



The
Buddhist
Temple
of
Chicago

October
2025

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Aloha! Goodbye and Hello as One
Rev. Frederick Brenion

When you receive this bulletin, a great change will have happened in the Higashi Honganji North American district that we are associated with. A new administrator (Bishop) and spiritual leader (Rinban) will have taken charge. His name is Kenjun Kawawata. He was my very first Dharma teacher. I wandered into his temple in West Covina, California and he welcomed and encouraged me every step of the way. Sometimes he had to give me some strong direction too! I was always the better for that. When interest was taken for me to enter into the ministry, he supported me at every step and turn. But really, it was his joy and love with which he spoke of the Dharma that really gave me the nurturing to grow and walk this path.

At the same time, our then current Bishop and Rinban, Noriaki Ito, stepped in to also guide my path. I owe him great gratitude for bringing my ministerial training to completion. He went with me to Kyoto, along with Rev. Peter Hata who was also a candidate for ordination, to help us along, at each step. And then it was done! I never thought years before that such a thing would happen. Life surprises us, and I am so glad.

About two years ago now he asked me if I would step-in and assist all of you at the Buddhist Temple of Chicago. This was more out of necessity as the minister who was asked to assist you, Rev. Paul Imahara, developed stage four cancer and passed away so quickly. He was a very good man, gentle of spirit, and he was my friend. He was the first to tell me I should seek ordination. As I was now the only one available for the task, here I am. I count myself fortunate to be here with you and to work towards the day when you do have a proper residential minister. That day is coming.

Now Bishop and Rinban Ito is retiring after fifty years of being a minister. That is amazing really! I just celebrated fifty years of marriage, so I know this is a great accomplishment. His legacy is all the temples he has led and nurtured. He has always been supportive of BTC. He has always advised me to do whatever will help build and encourage you all, even if it is different from traditional norms. I hope all of you will join me in wishing Bishop Ito great joy and happiness in his retirement and that he continues in a freer way to be a spiritual guide and exemplar of living the Buddhist and Jodo Shinshu way of life.

And now we welcome our new Bishop and Rinban Kenjun Kawawata. After serving many years in our district, at our Betsuin and later the West Covina Buddhist Temple, he had been made Bishop and Rinban of our Hawaii District, headquartered in Honolulu, Hawaii, and now he is coming back to the Mainland to be with all of us. Join with me in wishing him and his family joy in their return!

You may not know this but our own past minister, Rev. Saito, was a student of Rev. Akegarasu and the other lights of the school of Kiyozawa. Rev. Saito was a teacher of both Revs. Ito and Kawawata, and became their Bishop and Rinban while in California. Rev. Saito was greatly loved by them as by all at BTC. So, we share much in common with Revs. Ito and Kawawata, and they with us. Let us continue to walk together in this unity of our great spiritual tradition whether we say hello or goodbye. That is why Aloha, from Hawaii, is such a lovely word. It takes hello and goodbye and brings a deeper unity between both.

**A Letter of Appreciation to our retiring Bishop and Rinban
Presented 28 September 2025**

September 20, 2025

To: Reverend Noriaki Ito, Bishop
Higashi Honganji North American District

Dear Bishop Ito:

We, the Sangha of BTC wish to recognize the personal milestones of your achievements on the occasion of your retirement, by expressing our appreciation of your decades of service on behalf of our temple.

Even though we remain an administratively independent temple, we nevertheless recall that since your very first visit to our Sunday service long ago how you respected BTC, its ministers and sangha. Your abundant support of BTC as an affiliate temple in North America, your leadership as Bishop proved crucial in support of BTC's needs: the professional growth of our ministers and opportunities for our Sangha. You have personally extended opportunities for our Sangha to partake in Dobo and Hoshidan events in Kyoto and have generously assisted with our ministerial matters, including our current search for our next resident minister.

Perhaps your copious service in transmitting the Dharma is paramount; your unmatched skill for real-time interpreting presentations in Japanese for the benefit of English speakers. We received so much out of these presentations of the Dharma because of you. We offer you our endless gratitude for your leadership and service, and our best wishes to you, Janet and family as you embark on the new and exciting adventures that await you!

Sincerely in Gassho,

THE BUDDHIST TEMPLE OF CHICAGO

**Happy Birthday to Us
Bill Bohlman, Temple President**

Another year, another anniversary. As we mark our eighty-first anniversary, we look back with gratitude for all the sacrifices of those who came before and look forward with anticipation for things to come.

In 1944, Rev. Gyomay Kubose and a group of dedicated sangha members founded what was then called the Chicago Buddhist Church on the Southside. Times were difficult; the war was still raging and discrimination was rampant. Many of the sangha had recently come to Chicago from the internment camps and were starting from virtually nothing. However, regardless of their personal hardships they devoted time and resources to their new temple. The temple was more than a place to hear the Dharma; it was a place where the Dharma came alive. The temple was a cultural and social touchpoint of their lives. It is because of these early dedicated, sangha members that we have the temple we have today.

What is the future of BTC? Who will be the dedicated sangha members in the years to come? Right now, we are financially stable. However, with the additional expenses we will incur with a new resident minister our reserves may begin to dwindle. The question of how to proceed with the old residence building is due to be resolved this year. These are financial issues, but more important is the question of sangha involvement.

I have been coming to BTC for thirty-five years. During this time, I have seen many changes; most notably the makeup of those who attend Sunday service on a regular basis. Every year, the number of long-time family members in attendance seems to decline. Even on Shotsuki Hoyo Sundays there are only a few members there to honor their loved ones. We are hoping to have a new resident minister sometime in 2026. Will this new minister be the answer to the declining Sunday attendance, or will they find a disinterested sangha? For the last two years since Rev. Patti's retirement, Rev. Fred and a small group of dedicated members have made sure that we have service every Sunday. Who will be there to support the new minister in the years to come?

As we mark another year, we are grateful for the continued financial support of the members and friends. But a temple needs more than money, it needs an involved sangha. Let's all work to build on the strong foundation we have been given.



Scheduled Activities – subject to change

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

Qigong (Chinese exercise) – Tuesdays 10:30 am

Sunday Meditation - 9 am

Thursday Meditation – 7:15 pm

Asoka Society (social gathering) – 1 pm October 18

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

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Deepest Sympathies
To The Family and Friends of
Barbara Fukuya – September 4



The Buddhist Temple of Chicago

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

October 2025 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 Meditation 7:15 pm	3 Taiko 7 pm	4
5 11 am Monthly Memorial service Meditation 9 am	6 Iaido* 7 pm	7 Qigong 10:30 am	8	9 Meditation 7:15 pm	10 Taiko* 7 pm	11
12 11 am Temple Anniversary Meditation 9 am	13 Iaido* 7 pm	14 Qigong 10:30 am	15	16 Meditation 7:15 pm	17 Taiko* 7 pm	18 Asoka 1 pm
19 11 am Regular service Meditation 9:00 am	20 Iaido* 7 pm	21 Qigong 10:30 am	22	23 Meditation 7:15 pm	24 Taiko* 7 pm	25
26 11 am Regular service Meditation 9 am	27 Iaido* 7 pm	28 Qigong 10:30 am	29	30 Meditation 7:15 pm	31 Taiko 7 pm	