

Rev. Todd, Connie ... till we meet again

What it means to be a Shinshu follower

The following is from a Dharma message that was shared on Sept. 7, 2025.

By Rev. Todd Tsuchiya

This is the monthly memorial service for the month of September. It is an opportunity to remember, with gratitude, those family members and friends who have gone before us. In the Jodo Shinshu tradition, the memorial service is not for the benefit of the deceased, it is for us, to come together to hear the Dharma and to give a spiritual offering through the chanting of sutras, the singing of songs, the recitation of readings and being together as a sangha. It is a time to reflect upon our lives and express appreciation and gratitude for the many benefits we have received from those who passed away and how we are continually being influenced by them.

In Japanese, these monthly services are called "Shotsuki Hoyo" which means joyous month. It's joyous because through this act of attending the Shotsuki Service and remembering our family members and friends, we can say that it is the person who passed away that has called us together and giving us the opportunity to listen to the teachings of the Buddha. It is

*see **shinshu**, page 4*



"Now it's time to say goodbye, till we meet again."

By Elaine Matsushita

From the opening guided meditation to the presentation of a thank-you gift made by the Sangha to the gatha and a pair of musical offerings, the Sunday Service on Sept. 7 filled the hondo with a bounty of love and gratitude. And rightly so, as it was the final service led by Rev. Todd Tsuchiya as MBT's resident minister.

It was bittersweet to bid adieu to Rev. Todd and his wife Connie, who have brought so much light and joy along with lessons and teachings to MBT. But the Sangha did its best to focus on the sweet.

Connie helped as she opened the service with a "breathing love and gratitude" meditation by a teacher named Will Pye (see page 6). The hondo was still, yet brimming with the energy of those two feelings.

*see **love**, page 7*



Expressing gratitude to Tsuchiyas, Sangha and Ginza volunteers

By Joy Zavala

About 140 people filled the Social Hall on Sunday, Sept. 7 after the Memorial Service for a delicious brunch to thank Rev. Todd and Connie Tsuchiya, our Sangha members, and our Ginza Holiday Festival volunteers.

MBT has had the immense good fortune of having Rev. Todd as our resident minister for the past

*see **brunch**, page 10*

happenings

By Elaine Matsushita

Join JACL Chicago and Nikkei Uprising to learn how you can take action against immigration detention through Rapid Response Networks. Get informed, get involved, and help protect immigrant communities. All are invited to attend.

The Detention Then and Now: What's Happening and What You Can Do

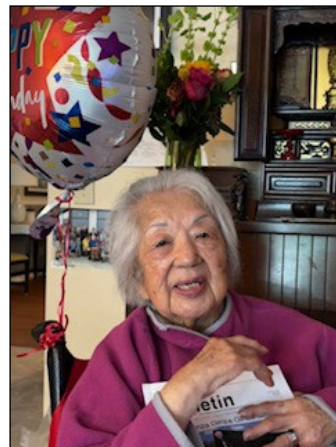
About It workshop will be held from 3–5 pm Sunday, Oct. 5 at Christ Church of Chicago, 6047 N. Rockwell St., Chicago.

While registration is strongly suggested, it is not required to participate in the event. To register, click [here](#).

Ireicho coming to town

The Ireicho ("The Book of Names")—a book monument with the names of the individuals of Japanese ancestry incarcerated during World War II—began its national tour on the Day of Remembrance in Washington, D.C., and will be in Chicago Nov. 6 and 7 at Midwest Buddhist Temple, 435 W. Menomonee St., and Nov. 8 and 9 at the Japanese American Service Committee, 5700 N. Lincoln Ave.

Named after the Japanese term for "consoling the spirits," the Ireicho monument honors those who have gone before us as well as those who carry on the memories and legacies of forced removal, unjust incarceration, and family separation.



Top: Kristi Chikaraishi Hseih joins the Twin Cities JACL Community Kai cohort and Emily Harada.

Bottom: Near-twins Asako Nishimura and Fumi Matsushita celebrated their 98th birthdays 12 days apart.

JASC will host the Chicago tour dates in partnership with JACL Chicago, Chicago Japanese American Historical Society, and Japanese Mutual Aid Society of Chicago.

Every visitor to the monument is invited to contribute to the creation of the monument by marking one or more names in the Ireichō with a blue hanko stamp.

The closing event for the

Chicago stop will be held on Nov. 9 at the JASC and the national tour will continue through 2026.

Visit Ireicho's [website](#) for more information.

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Please send articles and photographs to: **Midwest Buddhist Temple, 435 W. Menomonee St., Chicago, IL 60614** or bulletin@mbtchicago.org

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Don't forget to visit our website, mbtchicago.org, for more information about Shin Buddhism and the Midwest Buddhist Temple.



Photo illustration from themighty.com

Think, speak, act in the eternal now

The following is from a Dharma message that was shared on Aug. 21, 2025.

own enlightenment and for the enlightenment of all sentient beings.'

Namu Amida Butsu

By Joy Zavala

Good morning. I would like to open with a saying that is in our service book but was originally from "The Heart of the Buddha-Dharma" by Rev. Kenryu Tsuji. It is titled "Eternal Now." Please join me in Gassho.

'In the beginningless, endless flow of time, each life is a mere ripple, existing only for an instantaneous moment and disappearing forever.

But each life is a unique experience with beauty and truth, all of its own with no identical counterpart in history and none absolutely the same in the future.

Your life, my life—is attuned to the rhythm of the cosmos and to the heartbeat of reality.

Each life exists in the Eternal Now. Each idea that is thought, each word that is spoken, each action that is taken, changes the whole pattern of the universe, for the universe is interdependent.

Think, speak and act, then, always in the eternal now with compassion and understanding for your

Some of you may have heard of the Blue Zones. These are the five geographic areas in the world with the healthiest, longest-living populations. They are: Okinawa (Japan), Ikaria (Greece), Loma Linda (USA), Sardinia (Italy), and Nicoya (Costa Rica).

In Okinawa, there are over 24 people over the age of 100 for every 100,000 inhabitants.

Ikigai is a Japanese concept that means life's worth and the happiness of always being busy. There are some common characteristics shared by these longest-living people.

Activity is one of these characteristics. Activity, which is not exercise, but movement—gardening, kneading bread, using hand-operated tools, walking, yoga, tai chi and qigong are examples.

Radio Taiso consists of warmup calisthenics performed to music from a television station or internet video demonstrating the steps. This is

see now, page 12

voices from our past

A father sees life in a little pebble

This is an essay that was published in the April 1972 Bulletin. The late Tom Arima, a Nisei and founding member of MBT, was married to Kay Arima and was the father of MBT board member Steve Arima, and Alan and Craig Arima. Thanks to Victor Miyata for sharing this unearthed Bulletin.

By Tom Arima
(circa 1950)

My father fingered the colorful little stone tenderly, as if in communion with its world. It was just a small stone, not much larger than a quarter, and other than the marked depression in its



center, it was not so different from any other stone.

I had seen it often in my father's hand. Watching him now as the last strokes of the setting sun painted his timeworn face in a cinemascope of colors, I asked him why he cherished this particular piece of stone.

For a moment it seemed as if he had not heard, so engrossed was he in his thoughts. Then he turned and looked at me. "It does seem odd doesn't it? To cherish such a stone as this. It really has no value, at least not in terms of diamonds and rubies ... and as far as beauty is concerned, there are probably thousands of other stones which easily surpasses this in beauty, and yet, even with all of these considered, perhaps, there are sufficient reasons to place one's value here ... for after all, what is the criteria of value, if not the essence of individual reason."

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shinshu

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their gift to us.

I would like to pose a question to all of you. What impact does MBT have on society and the world?

I would like to start with a passage from the Larger Sutra which is one of the foundational sutras identified by Shinran Shonin for our tradition. This is a statement made by the Buddha telling Maitreya, who is considered to be the next Buddha, about the way of the world. Please join me in gassho,

"People in the world—parents and children, brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, other family members, or paternal and maternal relatives—should truly respect and love each other, refraining from hatred and envy. They should share things with others, refraining from greed and miserliness. They should always be friendly in speech and expression, refraining from quarrel and dispute."

Namo Amida Butsu

I would like to talk about the theme that the Dharma School focused on recently and how it relates to our temple. Dharma School focused on the first paramita of Dana—meaning selfless giving.

