

August 2024



The Buddhist Temple of Chicago



ADDRESS

1151 W. Leland Ave
Chicago, IL 60640-5043

TELEPHONE

(773) 334-4661

ONLINE

BuddhistTempleChicago.org

E-MAIL

Bulletin.btc@gmail.com

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A Dedicated Sangha

Bill Bohlman, Temple President

Natsu Matsuri 2024 was a success in many ways. Not only did it raise significant funds for BTC, it also was an example of a sangha in action.

Planning and preparation for the festival began months before the event. As the time drew near, the individuals in charge of each facet reached out to the sangha to enlist their help. A kitchen crew was assembled, Team Teriyaki coalesced, performances were arranged, silent auction items were acquired and a floor plan was developed. When the weekend arrived, things kicked into high gear.

Saturday was a whirlwind of activity. Almost 600 chicken halves were trimmed and marinated in our special teriyaki sauce. A group of workers assembled the barbecue pit. In the kitchen, others washed rice, chopped ingredients and made the final preparations. Sunday morning, skilled hands prepared the inari while others cooked the udon noodles. Team Teriyaki arrived early to make sure that the chicken would be ready when the festival began. Throughout the day, sangha members worked tirelessly to make the day enjoyable and successful. When the festival ended, everything was quickly returned to its usual condition so the JASC adult day care could meet on Monday.

Every year, Natsu Matsuri shows us what a sangha working together can achieve. The question before us is how do we carry this involvement to the rest of the year? The temple does not take care of itself; it needs the help of the sangha. We appreciate the enormous amount of help at Natsu Matsuri time; we can only hope for that level of support throughout the year. BTC depends on you. As we approach our 80th anniversary, let's all ask ourselves how we can help the temple.

DOMO ARIGATO

2024 SILENT AUCTION, QUILT RAFFLE AND CRAFTS

By Alice Murata

We have concluded another successful Natsu Matsuri thanks to many, many people. Those who made this happen include volunteers, Bill Bohlman, Jane Morishige, Gary Nakai, Frances Patzwaladt, Tina Kato Rohde, Betty Segal, and Miriam Solon.

Our very generous contributors to the Silent Auction and Craft items include Dennis Chan, Nancey Epperson, Jane Morishige, Alice Murata, Stanley Nakamura, Nancy and Kurt Nakaoka, Barbara Oshita, Helene Palella, and Frances Paltzwaladt.

We are very grateful to Ritsuko Inouye's family for the beautiful flower quilt for the raffle. Ritsuko's daughter, Joyce passed away last year and her family had her burial on June 7 at Rosehill. Joyce donated her mother's quilt to BTC.

We are very grateful to the many people who donated and those who purchased these beautiful, precious items.

Natsu Matsuri Thank You

By Gary Nakai

Many thanks to the following individuals for their relentless help in setting up the inside of the temple and dismantling everything so that BTC was able to seamlessly carry on with its responsibilities and commitment immediately before, during, and after the festival. I apologize if I missed listing you.

For prep work of the Hondo center rear partition's mobility enhancement structure and caster refurbishment: Bill Bohlman, Rev. Patti Nakai, Gary Shimomura

For the clearing of Hondo and setup of tables and chairs for dining; rearranging furniture into storage, assembling food staging tables, moving wall partitions: Bill Bohlman, Tes Blanca, Armando Ten Chavez, Katren Chiong, Emil Espiritu, Larry Hernandez, Aldrin Rey, Melba, Randy, Ronald Ristow, Tomio Tadamoto, Joel Villaruel,

Installing outdoor speaker and signage creation and installation: Drea Gallaga, Dennis Lortie, Peter Mizuki.

Installing stage area PA and taking down and storing: Stanley Oda

Post-festival clean-up, dismantling structures, putting all away in storage room, restoring Hondo configuration: Veronica Andersen, Bill Bohlman, Tes Blanca, Armando Ten Chavez, Katren Chiong, Emil Espiritu, Glenn, Mieko, Maris Fujiura, Donald Glenburg, Larry Hernandez, Kim Hubbard, Alexa Karczmar, Colleen Murakami, Aldrin Rey, Melba Ristow, Tricia Soo, Manolo Tobias, Tomio Tadamoto, Joel Villaruel, Jan Winters, Steve Yamasaki.

The BTC 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.

Our Mission, and it is yours to accept!

“To be guided and inspired by the historical Buddha, Gautama Shakyamuni, and the teachers who have followed –

Shinran Shonin, Manshi Kiyozawa, and Haya Akegarasu.”

-- The BTC Mission Statement, Second Point.

Rev. Frederick Brenion

It all began with Buddha. There was something about him. He had a presence. When he spoke, others listened. When he was silent, they listened. We admire those who are selfless. Buddha found the Selfless. He lived it. He taught it. Many who heard him chose to stay with him, to learn this way, and to live it. This was the start of the Sangha. Through observation, sometimes by trial and error, Buddha established rules by which they could all live and work together. There was to be no caste system.. All worked as equals in maintaining the daily life of the Sangha. Only one point of ‘superiority’ was established though, that of seniority. Not of age, but of how long one was practicing. Each then had the opportunity to teach. They could teach by words, examples, sometimes by a friendly smile. Everyone was a student and everyone was a teacher to another. And quite often a newer member could have something to teach those who’ve been around!

When the time came for Buddha to die he did not appoint a successor. He told the Sangha, “You have the Dharma already. If you have the Dharma then you have me. You don’t need anything more. Take refuge in yourself!” By this Buddha made all of us in the Sangha equal, not one as superior to another. All serve, all teach. Diversity was the reality that the Sangha had to express. The view that the Dharma was for all became the Mahayana, the Vehicle that could carry everyone. Even then, many teachers began to fossilize the teachings and many found that alliances with governments could ease life for the Sangha.

