



The Buddhist Temple of Chicago

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In Obon we live and dance our Buddhist life

Rev. Fred Brenion

As you read this, our Obon festival will be arriving. I hope you can attend. It is our chance to loosen up and show the world what we are about. It will be fun. The day after the festival, we will turn our attention to what this is all directed towards, our Obon and Hatsubon Service on August 10th. We come together then to consider, within our hearts and minds, our loved ones, friends, ancestors, who have passed on but who have added so much to who and how we are. Especially those who have passed in the past year since last Obon. We have an immense debt of gratitude. Though that debt is infinite, our gratitude can be infinite as well.

Let's explore the story of Obon. It is a uniquely Buddhist story. It says much about us, how we look at ourselves, each other, and how we live our lives. In the story the monk, Mogallana, had the ability to see into other spiritual realms. He saw his late mother suffering greatly in a hell world, known as Ullambana where she is hanging upside-down. Her suffering was tremendous. Mogallana wanted to ease his mother's pain but couldn't. In tears, he went to Buddha and Buddha did what Buddhas always do. He used a skillful means to help Mogallana look deeper into what reality really is. He told Mogallana that on his own he couldn't help his mother, but, if he was to prepare a great feast for the Sangha, if he asked everyone in the Sangha to help him, then something might be able to be done. So Mogallana prepares a feast. He makes the meals. He arranges the entertainment. As he does so he begins to sing and dance around the tables. Everyone joins him and the party is a success. Afterwards, Mogallana now sees his mother is transformed. She is happy. She is right-side up. He dances now in greater joy. This is the skillful means that brings this about: knowing the great debt he owed his mother in raising him. He acted as his mother had taught him by being a generous and open person. In so doing he sees his mother in a truer and deeper light. In many ways during the festival we enact aspects of the story of Mogallana. During the festival we all are in the service of each other, and it is in such service that we grow into the light that is the reality we know as Buddhists. It is a light that guides our footsteps throughout the dance we know as life.

What this simply means is that we are all connected to our past, to all the past. Everything has its play within our lives, and we are one with all. Nothing is lost. All is gained in us and us in all. Even in suffering, Mogallana's mother is ever embraced by the love of her son: an embrace that will lift and transform her as he is transformed by living what she has given him.

For in the embrace of all that was is also the embrace of all that now is. Mogallana, in service to the Sangha, lived out all that his mother gave him. In so doing he was able to reach out and touch everyone. It could not be otherwise. In his embrace, his acceptance of her, even as she is, his embrace of service to the Sangha, even as we are, is that Other Shore, in which light he sees his mother truly, as the beautiful being she will always be to him. No wonder he danced in joy. Within the past, and in the present, Mogallana dances towards the future, and we can too. I hope you all will dance this Obon festival!

This is the lesson of Obon. It is the story of our Buddhist life, and why it speaks deeply to us all. As we approach the Obon Service I hope that each of us will carry the past into the present at our Service, and walk out open towards all that may come, seeing all within the true light of the Pure Land. Through Obon we live, we dance our Buddhism, our religion of relationships.

An Exercise in Sangha
Bill Bohlman, Temple President

Another Natsu Matsuri has come and gone, and once again it has shown the strength of sangha. Temple members and friends joined together to do the work that led to a successful festival.

The indoor layout for the festival was designed by Gary Nakai, who is also the person who moved the walls and set up all the tables and chairs. At the end of the festival, Gary directed all the people who helped break everything down and put it away.

The kitchen, and all the food ordering, was led by Gwen Kato. The kitchen volunteers spent hours on Saturday preparing the ingredients for Sunday under the direction of chef Yasuo Mizuuchi. On Sunday, they arrived early and began preparing the inari. Throughout the day, they kept a steady flow of food going out to the customers. The inari, udon and teriyaki chicken got rave reviews.