When we think about giving, we most often think of giving something of monetary value. We are encouraged to give to many causes in our lives, including financial support to the temple—which is important!

We are encouraged to give to those who are less fortunate or going through difficult times in their lives. It is most often monetary gifts, but Dana can be other things that have value that are not material things.

What is important about Dana is that it is giving without expecting anything in return. How often do we get perturbed when a gift we give is not acknowledged by a thank you note? Or if we give something but it is not received as enthusiastically as we had hoped? That's our human ego coming through.

Dana is often described as having three

aspects.

1. The gift of material goods: which means to share of one's wealth and property for the benefit of the community and those in need.

2. The gift of freedom from fear. This means to share the courage of true wisdom, so that the difficulties of life can be met with a calm and peaceful heart. There is a great amount of fear that grips our society. Our fear is being exploited. We are told to be fearful. We are being sold fear like aging and then being sold skin cream, fear of illness, then sold medicines, politicians tell us to fear immigrants sending in ICE agents.

Religions aren't always better. We are told that we need to believe in their beliefs or we will suffer a bad fate. The selling of *omamori* is selling fear.

Omamori are amulets to ward off bad luck. Jodo Shinshu temples don't do this.

Jodo Shinshu is not based on fear. Shinran Shonin reconceived the nature of spiritual reality based on his deep awareness of Amida Buddha, which surrounds our lives.

An important characteristic resulting from this awareness was liberation from religious superstition, fear of retribution and religious exploitation. *Shinjin*, the goal of a Shin Buddhist, is entrusting, it is awakening. It is the Buddha's mind coming to us. Shinran never used fear to motivate religious adherence. We are never told to fear Amida. Amida is not a diety or should be feared.

3. The gift of Dharma (*hō-se* centered dharma/offerings) means to share one's appreciation of the Buddha's teachings.

Dharma School is an example of the practice of *Hō-se*-centered Dana—meaning the generosity of spreading the dharma.

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I would like to focus on what we as a temple are doing. These things are all really a combination of all three types of Dana that I just explained.

The temple's Outreach Program provides sandwiches to Sarah's Circle, which provides interim housing in Chicago's Uptown neighborhood. Sarah's Circle provides many services—working with

the women to help them find permanent housing, supporting the most vulnerable women end their homelessness.

These meals are also provided for a North Side housing for men, Ewing Annex Men's Hotel, and a tent city.

I'm sure you are all familiar with this project organized very skillfully by Joy and Jesse Zavala and their many volunteers.

Homelessness, or maybe a better term to use is "those who are unhoused," is more pervasive than we may realize. It is not easy to solve homelessness or it would have been solved long ago. As Buddhism says, everything has causes and conditions, not just one cause and condition. Being unhoused also has many causes and conditions. Therefore, the solutions must not be just one.

When we think about those who are unhoused, those trying to help talk about short-term, middle-term and long-term solutions.

One of the short-term solutions is serving food for today and providing a place to sleep for tonight. The Outreach program is doing their best to help address this short-term need.

Joy and MBT were also able to provide a pathway for Sarah's Circle to receive a grant from the Buddhist Churches of America's Social Welfare Committee to fund some equipment purchases for their building.

Providing food and places to sleep for the unhoused is important and necessary. It is amazing to see the work that organizations like Sarah's Circle does, and I am glad that MBT supports them.

It is impossible for one person or one organization to provide all the support needed. Shinran Shonin is quoted in the Tannisho about our human limitations of compassion. He says "it is extremely difficult, however, to accomplish the saving of others just as one wishes."

Yet, everyone has something they can do. Although we have our limited ability, that

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## shinshu

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doesn't mean we do nothing. When we realize our limited ability, it is not about being overwhelmed, but we need to think about what we can do and what we should do.

Even small acts of kindness make a difference. This can include sharing the Dharma.

Our founder, Shinran Shonin, said in one of his letters to his followers, "May there be peace in the world, and may the Buddha's teaching spread." Spreading the Buddha's teaching can bring peace to the world and help people to live a peaceful life. This world becomes peaceful if everyone can share this view and the way of thinking that Buddha Dharma teaches. As a temple, we should make the effort.

You don't have to be Buddhist to live with the understanding it is our self-centered thinking that causes so much difficulty in the world.

In fact, there are many non-Buddhists who volunteer their time helping causes at the temple like the sandwich-making project and Ginza.

Last year was my first experience interacting with the Dharma School students here at MBT. I enjoyed talking to them about the Buddhist teachings as it is experienced in their everyday life. If we only learn facts and dates, although important foundational and historical information, it may not fully resonate.

Practical Buddhism is understanding how the teachings apply to our lives. It should not be compartmentalized to just Sundays.

Part of the education of Dharma School students was in their growth through their participation. Speaking and performing in public is an anxiety producing event for most of us, including me. But they were able to do what they could to bring the Dharma to all of us.

Dharma School is not just meant to influence the students. Through their effort, they allowed all of us to encounter the teachings of Shinran Shonin. This is significant. They have been important

teachers for us all. Dharma School is the future of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism.

In our first reading this morning led by Grady Hutt, we learned about the gifts that do not require any possessions yet give great results. These are things each of us can do on a regular basis that can have great impact. These are the small things that can

For me—and likely for all of you, it is about the people. This connection—a joy and gratitude, a devotion, a respect for the tradition and a sense of humility—we find through meeting people. It becomes a part of our life.

Jodo Shinshu is a part of the lives of the people we meet at the temple, the

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*Our founder, Shinran Shonin, said in one of his letters to his followers, "May there be peace in the world, and may the Buddha's teaching spread." Spreading the Buddha's teaching can bring peace to the world and help people to live a peaceful life. This world becomes peaceful if everyone can share this view and the way of thinking that Buddha Dharma teaches. As a temple, we should make the effort.*

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make a big difference in the lives of others.

You can all think of a time you were you taken aback by the kindness of others, however small the act may seem. If we can all act with kindness, this can lead to greater compassion in the world.

MBT is made up of a dynamic mix of people that come from all walks of life and interact with each other.

This temple has a physical structure with walls. These walls give form and meaning to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. It is where we celebrate the joys in our lives and also a place of sadness where so many of our family members are remembered in their funeral and memorial services.

When we look at Amida Buddha in the najjin and think about the events we participate in, this form gives us a tangible understanding of Amida Buddha's compassionate vow. A place for us to experience Namo Amida Butsu.

Each of you has a story of how you have encountered Shinran's teachings and what brought you to the temple.

Nembutsu is alive in them. We value this connection.

We may come to the temple to be with our friends, dance at Obon, help at Mochi Tsuki or Ginza Holiday, even argue with each other in the kitchen on how things should go. For me, I come to harass David Toguri!

These are all forms of Jodo Shinshu practice—for us to see and understand our true selves.

Rennyo Shonin, the 8th abbot of our tradition, is quoted as saying: "There is no loss in coming in contact with fellow Buddhists. An entertaining word or two, playfully passed on, is from the mind-depths of the Buddhadharma, itself; and there is much to be gained!"

What connects us with our true lives is understanding we are intertwined with all other lives. However, it is also limiting to think of our involvement as a Shin Buddhist to just within the temple walls. We must not forget is that Amida, as infinite light and life, represents all lives.

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## shinshu

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As many of you participate in the various temple community service projects, we are aware that being part of the community, being part of the Sangha, is broad and includes people we may not know.

Many people are leery about labels. A PEW study showed that people often don't want to be considered a part of a religious institution. In fact, statistically the greatest growing religious group is categorized as "none."

Labelling ourselves as affiliated with a religious group for some carries a stigma that is bothersome. For some like me, it is something I am proud of. Hopefully for all of you, it is also something you are also proud of.

These studies tell us that many may not feel compelled to come to the temple on a weekly basis to participate in ritual and to hear the Dharma but will participate in activities that align with their values. These can be societal causes, they can be family-focused traditions—things like Ginza and Obon.

But really on a fundamental level, these are all still opportunities to hear the Dharma. They are all truly lived experiences and Jodo Shinshu



values. Sometimes overthinking and placing labels can get in the way.

We are introduced to the Dharma through our interactions with others at the temple. It is through our relationships, by just experiencing our lives together, where we share the Dharma with others. We are side-by-side with others as a collective us. I believe this is

what it means to be a Shinshu follower.

