Kellman, Glenn Fujiura  
**Sweeping, mopping, vacuuming:** Mary Harvey, Michael Yasukawa  
**Restocking paper towels and toilet paper:** Miriam Solon  
**Watering plants, laundering kitchen towels and aprons:** Ruth Abbinanti, Alice Murata  
**Clearing trash and weeds from Temple exterior:** Jacob Fawcett, Mary Harvey, Gary Nakai, Miriam Solon  
**Cleaning minister's residence:** Miriam Solon, Dharma School  
**Administrative Office Volunteers:** April Kellman  
**Maintaining and updating Temple website:** Wendy Fawcett, Glenn Fujiura  
**Maintaining and updating Temple computer:** Gary T. Nakai  
**Setting up and taking down chairs & tables:** Too many to thank—thanks to all!



## THANK YOU!

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

**Sunday Service Participants:** : Bill Bohlman, Nancey Epperson, Bill Gallaga, Debbie Miyashiro, Peter Mizuki, Stan Oda, April Sakaeda, Diana Schoendorff, Miriam Solon, Dharma school, Esther, Kerry, Isla, Liam, Eli.

**Lay Leaders:** Sue Balsam, Bill Bohlman, Nancey Epperson, Wendy Fawcett, Lynnell Long, Gary Nakai, Miriam Solon.

**Musicians:** Drea Gallaga.

**Audio Controls:** Wendy and Jacob Fawcett, Gary T. Nakai, Liam.

**Bulletin Mailing:** Haru Ito, Ruby Izui, Noreen Enkoji, Arron Guiles, Sadae Kasamoto, April Kellman, Masa Nakata.

**Sunday Service Refreshments:** Noreen Enkoji, Gallaga Family, Anna Idol, Jane Ike, Haru Ito, Susan Kuse, Jerry & Jane Morishige, Alice Murata, Jan Saiki, Shimizu family, Tademoto Family, Upaya





## The Buddhist Temple of Chicago

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### April 2020 Calendar

Events may be canceled or moved:  
Check [www.facebook.com/budtempchi](https://www.facebook.com/budtempchi)  
for the most up-to-date changes.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat

All activities at the temple are  
cancelled until further notice