In time this led Buddhism to become subsumed into service to the government in places like Japan. The Sangha would take care of the afterlife of the Emperor and the aristocracy. Buddhism became a death-oriented religion. It was given such exalted status that it separated itself from the common people. This lasted for centuries. Then...along came Honen, and his student, Shinran.

Honen was highly respected among the Buddhist monks of Japan. He heard of a movement in China called Pure Land, that taught that simply recollecting the Buddha name as an act of refuge was enough. He preached this and the religious landscape of Japan was transformed. Common people, the poor, criminals, and...women, could embrace an easy path and attain understanding and peace. A young monk, Shinran, heard and was electrified. Troubles ensued from religious leaders who valued wealth and power. Honen and Shinran were defrocked and sent into exile. It was in exile that Shinran found his voice and he began to preach and teach to the outcasts. Buddhism became a religion of life for them. The Pure Land movement exploded. In time it became a force to be reckoned with. Those who followed Shinran, who said he had no disciples, carried the light forward.

But in time, that light became fossilized too. Our Jodo Shinshu became a religion about Shinran, and not the religion that Shinran discovered, a Buddhism that was foundationally egalitarian and democratic. We became instead the religion of the status quo.

Then at the start of the Meiji period, Japan was forced open to the world stage. The shock of Western learning needed to be met. A young priest and scholar, Manshi Kiyozawa, saw that reform was needed in our tradition and particularly in its educational system. For his troubles, like Shinran, he was kicked out. He lived a humble life, trying to rethink his way. He rediscovered the great masterpiece of Shinran’s thought, *The Tannisho*, brought it out of hiding and placed it center stage. He gathered a group of other ministers, such as Soga Ryojin, Kaneko Daiei, Yasuda Rijin, who embrace Kiyozawa and built further his program of reform and restoring Higashi into the religion that Shinran discovered. One other student must be mentioned, Haya Akegarasu. Like Kiyozawa, most of these students were kicked out, only to be restored, like Kiyozawa, when Higashi saw that their way was desperately needed! Akegarasu is particularly important to us because he became the teacher of our temple’s founder, Rev. Kubose, and he was decisive too for our Rev. Saito.

We are all part of a line of teachers who have enriched our Buddhism. They have given us a light to inspire us and to place our feet firmly on our path. We must remember that we too, in carrying forward this light, are teachers to this great community of Chicago, to this country, and world. This is foundational to our mission. A mission to uphold proudly and with strength! We are teachers and students to each other! You are invited to share in this mission with us!

Are you interested in a discussion group about Buddhism and Jodo Shinshu?

We have an invitation to meet with West Covina Buddhist Temple's group on Thursdays, 10 am (PDT) / Noon (Chicago). We meet via Zoom. It goes for about an hour. It is hosted by Rev. Miyoshi, and by myself every so often! An interesting article is shared along with the Zoom invitation each week. If you would like to give this a try then please email me at fbrenion@gmail.com and I will send out the invite. Thank you! – Rev. Fred

Also!

If you are interested in talking with me, via email, Facetime, Zoom, etc. on your questions, I am here for you! Feel free to email me at fbrenion@gmail.com! Remember, I am two hours behind you! – Rev. Fred

Obon Service – Sunday, August 11 at 11 am

At Obon time, we honor our loved ones and each year we list those who passed away since the previous year's Obon.

These are the names that will be displayed as Hatsubon ("First Obon"):

08/05/2023 Rodney Maruyama
08/10/2023 Harold Nakaoka
08/12/2023 Joyce Inouye
09/14/2023 Sadao Harano
09/22/2023 Tomiko Inouye
10/10/2023 Tomoko "Tommi" Tomiyama
10/18/2023 Yasushi Okada
11/04/2023 Yoshiko Sugano
11/12/2023 Yusuke Arakaki

11/19/2023 Ai Hashinoguchi
12/05/2023 Mitsu Uchimoto
12/07/2023 Shizuko Akitomo
12/25/2023 May Hirai
02/08/2024 Harriet Itano
02/24/2024 Haru Ito
05/05/2024 Donna Ogura
05/05/2024 Georgia Shimizu
05/23/2024 Sadae Kasamoto



Scheduled Activities – Subject to Change

Weekly services – Sundays 11 am - in-person, Facebook Live

Qigong (Chinese exercise) – Saturdays 10 am

Sunday Meditation - 9:30 - On break for summer

Thursday Meditation - 7:15 pm – On break for summer

Asoka Society (social gathering) – 3rd Saturday 1pm – August 17

Obon Odori practice – 7 pm – 8/1, 8/6, 8/8

The above activities are open to the public and free (donations appreciated).

If you are interested in the two activities below, please leave your contact information and the group will set up an appointment for you to visit them.

Iaido (martial art) – Mondays 7:00 pm

Kokyo Taiko (drums) – Friday evenings, Sunday afternoons



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1151 W Leland Ave
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AUGUST 2024 Calendar

Events may be canceled or moved:

Check www.facebook.com/budtempchi
for the most up-to-date changes.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2 Taiko* 7pm	3 Qigong 10 am
4 11am Monthly Memorial	5 laido* 7:00pm	6	7	8	9 Taiko* 7pm	10 Obon Odori 7:15 pm Qigogn 10 am
11 11am Obon Service	12 laido* 7:00pm	13	14	15	16 Taiko* 7pm	17 Qigong 10 am Asoka 1 pm
18 11am Regular service	19 laido* 7:00pm	20	21	22	23 Taiko* 7pm	24 Qigong 10 am
25 11am Akegarasu memorial :	26 laido* 7:00pm	27	28	29	30	31 Qigong 10 am

*laido and Taiko require appointments made in advance