I would like to close by re-reading the passage from the Larger Sutra: "People in the world—parents and children, brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, other family members, or paternal and maternal relatives—should truly respect and love each other, refraining from hatred and envy.

They should share things with others, refraining from greed and miserliness. They should always be friendly in speech and expression, refraining from quarrel and dispute."

*Namo Amida Butsu*

This is my last Dharma talk at MBT as the resident minister. I want to thank [Board of Trustees President] Jason Matsumoto, Carl Ichikawa and the board for all of their support. Also Taryn Hutt, our office manager and her husband Grady, who both have been a joy to work with. I want to thank Rev. Ron and Elaine Miyamura for all their support and covering for me during my medical leave and beyond.

I have known Rev. Ron since I was a young child of 12 years old. He also married Connie and me almost 36 years ago.

And lastly, but most importantly, I want to thank all of you, the MBT Sangha, for being a part of our lives.

We will be moving back to Minneapolis in two weeks. Connie and I have come to understand that the temple is an important place for us. It is an emotional time for both Connie and me. I am sure I will be back sharing Dharma messages in person and on Zoom and for various events at MBT.

We will miss you all. Thank you again.

## Breathing love and gratitude meditation

*This is guided meditation that was led by Connie Tsuchiya at the Sunday Service on Sept. 7, 2025.*

**G**ood morning. I would like to offer a meditation inspired by a teacher named Will Pye ... on breathing love and gratitude.

Take a moment to notice what is around you without engaging your mind. Simply see. Gently blink eyes shut and notice whatever there is to notice ... sensations, emotions, aches or pains in the body, an awareness that there is the experience of having a body. Gently welcome everything that you are noticing. No need to get involved in any busy thoughts. Notice more subtle feelings, emotions. Simply notice.

Notice that breathing is happening. In the

diaphragm or rise and fall of the chest, or the sound of breath happening. There is nothing at any point that should not be happening. In and out, rise and fall of breath. Allow attention to come to the heart center at the center of your chest.

Notice sensations in the heart center. Bring the breath to the energetic heart space. In and out.

On the next In breath, breathe in LOVE. You might breathe in the feeling, or imagine white light as love. Or silently say the word LOVE in your mind as you inhale. Allow Love to be breathed in to the heart center. Enjoy the experience of receiving Love. If any aches or pains in the heart come into the space ... we welcome this into awareness and we breathe love into the pain.

As you continue to enjoy breathing

in Love, on the next OUT breath, find gratitude. See it as the white light of Love being breathed out as gratitude. Maybe the words "thank you" accompany the out breath.

Breathing in Love, breathing out Thank You. Breathing in Love, breathing out Gratitude.

It may be that the next in breath is just feeling love, and on the next out breath, feeling appreciation.

Feeling gratitude for this breath, this moment, this body. Breathing in Love, Breathing out Gratitude.

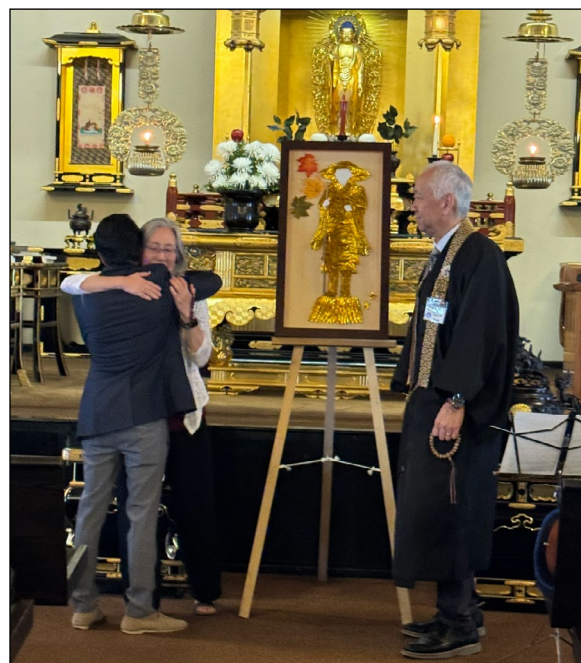
Please gently open your eyes and join me in Gassho.

May you be held in compassion. May your struggles and sorrows be eased. May your heart be at peace.





Rev. Todd takes in the unveiling of the Sangha's Shinran thank-you gift.



## love

*Continued from page 1*

"Breathing in Love, breathing out Thank You. Breathing in Love, breathing out Gratitude."

And, as this was also our monthly memorial service, this was followed by the Hyobyakumon and reading of memorial names.

We then chanted the Shoshin Nembutsu Ge and heard a reading of "Seven gifts that do not require any possessions and yet bring great results," before Christina Szabo accompanied the Sangha on piano in a personalized rendition of the gatha "Farewell." With a slight change to the lyrics, we sang:

*"Now we've heard the Dharma, for another day*

*Let us gather 'round the shrine, bow our heads and say:*

*Thank you, **Sensei Tsuchiya**, thank you every one.*

*Buddha's love will keep us safe till our work is done."*

It was a joy to see Rev. Todd's expression as he heard the revised words.

After Rev. Todd's Dharma message (see page 1), the MBT Ukulele Group, of which both Rev. Todd and Connie are founding members, led the Sangha in "Ondokusan I." How wonderful to get to see and hear both Rev. Todd and Connie strumming away once more with Cynthia Mee, Ian Taura and, on this occasion, newcomers-to-the-group Jesse Zavala and Elaine Matsushita.

Then it was time for Jason Matsumoto, president of the Board of Trustees, to present Rev. Todd and Connie with a gift that was made with love and gratitude by the Sangha. The gift was draped on a tall easel in front of the naijin, creating a wonderful sense of suspense.

When the covering was removed, a golden figure of Shinran Shonin was revealed. Modeled after the statue of Shinran in the temple's Legacy Garden, this Shinran was made by arranging 1,000 origami cranes—each folded by the Sangha.

Jason pointed out (see page 8) that the choice of using origami to make the artwork was inspired by a Dharma talk that Rev. Todd gave on Mother's Day. In that talk, Rev. Todd told of his late mother's "trail of

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# From the Sangha to Rev. Todd and Connie: Thank you

**A**t the Sept. 7 Sunday Service—the last service led by Rev. Todd as MBT's resident minister—the Sangha presented him and his wife Connie with a gift to express our gratitude for them.

The gift was made by the hands of nearly 100 Sangha members—who live in the metropolitan Chicago area to as far away as Wisconsin, Texas, Washington State and New Jersey. Each of them folded gold foil origami paper into tsuru (cranes), making 1,000 cranes. And each of their cranes was then arranged in the form of the statue of Shinran that stands in our MBT Legacy Garden.

Along with Shinran, the artwork includes maple leaves falling—showing front, showing back. And two little tsuru in flight.

These are the words of appreciation that were read when the artwork was presented to Rev. Todd and Connie.

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Rev. Todd and Connie, we hope you know the widespread, positive impact that you both have had on our Sangha and beyond. Through your Dharma talks, your guided meditations, your kindness, your words, and your actions, you have been our teachers. With your positive energy and your warm embrace of all, you have given us joy, laughter, guidance, calm, and comfort when we needed it most.

We know that origami has a special place in your heart. Rev. Todd, you shared a particularly moving story about your mother and origami in your Mother's Day Dharma message. You said, in part: "One thing she loved to do was to make origami figures and share them with others. She sometimes made dollar bill versions of many of them and gave them to people. It put a smile on so many faces. I would go to an office or retailer and see an origami figure or dollar and ask them



Photo by Joy Zavala

where they got it. It was always my mother who was somehow there before me...

I was a dentist before I became a minister and one of my patients related an experience she had... a mother of three children [who] had recently lost a very young son to cancer. ... She was at a local mall with her remaining children and they stopped to rest. ... A nice elderly woman came up to her kids and gave them origami cranes where you could flap their wings. ... They laughed and smiled and it made their entire family happy. ... A couple of sentences into her story, I already knew it was my mother. She said it was really nice to see her family happy and to forget for even just a little while. When my mother passed away, I received many cards, social-

media posts and phone calls from people, each of whom had their own story about the trail of origami happiness she left. ... The compassion she conveyed was truly amazing. I still have a dollar bill origami heart made by my mother that I keep in my wallet."