The chicken crew, Team Teriyaki, cooked over 550 chicken halves. On Saturday, the chickens were prepped and put in our secret recipe teriyaki sauce. They assembled the barbeque pit and set up the covering tent. Sunday morning early, they arrived and started the process of cooking the chickens. There were many helpers but I want to name a few. Pete Izui once again contacted the crew to start things rolling. Neil Kanemoto got all the ingredients for the marinade. Bob Kumaki, Gary Shimomura, the Kato family and many others helped with the cooking.

Jane Morishige arranged for a cultural display of Japanese dolls. Alice Murata led the silent auction and the general item sale.

Our performers this year were Kokyo Taiko, BTC Iaido and a kyudo demonstration by Yasuo Ito. We are hoping to get more performers for future festivals

The food ticket distribution and sales were handled by Stan Oda and the Fujiura family.

I know I have left many individuals out, but my deep appreciation goes out to everyone who helped, or just attended the festival. To see the temple filled with people enjoying themselves shows the strength of our sangha. My hope is that many of you will come more often, not just for the festival. The next event in Obon Odori on Saturday, August 9 at 7:00 PM. If you can, come and dance with the sangha.

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THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU
NATSU MATSURI JULY 13, 2025
SILENT AUCTION AND CRAFTS SALES
By Alice Murata

Thanks to the many people who helped make the Natsu Matsuri Silent Auction and Crafts sales so successful. We are greatly indebted to volunteers Bill Bohlman, Drea Gallaga, Joann Harano, Jane Morishige, Gary Nakai, and Arlene Nozawa.

Our generous donors to the Silent Auction and Craft items included,

Asoka Society, Nancey Epperson, Joann Harano, Gwen and Alan Kato, Taka and Richard Kawashima, Jane Morishige, Alice Murata, Frances Paltwaldt and Jill Russell.

Special this year were the donated and lent Kimekomi dolls (made by Hide Kikuchi) from James Kikuchi and Mary Getty, Alice Murata, Arlene Nozawa, and Joann Tohei, We are grateful to their Kimekomi sensi, Fujiko Asa for the many years she devoted teaching this beautiful Japanese craft before she retired in Japan.

Many apologies to the donors who generously left beautiful items without their names attached. We are very thankful to you. Do let us know your names.

And we are especially grateful to the many people who purchased these beautiful, precious items. We hope the items give you joy and pleasure.

A VERY SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

It is with sadness on my part to announce to you all that our dear friend and supporter of our temple,

Bishop and Rinban Noriaki Ito

will be retiring after 50 years of service to our North American District.

He was instrumental in my own training and guided my ordination,
and to take on the duties of serving as your Supervisory Minister.

He was a friend and supporter of our past ministers.

I am grateful for all that he taught and encouraged me in.

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There will be a service and luncheon occurring on Sunday, September 28th in Los Angeles.

I will be attending and representing our Buddhist Temple of Chicago there.

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This service will also be the Service of Accession for our new Bishop and Rinban,

Bishop and Rinban Kenjun Katawata!

He has been previously Bishop and Rinban of our Hawaii District
and was also the head minister of the West Covina Buddhist Temple.

He was my teacher into our Dharma and encouraged me to pursue the ministry.

His love of our teachings continues to inspire and guide me!

Rev. Frederick Brenion

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Scheduled Activities – subject to change

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

Qigong (Chinese exercise) – Tuesdays 10:30 am

Sunday Meditation - on vacation until September

Thursday Meditation – on vacation until September.

Asoka Society (social gathering) – 1 pm August 16

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

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

Iaido (martial art) – Mondays, 7 pm

Kokyo Taiko (drums) – Friday evenings, Sunday afternoons

* * *

Obon Service – Sunday, August 10 at 11am

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"):

08/11/2024 George Sasamoto	04/22/2025 Ruby Izui
11/09/2024 Seiji Frank Miyake	05/30/2025 Chihiro Joe Sameshima
12/08/2024 Shizuko Honda	06/07/2025 Yoneo Shimomura
01/11/2025 Masako Terada	06/22/2025 Carol Ann Miyake
02/07/2025 Allison Sasamoto	07/04/2025 Pat Ouchi
03/24/2025 Midori Sugimoto	



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

*laido and Taiko require appointments made in advance