Your mother's "trail of origami happiness" and this beautiful Dharma message were the inspiration for this gift. This image of Shinran, which is modeled after the statue in our Legacy Garden, is made from 1,000 origami cranes—each folded by a member of our Sangha. While this is a gift for you, it has also been a gift to our Sangha, allowing us to come together and put our feelings of gratitude into each and every crane. With our hands, our hearts and our time, we say thank you for the

teachings and guidance you have given us.

The number of Sangha members who participated is amazing and reflects the widespread and heartfelt gratitude. It was a multi-generational project, from our Nisei members to our Dharma school students. For some, this was their first time attempting origami; for others, it had been a long time, or they had never worked with such small paper. Yet, everyone rose to the challenge and persevered to be a part of this project.

Rev. Todd, your Dharma talk on Aug. 3rd brought even deeper meaning to this project and the choice of gold for the cranes. You spoke of Ubuntu, saying:

"It says—not as Descartes did, saying 'I think, therefore I am'—but rather 'I am because I belong.' We need other human beings in order to be human. ... There is a oneness to humanity. ... To express this using Buddhist terms, we might say that everyone has Buddha Nature. ... It is like the Third Vow made by Amida Buddha: That everyone has the color of gold. It doesn't mean everyone is the same, but that everyone has high value."

We present this gift in honor of you, Rev. Todd and Connie, and your entire family. We are forever grateful for the journey that brought you to us at MBT.

Though we are saddened by your departure, you are leaving us with powerful reminders of the Dharma. You remind us of impermanence—that everything changes, and we must cherish the past but live in the now. You remind us of oneness—that all things are interdependent, we are one Sangha, and we will always be connected. And like your mother, you have shown us that each of us has the color of gold, and that even a small act, like folding an origami crane, can convey immense compassion and spread joy. With kindness and gratitude beyond words.

From Rev. Todd and Connie to the Sangha: Thank *you*

A most heartfelt thank you for the heartwarming send off we received from the temple.

Rev Todd is pictured here in his Minnesota home office with the astonishing Shinran Shonen artwork created by the Sangha.

We were surprised and humbled by all the kind words and expressions of gratitude. We leave with the warmest memories of our time in Chicago and will miss this very special Sangha dearly.

*In Gassho,
Rev. Todd and Connie*



niji dharma Dr. Arai to be guest speaker

By Taryn Hutt

The Niji Dharma group is hosting the Oct. 19 Sunday Service, which will feature Dr. Paula Arai as the guest speaker.

As a researcher with a focus on embodied experience, Arai has received a range of support—including from



Fulbright, the American Council of Learned Societies, the Mellon Foundation, and the Reischauer Institute of Harvard University.

Arai has curated exhibits of Iwasaki Tsuneo's Heart Sutra paintings at a number of venues, including the Louisiana State University Museum of Art, the Crow Collection of Asian Art in Dallas, and the Morikami Museum in Florida.

A devoted teacher, Arai has taught at Vanderbilt University, Carleton College and Louisiana State University, and is currently The Eshinni and Kakushinni Professor of Women and Buddhist Studies at the Institute of Buddhist Studies in Berkeley, Calif.

Under the tutelage of Aoyama Shundō Rōshi, she did Zen training at the Aichi Senmon Nisōdō nunnery in Nagoya. An active public speaker, she also leads workshops on healing rituals.

Having met during the U.S. Occupation of Japan, Arai's parents were committed to healing after World War II. Her Japanese mother and Euro-American father raised her in Michigan. She enjoys hiking, playing the violin, and seeing her son do magic tricks. She loves dogs and playing games, especially Pictionary.

In addition to speaking at our Sunday Service, Arai also will lead a roundtable discussion after service.



Photo by Joy Zavala

Jesse Zavala gives NLOB mats to an unhoused neighbor while out delivering sandwich lunches with the MBT Outreach Program

Sleeping mats delivered to unhoused neighbors

Sleeping mats made by New Life for Old Bags volunteers Mary Miller and Elaine Matsushita found their way to two grateful unhoused neighbors, thanks to the MBT Outreach Program.

New Life for Old Bags is a program that recycles and reuses plastic shopping bags. Sessions hosted by the MBT Buddhist Women's Association had been held at MBT on the second Sunday of most months, following Sunday service. The BWA is considering, however, moving to a new process.

Volunteers to cut used plastic bags into strips, or knot the strips to make "plarn" or to crochet the plarn into mats are always welcome. No prior skills are needed. Contact the temple office for more information.



Photos by Joy Zavala

The Sangha gathers over plates of pancakes, sausages, fruit salad and quiche to say thanks to Rev. Todd and Connie, the Sangha and the Ginza Holiday Festival volunteers.

brunch

Continued from page 1

few years, with his inspiring Dharma talks and leadership. His wife, Connie, provided guided meditations at the beginning of some of our services, and she helped with tech support by welcoming our Zoom attendees.

They played taiko at Obon and Ginza, and ukulele (Connie) and fue (Rev. Todd) with the MBT Band.

Rev. Todd led Buddhism classes on Zoom, so we could learn more about Jodo Shinshu. Since joining our temple, he and Connie have been involved in our events and outreach programs, including MBT's Homeless Project. We will miss their presence in the kitchen, making and packing sandwiches for people at the homeless shelters, men's hotel and tent cities that we support.

Caring for our Sangha members as well as our unhoused neighbors embodies the true nature of our beliefs. We thank Rev. Todd and Connie for all their work and good nature they shared with the MBT Sangha.

We appreciate our Sangha who attend and participate in the weekly Sunday services,



including monthly memorial services for remembering and honoring relatives and friends who have passed away. The Dharma messages are an important part of the service, learning from the teachings given by our ministers, minister's assistants and various guest speakers.

The MBT Ginza Festival is our largest fundraiser, but this year also marked its 70th anniversary. It was an event where many (175) volunteers participated with amazing energy and dedication in 90-plus-degree weather.

Combining our brunch with the Ginza volunteers gave us all a chance to socialize and celebrate after working so hard.

The menu for our brunch consisted of pancakes (regular and gluten-free), sausages (turkey and veggie), quiche and fruit salad, with orange juice, tea and coffee.

Rich Taura and Alexa Tang (with Elaine Miyamura and Joy Zavala advising) led the making of the brunch that morning with many volunteers cutting fruit, cooking food, decorating the Social Hall, preparing the serving tables and pouring beverages.

Since there were three groups being celebrated, we had three cakes—each with a different message: "Thank you, Rev. Todd and Connie," "Namu Amida Butsu," and "Thank you, Ginza Volunteers."

Speeches were given by our Board of Trustees President Jason Matsumoto; Terry Cichocki, Women's Association; Kiku Taura, Ginza Committee; and Rich Taura, Events/ Outreach Committee.





In addition to the MBT Ukulele Band (below) leading the Sangha in "Ondokusan I," Anabel Hirano lent her beautiful voice to "Remember Me," accompanied by Christina Szabo and Elaine Matsushita (left), and again she sang "Sen No Kaze Ni Natte / I Am a Thousand Winds," accompanied by Bob Sutter and Elaine (bottom).

Photos by Andrea Shlmon

love

Continued from page 7

origami happiness" that she shared with people—even strangers—she would meet. The Sangha was thrilled to contribute their handmade tsuru in an attempt to express their gratitude. (But perhaps one of the most impressive parts of the Shinran artwork was the Sangha's success at keeping the gift a surprise!)

The service came to a close with two musical offerings (click [here](#) to have a listen)—each picked because they are close to Rev. Todd's heart. The first was "Sen No Kaze Ni Natte," a Japanese song based on a poem by Mary Elizabeth Frye. She wrote the poem in 1932 to console a friend whose mother had passed away. Originally written in Japanese, the song was later translated into English by none other than Helen Tsuchiya, Rev. Todd's mother. The English title for the song is "I Am a Thousand Winds"—and the lyrics are as beautiful as the music. It was sung by Anabel Hirano and accompanied by Bob Sutter on piano and Elaine Matsushita on cello.

The service concluded with another song: "Remember Me," from a Disney Pixar film called "Coco." The song, referenced once by Rev. Todd at a previous memorial service, is sung to a young girl in the film by her father. And, later in the film, it is sung again. But this time it's sung by a young boy to the same "girl" who is now an elderly woman. The young boy is her grandson.

"Remember Me"—both in the film and in the MBT hondo—truly is a musical love note. It was performed by Anabel Hirano, accompanied by Christina Szabo on piano and Elaine on cello.

*Remember me
Though I have to say goodbye
Remember me
Don't let it make you cry
For even if I'm far away
I hold you in my heart.*



now

Continued from page 3

usually done in groups, in schools before classes start and in businesses before the workday begins. We have seen this in many Asian movies.

Right now, if you have space, just raise your arms and stretch. That feels pretty good, right? Many of us probably don't move and stretch as much as we should.

Rituals: Some examples are prayer, honoring our ancestors, napping and attending Sunday services. Not necessarily in that order.

Diet: Okinawans stop eating when they feel 80 percent full. We know how it feels to be stuffed, so we can just stop when we start to feel full or content. In Japan, a meal is served on smaller plates, making the diner feel like they are eating more.

I mentioned *mottainai* in another Dharma talk and, if you're like me, you don't like wasting food. So, when we feel 80 percent full, we can save our leftovers for another day if we do not want to throw them away.

Community and friends are important aspects of connecting with other people. Family, including our Sangha family here at MBT, can be our support system.

Hobbies and activities: What do we like to do? Sometimes, we aren't crazy about our jobs, but we can do what we want during our free time. We can work on hobbies—crochet, knit, work in a garden, play an instrument, learn a new language, paint, write poems, bake, cook, teach or talk to and make a connection with someone.

These and other hobbies are doing things that may be meaningful to you. Practicing kindness, spending time with friends and family, and volunteering where it can make a meaningful difference are good examples of looking outside of ourselves to obtain calmness and a purpose in life. Rather than concentrating on being "happy," we can find our *ikigai*.

We can **live in the moment** without dwelling on the past or worrying about the future. Experience the here and now, be mindful, appreciate the sights and sounds of nature, and be aware of actions—positive or negative.

How often do we complain about things like the weather? It's too hot, it's too cold, it's raining, it hasn't rained enough.

I know I'm guilty of complaining, but if we can embrace each moment, even if it is too cold or too hot, imagine how it will be when the weather is perfect. Of course, each person's idea of perfection is different but that would be a separate discussion. Every morning, the late Lin Brehmer, a popular Chicago radio host on WXRT, would announce, "It's great to be alive." Though he passed away in 2023, many of us still remember his appreciation for living—which

we should all have.

Gratitude: We should be thankful for our food, nature, friends and family. When we have gratitude, we realize all that we have instead of focusing on what we are missing.

Many of you have either seen or heard of "Perfect Days," a 2023 Japanese movie about a man (Hirayama) who cleans public toilets in Tokyo for a living. He has a morning ritual of spritzing his plants, looking outside his window at the sky, buying a can of coffee from a vending machine right outside his home and driving his van while listening to music on cassette tapes. He listens to The Kinks, Van Morrison, Patti Smith, Otis Redding and the Animals. We older folks can relate to this music.

He then arrives at the various public restroom locations and meticulously cleans the toilets, even using a small mirror to make sure he cleans in places that cannot normally be seen.

On his lunch break, he eats a sandwich outdoors and pulls out a small camera. He notices his surroundings, especially the way the sunlight filters through trees, creating patterns of light and shadow. This is called *komorebi*, which can also be a reminder that there are small moments of light in the midst of difficult times.

Hirayama takes photos of moments in nature and even has them developed at an old-fashioned photo-developing store. Remember those?

He has a mundane job, but he does his best and does not complain. He is content, enjoying moments of nature, good music and occasional social encounters. He reads literary works by William Faulkner and Patricia Highsmith.

His *ikigai* includes enjoying each moment of every day.

As Hirayama bicycles over a bridge with his niece, they repeat the phrase: "Next time is next time, and now is now." We can plan for a next time, but we should take advantage of the present moment.

Every day can start out the same with certain rituals performed, but we can practice mindfulness and enjoy each moment. As we walk from place to place, we can also look up and see the sunlight filter through trees, or look down and notice flower buds pushing their way up through the soil in the spring.

We can see the interconnectedness in everyday motions and let go of our greed, anger and ignorance. We can practice kindness with a smile or by lending a helping hand.

Wabi sabi: This may sound like an exotic Japanese dish, but it is a philosophy that finds beauty in imperfection, impermanence and simplicity. It derives from the Buddhist teaching of the three signs or marks of existence. They are *anicca* (impermanence), *dukkha*

(dissatisfaction or suffering) and *anatta* (no-self or egolessness). It also refers to an awareness of the transient nature of earthly things and a corresponding pleasure in the things that bear the mark of this impermanence.

Wabi means "less is more" or "subdued, austere beauty"—recognizing beauty in humble simplicity. **Sabi** means "attentive melancholy" or "rustic patina"—the passage of time, how all things grow, age and decay. Beauty is hidden beneath the surface of what we actually see.

Rather than seek perfection, we can accept, respect and embrace things and people with their flaws. This also pertains to ourselves—we can only do our best and accept our imperfections.

We can accept what is, stay in the present moment and embrace the simple, transient stages of life.

Kintsugi is a method for mending broken objects, such as pottery, with gold. It is often associated with *wabi-sabi*. The so-called "scars" may act as symbols of fortitude, resilience and wisdom.

In life, there are times when we feel broken, when we fail at something or when we have emotional or physical scars. We can learn from our mistakes and be grateful for and embrace our imperfections. After all, we are only ordinary foolish beings or *bombu*.

Suffering: The subject of suffering often appears as a common term to describe our feelings.

There is an article in an issue of the Jodo Shinshu International, a Buddhist quarterly. It is an edited adaptation from Rev. Seikan Fukuma's book, "Monshin: Hearing/Faith." One of the subjects in the article is about suffering.

People suffer with illnesses, emotional distress, family problems, being unhappy with jobs, not making enough money to live as they would like and having to part with a loved one who has passed away. These are examples of shallow suffering, which is temporary. These may be alleviated by incorporating changes in one's life through effort or circumstance.

Deep suffering refers to the profound, existential suffering inherent to the cycle of samsara or the endless cycle of birth, illness, aging and death. It is characterized by ignorance, attachment and desire.

Deep suffering questions why we are in these situations. Why do these things happen to me? Why do I have to be sick, have a job that doesn't pay enough, and have to associate with people I don't like?

However, even if we do have enough food, clothing, a nice home and good health, we sometimes ask ourselves how long it will last. We experience deep suffering when we consider our lives, this life.

see now, page 11



Photo by Joy Zavala

The Sangha joins in with the MBT Band, singing "If You Want to Sing Out, Sing Out"—a song by Cat Stevens that promotes individuality, finding our own path, and expressing ourselves without apprehension.

now

Continued from page 10

Rev. Fukuma uses the metaphor of putting out a blaze by extinguishing only the sparks. We must douse out the flames that caused them instead of stamping out sparks.

The cause is our *bonno* or blind passions. Our acts stem from our egos, which we can control. Rev. Fukuma stated that using the Buddha-Dharma to be free from our problems is an absolute perversion of the teaching. Its purpose is to remind us that trying to fulfill our selfish desires is precisely the problem.

When we realize all that we have and not what is missing, we express gratitude by reciting the Nembutsu.

In Jodo Shinshu, deep suffering is often seen as the root cause of shallow suffering. Shinran taught that, regardless of the level of suffering, all beings are equally caught in this cycle of suffering and are incapable of liberating themselves through their own efforts alone.

The central focus in Jodo Shinshu is the Vow of Amida Buddha—which, through the recitation of the Nembutsu ("Namu Amida Butsu")—offers a path to liberation from both shallow and deep suffering. The practice of Nembutsu is a recognition of one's inability to overcome suffering by oneself, and a trust in the compassionate vow of Amida to guide all beings to enlightenment, no matter the

depth of their suffering.

Ultimately, Jodo Shinshu teaches that, by relying on Amida's vow and the power of faith, even the deepest suffering can be transcended, and one can be reborn in the Pure Land, free from the endless cycle of samsara.

Each of our lives is unique and we can discover what we enjoy doing, always be busy, connect with friends and family, enjoy every moment, embrace our emotional and physical scars, learn from our mistakes and be grateful for what we have.

Perhaps we can wake up occasionally and declare, "It's great to be alive." We can deal with our shallow suffering by making changes, working through problems, and recognizing that they are temporary. We can realize our *bonno* (blind passions), recite the Nembutsu and rely on the Vow of Amida Buddha to overcome our suffering.

Our second gatha today will be "If You Want to Sing Out, Sing Out" by Cat Stevens. He wrote the song for the quirky movie "Harold and Maude," which is about an elderly woman with a zest for life, who shares it with a troubled young man. This song promotes individuality, finding our own path, and expressing ourselves without apprehension.

Thanks again to the MBT Band, which today consists of Christina Szabo, Rev. Todd and Connie Tsuchiya, Jesse Zavala, Cynthia Mee, Dean Katahira, Elaine Matsushita, Ian Taura and Grady Hutt. And

to Alex Vincer who created both the band arrangement and the music sheet so the Sangha can sing along. And thanks to Paul Shea and Ellen Dunleavy for their help leading the singing. There is so much talent here at MBT.

I would also like to thank Rev. Todd Tsuchiya. Next Sunday will be his last day and Dharma talk here at MBT as our resident minister. His leadership and messages have been very inspiring and we will miss him. We look forward to having him join us as a guest speaker either in person or on Zoom. We will also miss his wife, Connie, who has been very active with our services and events.

We are also grateful to Rev. Ron Miyamura for stepping in again after his retirement. His many years of experience will be appreciated before we find another resident minister.

Please put your hands together in gassho.

Each life exists in the Eternal Now. Each idea that is thought, each word that is spoken, each action that is taken, changes the whole pattern of the universe, for the universe is interdependent.

Think, speak and act, then, always in the eternal now with compassion and understanding for your own enlightenment and for the enlightenment of all sentient beings.

Namu Amida-Butsu

What it means to be a Buddhist? Be kind and gentle

The following is from a Dharma message that was shared on Sept. 14, 2025.

By Rev. Ron Miyamura

Good morning. We have once again gone through an eventful summer. We had a wonderful Bon Odori in July. We survived the heat of the 70th Ginza Holiday Festival. We observed the resignation/retirement of Rev. Todd Tsuchiya. And, now, I am coming out of retirement on a part-time basis.

I need to start by thanking Rev. Todd. In just a few short years, he has contributed so much to the Midwest Buddhist Temple.

He changed the format of the services a bit—added a second reading, added back the second gatha, he led the chanting so beautifully, starting on “D,” and, behind the scenes, he cleaned and dusted the naijin, cleaned out the incense burners—and paid attention to the details of being a minister.

Although he can’t take credit for it, he found Grady and Taryn Hutt. Grady came to MBT just as we were looking to upgrade our audio-visual systems and were trying to figure out how to integrate Zoom into a real tool for our services. And so many other things to mention.

Rev. Todd really fit in with MBT and he worked with everyone to make MBT a welcoming place for everyone. Thank you, Rev. Todd.

This morning, I would like to talk about how we take care of each other. This past week, I came down with COVID. And I cannot thank my wife, Elaine, enough for taking good care of me.

She got me Paxlovid, which made COVID milder than it might have been. She ensured I drank enough water and stayed hydrated. She prepared meals that were easy to eat. And so much more.

It is a reminder that we all started with caregivers. A newborn baby cannot survive



alone. A baby must be fed, changed, bathed, cleaned and so on.

And, perhaps, at the end of our lives, we will again need caregivers to take care of us as we get older, perhaps seriously ill.

Needlessly to say, we all appreciate our caregivers.

This week, Rev. Blayne Higa of the Kono Hongwanji on the Big Island of Hawaii published an article that I'd like to quote from a section of his article:

In a story from Buddhist scripture, we learn how Shakyamuni Buddha and his disciple Ananda once cared for a monk who was left to die in filth by his fellow monks. After bathing and tending to the sick monk, Shakyamuni called the monks together and asked them why no one was attending to their fellow monk in need.

They replied, “He doesn’t do anything for the monks, lord, which is why they don’t attend to him.”

In response, the Buddha admonishes them. “Monks, you have no mother, you have no father, who might tend to you. If you don’t tend to one another, who then will tend to you? Whoever would tend to me, should tend to the sick.”

When tending to the dying monk, the Buddha showed us how to live with sincerity, how to die with dignity, and how

to care for others as we care for ourselves. He teaches a profound lesson in accepting the unavoidable truth of impermanence and living mindfully and compassionately.

In this quote, Rev. Higa reminds us that we have to take care of each other because there might be any one else. Even in the time of the historical Shakyamuni Buddha, even devoted monks could become selfish and distracted. It is the Buddha who reminds us to care for one another.

The Buddha and Ananda became caregivers and set the example to all the other disciples of how to think, feel and act. The Buddha set the example of how to be caregivers and to appreciate the work that caregivers provide for all of us.

And I have to think back to my anthropology class in college. In that class, we were asked why humans built civilizations—which makes humans different than other animals.

Certainly, other animals lived in groups or herds for protection from predators. But humans built water and sewer systems, and invented the wheel, learned to control fire, to grow crops and so many other things.

But in this class, the teacher pointed out, it was the observation of the famous

anthropologist Margaret Mead who pointed out human civilization started when the first caveman stopped to help another human being with a broken leg.

With most animals, when an animal breaks a leg, they are left to die because they can no longer run away from danger.

It is humans who can collectively benefit from everyone helping each other, by staying together and thus survive together as a civilization. As a civilization, we can “protect those who are weaker than myself.”

Of course, the phrase “protect those who are weaker than myself” comes from the Golden Chain that was written by Dorothy Hunt of Hawaii in the 1930s as a way of explaining Buddhism to Dharma School children.

As the full sentence goes: “May I be kind and gentle to every living thing and protect all who are weaker than myself.”

This is a beautifully written way of explaining Compassion and Interdependence without using those words.

To be kind and gentle, and then to protect.

This is what it means to be human, this is what it means to be a civilization, and this is what it means to be Buddhist. Just be kind and gentle to all living things and to protect those who are weaker than myself.

Humans can be caregivers. Caregivers not only help the individual receiving care, but the whole society benefits from the care given.

We know from the lesson the Shakyamuni Buddha gave by admonishing his fellow monks. I know I benefited from the care given to me by my wife Elaine. And you all benefited that I was healthy enough to be here today.

*Namu Amida Butsu
— with gratitude and
kindness beyond words*

outreach program

Volunteers make, deliver 385 sandwiches

By Joy Zavala

Our monthly sandwich-making day on Aug. 30 at MBT was filled with many volunteers. We had 225 sandwiches made from home and delivered to MBT, and 155 sandwiches made at MBT.

Peanut butter and jelly sandwiches were doubled in each bag since we had so many, and all 300 bags (385 sandwiches) were delivered to Sarah's Circle, North Side Housing for Men, Ewing Annex Men's Hotel and tent cities.

All bags were packed with chips and some had additional snacks and grapes. And along with the sandwich bags, cold bottles of water were distributed to people at the tent cities.

We are very grateful to our volunteers who give up their time one Saturday a month, making sandwiches, packing grapes, filling bags and delivering them to the various locations.



Photos from Joy Zavala

Volunteers make 155 sandwiches at MBT and pack them and the 225 that were made at volunteers' homes in bags. Additional snacks, grapes and chips were also packed in the sandwich bags.



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Above: Hokusai's "Great Wave" at the College of DuPage exhibit.

Right: The Cool Ladies taiko group will take the stage at the Edge Theater on Oct. 4.



happenings

Continued from page 2

Like old times

Kristi Chikaraishi Hseih and her son **Jackson** had a great time when the Twin Cities JACL Community Kai cohort recently. "They did an activity on Sept. 13, which featured **Emily Harada**, who talked about what is taiko, the history of taiko, and then we got to play the on the drums at the TaikoArts Midwest studio."

Hokusai exhibit

Before **Gary Tsuchiyama**'s sister came to town for a visit, Gary went to see the Hokusai exhibit at the College of DuPage in Glen Ellyn to prepare a sightseeing itinerary. "I have to confess that I'm not the type to hang around art museums, surprise, but this one was pretty interesting," says Gary Tsuchiyama. "To see the intricate details in the woodblock prints and to think this was before Adobe Illustrator. The colors are still vibrant after a few hundred years."

"Even though it's a small exhibit space they were able to recreate a scene from Hokusai's era ... The final surprise was the famous 'Wave' woodblock print. It's really small!!!"

Sorry to say the exhibit closed on Sept. 21.

Come see the Cool Ladies

The Asian Improv aRts Midwest's Cool Ladies taiko group will present its 3rd annual recital on Saturday, Oct. 4. AIRMW Cool Ladies members include **Kiku Taura** and **Sandra Inouye** (of Ginza Beer Booth fame). The recital will be held from 3 pm at the Edge Theater, 5451 N. Broadway, Chicago. Admission

is free; all are welcome.

Teacher, teacher

Debra Levie is back in the classroom. "I am back to teaching black-and-white darkroom photography at Columbia College," says Debra. "I teach part-time."



School is in full swing. I am beginning my 30th year at Columbia.

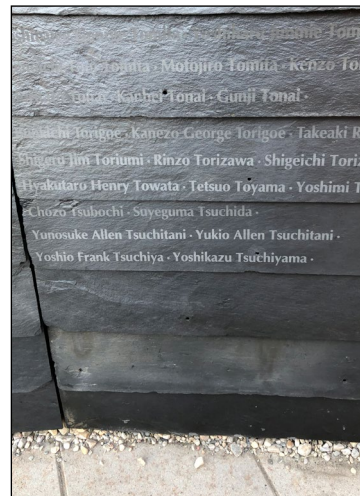
"With my business called Art Alive Programming," Debra adds, "I research my topics on art, artists and art museums and collate the researched digital slides into PowerPoint programs. I share the PowerPoint programs with senior retirement communities."

"I have a program on three 20th century Japanese artists. I would be happy to share it with MBT."

"Between teaching and visits to retirement communities, I work a six-day week. I am grateful and very happy to have the work."

Off to Nihon

Eric Langowski and **Lisa Doi** will be heading to Japan in mid-October. "We are going to Kyoto, Hiroshima and Tokyo," says Lisa. "It's been a long time since I've been to Hiroshima, so I'm



Yvonne and Michael Harada were invited to attend a Powwow when they visited Bismarck, N.D. They also saw the Memorial Wall with names of Japanese American incarceratedees inscribed—one of which is Rev. Todd's father, Yoshio Frank Tsuchiya.

interested in seeing the Peace Museum as an adult." Safe travels!

Aloha

Albert Sora, who is visiting his home in Hawaii with his wife, **Judy**, reports that he was helping to install paper birds at the Soto Mission of Hawaii for Peace Day (Sept. 15). The results (*see photo on page 17*) are very impressive and moving.

Bismarck visit

Yvonne and **Michael Harada** are back from Bismarck, ND, where they attended the dedication of the memorial (wall) for all of the Japanese American incarceratedees who were imprisoned at the Snow Country Prison at Ft. Lincoln in Bismarck. It is located currently on the campus of the United Tribes Technical College.

"Finally," says Yvonne, "we were all

see happenings, page 17



The many tsuru that Albert and Judy Sora helped install at the Soto Mission of Hawaii for Peace Day.

happenings

Continued from page 16

invited to see the Powwow that several different tribes participated in. ... It was both meaningful and uplifting. **Emily and Taiko Arts Midwest** performed at the dedication and at the Powwow."

Improving global health

Christina Szabo was out near Washington, D.C., in September. "I volunteer for the United States Pharmacopeia, whose mission is 'to improve global health through public standards and related programs that help ensure the quality, safety and benefit of medicines and foods,'" says Christina.

"I have just started as a member of a USP expert committee on dietary supplements. I am in Rockville, MD, for an orientation to kick off our five-

year volunteer cycle."

Viewing reco

Allison Hagio-Conwell tells us that she just finished watching "Blue Eye Samurai" on Netflix. "Very good!" she says. "Takes place in the Edo period. History, twists, adventure. Great anime." Sounds like one to add to the watch-this list!

Seamless story

Other than teaching dress history at the School of the Art Institute, you will find **Gillion Carrara** teaching a six-week online class from 1 to 2:30 pm on Thursdays. The class is titled "seamless: fashion, art and society."

On the move

After 36 years in Glenview, **Dr. Michael Harada** merged his dental office with **Zen Dental** and **Dr. Remy Dalloul** in Deerfield.

"I joined my father, **Masaro**,

see *happenings*, page 19

October memorials

On the first Sunday of each month, the Midwest Buddhist Temple holds a collective Monthly Memorial Service during the regular Sunday Family Service, when loved ones can be remembered and honored.

Although memorial services are held in memory of a loved one who has passed away, the purpose of the memorial service is for us, the living, the ones who remain behind. The memorial service provides an opportunity to express appreciation and gratitude for the many benefits we have received from the person who passed away. These are the names of temple friends who have passed away in October, and who we will remember during the MBT service on Oct. 5.

October			
1918	Keisota Umeki	1994	Yoshinori Osaka
	Yu Umeki		Eizo Sugihara
1935	Iwajiro Sugiyama	1995	Yukino Watanage
1936	Yoshi Kusatsu	1996	Noby Yamakoshi
1941	Yasuhei Nishioka		Himeko Fujita
1946	Naoichi Ishibashi		Ellen Johansen
1949	Masahiko		George Mukai
	Fujishima	1997	Kenichi Takahashi
1953	Entaro Seki		George Matsuura
1954	Senichi Tomihiro	1998	Mitsuru Toba
1957	Toichiro Mayahara		Suehiro Sam
1959	Hisayo Oshita		Nagata
1961	Iyo Mayahara	1999	Sachiko Nathan
1962	Tameji Yoshimura		Richard Langlois
1964	Masakichi Chino		Roshi
	Linda Maruyama		Churo Sakata
	Yosaburo		Florence Sakata
	Maruyama	2000	Byron Fumio Toguri
	Ishizo Sato	2001	Masaye Ono, MN
	Hideji Yanokawa		Akira Morimoto
1966	Chiyo Yoshida		Annie Sera
1972	Inez Yasukawa	2005	Keiko Hagio
1974	Sam Terao		Florence Yamada
1976	Mitsuno Fujisawa	2006	James Amano
	Hamayo Yamashita		Thomas Omori
1978	Mishi Nakamura		Larry Uemura
	James Shigeo	2008	Lewis C Ruffin III
	Ogata		May Sachiko
1979	Vicki Nyman		Kawata
1980	David Lekki	2009	Yoshiro Harada
1981	Terry Shiga		Susie Oshita
	Yamashita	2010	Tanaka
1982	Asano Kusatsu		Edith Higashi
1983	Hideko Yoshimoto		Laraine Koyanagi
1984	Shigeo Naito		Mae Y Tsusaki
1985	Harold Hajime		Margaret
	Fujimoto		Yamaguchi
	Tsuyo Kaihara	2011	Tony Yutaka Naito
1987	Joseph Tadao	2012	Hiddenori Iijima
	Makino		Mary Hisako Tono
	Chisato Migaki	2013	Jimmie Watanuki
1988	Rose Tani		Susumu Hirota
1989	Henry Hosaka	2014	Shizuka Mine
	Robert Richard	2016	Rich Kiyoshi Takaki
	Hideo Emmett		Michael Furuta
	Shintani		Yoshio Frank
	Kimiko Sugano		Kawaguchi
	Kimiko Taguchi	2017	Ayako Yamakoshi
1990	Misaka Nakao		Masayasu Taura
1992	George Blagg		William Takashi
	Irene Tamayo	2019	Toguri
	Miyata		Masao Miyata
1993	Olivia Laatch	2020	Khira Suhara West
	Lydia Schroeter	2022	Marc Nevarez
			Grant Ohori



Dharma speaks through sounds of the world

*Listen to the birds, singing in the morning,
The wind sighing in the boughs overhead
And the roar of the waves on the beach. ...
Do we have the ears to hear and listen?*

By Elaine Matsushita

Listen. That was the message at the heart of the Fall Ohigan Service celebrated at MBT on Sept. 21.

The Ohigan is a service that is held twice a year—once in the spring and once in the fall. It is a time of year when things are usually in balance. The amount of light and dark in a day is equal, the weather is not too cold or too hot.

It is a time of reflection on the spiritual balance and harmony in our lives. At MBT, for the past few years, we have been celebrating the Fall Ohigan with a service that focuses on music and harmony.

As a prelude to the service, pianist Yvonne Harada performed "Sariputra," a gatha composed by Albert Fujitsubo of the Fresno Buddhist Temple and arranged for piano by Yvonne.

As part of the service, Christine Szabo on piano and Elaine Matsushita on cello performed a song called "Innocent," which is also known as "Carrying You." Written by Joe Hisaishi for the Studio Ghibli film "Castle in the Sky," the song aims to capture the film's themes of love, innocence, and a yearning for home.

Even the readings aligned with the service's musical theme. The first reading was from Shinran Shonin's Hymns of the Pure Land #39:

The delicate, wondrous sounds of jewel-trees in the jewel forests



*Are a naturally pure and harmonious music,
Unexcelled in subtlety and elegance,
So take refuge in Amida, the music of purity.*

The service also included musical offerings like the gatha "Namo Amida Butsu," which the Sangha sang accompanied by the MBT Ukulele Group. The uke group—Cynthia Mee, Elaine Matsushita and Jesse Zavala—was a little smaller this time having lost Rev. Todd and Connie Tsuchiya to their move to Minnesota, and Ian Taura to a broken hand.

But the band played on. And followed the gatha with an upbeat singalong of Bobby McFerrin's "Don't Worry, Be Happy."

Yvonne then led the Sangha in another gatha, "Nori no Mlyama."

The service's last musical offering was a

The Fall Ohigan music service included the MBT Ukulele Band; Christina Szabo and Elaine Matsushita on piano and cello; and pianist Yvonne Harada.

Photos by Joy Zavala

piano-cello duet version of "What a Wonderful World," performed by Christina and Elaine. The song, made popular by Louis Armstrong, was written by Bob Thiele, under the pseudonym George Douglas, and by George Weiss. Talking about his inspiration for the song, Thiele said: "In the mid-1960s during the deepening national traumas of the Kennedy assassination, Vietnam, racial strife, and turmoil everywhere, my co-writer George David Weiss and I had an idea to write a 'different' song specifically for Louis Armstrong that would be called 'What a Wonderful World.'"

As the service concluded and the Sangha prepared to leave the hondo, Yvonne returned to the piano to play "Ananda," another gatha written by Fujitsubo and arranged for piano by Yvonne.

First class and meet our teachers!

By Jennifer Toguri

Our first regular class of the new school year will be held on **Sunday, Oct. 5**. Dharma School parents and students are invited to meet and learn about Dharma School plans and activities. We're looking forward to welcoming our students back for learning, community and fun.

This year, our Dharma School activities will take place on the first and third Sundays of each month. We encourage our youth to explore the teachings of Buddhism in a supportive and engaging environment. In addition to classes, our students will once again have the special opportunity to help lead services, supported by the new Service Planning Committee.

We are also thrilled to introduce and welcome our new and returning volunteers who will be helping to guide our students this year: **Alex Vincer, Allison Hagio and Andrew Harada Rowland, Gardiner Funo O'Kain and Jennifer Toguri**. Their dedication and enthusiasm are a true gift to our Sangha, and we are incredibly grateful for their willingness to share their time and wisdom.

Click [here](#) to review the Dharma School Overview information. Then, please complete [this form](#) to register for the new school year.

• **Save the date** for our Dharma School Halloween celebration on **Sunday, Nov. 2!**

Look for announcements in the weekly email. Or contact the temple office at office@mbtchicago.org.

happenings

Continued from page 17

in Morton Grove in 1986 after being discharged from the Navy and after completing a dental residency. In 1989 the building we were in had a bad fire. We moved to Glenview that same year and we practiced together for another 10 years.

September birthday girls
We heard from longtime MBT member **Janice Nishimura** that her mom **Asako Nishimura** just celebrated her 98th birthday on Sept.

1. Janice and Asako now live in Minnesota but keep up with MBT goings-on in the Bulletin. "When I print the monthly Bulletin for her," Janice says, "she is excited and reads it from cover to cover."

And back here in Chicago, **Fumiko Matsushita** also celebrated her 98th birthday with family. Fumi's birthday was 12 days after Asako's—on Sept. 13. Instead of gifts, guests brought jokes to tell Fumi instead. It was a real delight to see her laughing at the attempts at standup

comedy.

Happy birthday to our two 98-year-young friends.

Happy birthday to...

We would like to send happy birthday wishes to our friends born in October. Happy birthday to:

Kayla Arima Castillo / Oct. 6

Kay Arima / Oct. 7

Lisa Macri and Yohei Sagami

/ Oct. 10

Kori Park / Oct. 11

David Toguri / Oct. 14

Kevin Matsushita / Oct. 14

Sam Fidler / Oct. 16

Pecan Sandies

Joy Zavala

Ingredients

1 cup butter
½ cup sugar
2 tsp. water
2 tsp. vanilla
2 cups flour, sifted
1 cup pecans, chopped

Directions

1. Heat oven to 325°. Cream butter sugar. Add water and vanilla. Add flour and chopped pecans. Form balls and place on ungreased cookie sheet.

2. Place cookie sheet in oven and bake for about 10 minutes. Cool slightly and shake powdered sugar over cookies.

To order a copy of "Oishii Cookery," send a check (\$15, if picked up at the temple; \$20, if mailed—made out to MBT Women's Association) to MBT, 435 W. Menomonee St., Chicago, IL 60614.

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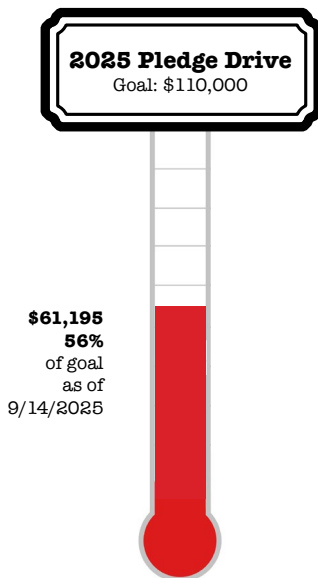
MIDWEST BUDDHIST TEMPLE 2025 PLEDGE DRIVE

MBT welcomes everyone to become temple members, with no minimum pledge requirement. All MBT supporters are asked to give what they can financially, as well as their much appreciated time and effort. Donations can be made online at mbtchicago.org/join-support/donate-now/; look for the purple "Donate Now."

DONATE NOW

What are the benefits of making a pledge?

- Maintains the daily cost of operating the temple (salaries, utilities, maintenance, supplies)
- Supports our religious, social and community programs
- At the \$300 minimum, allows voting on key temple issues
- Receive our monthly Bulletin newsletter
- Provides membership in the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA), including Wheel of Dharma newsletter
- Ensures the continued growth of the temple



domo

The Midwest Buddhist Temple gratefully acknowledges the following donations received between **Aug. 13 and Sept. 15.**

Due to some delays in

processing, you may see your donation acknowledgment in the next issue of the Bulletin. Please reach out to the office with any questions. Please notify the Bulletin or the MBT Office of any omissions or

August Memorial

Gail & Bob Ikoma
Joyce Saiki
Joy & Jesse Zavala

September Memorial

John Adachi
Dianne Ichishita
Jean Inouye
Dr. Rick & Joyce Morimoto
Dr. Emiko Morimoto
Linda & Michael Naito
Marc & Heather Nobuhata
Andrew & Kristin Park
The Taura Family
Colleen Tsuji & Paul Wanderski
Tom & Mitzi Yamaguchi

October Memorial

Mrs. Asako Nishimura
The Taura Family

Nokotsudo

Linda & Michael Naito

Ginza

Mark & Susan Brown
Carl & Harumi Ichikawa

Pledge / Membership

Stacy Arima Castillo
John Barnes
Mark & Susan Brown
Sandra Endo
Kim Inouye Brannigan
Brian Key
Ted & Gayle Kodama

Marshall Kubota
Elaine Matsushita & Bob Sutter
Victor & Sandy Miyata
Sharon Miyata-Sipich
Arleen Paguirigan
Derek & Kristine Provo
Blackwelder
Susan & Robert Rakstang
Kenneth Russell
Rich Taura
Joy & Jesse Zavala

Special Donations

Kaoru Buzuayene
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Kay Kawaguchi (as acknowledgment for Rev. Todd's final service)
Malli Moran
Gardiner O'Kain
Ken & Janice Rivera
Chika Sekiguchi
Matt Sipich
Ken Smith
Dennis Wier
Robin Wylie

You can listen to Dharma talks on MBT's YouTube channel

Did you know that MBT has a YouTube channel? We do! You can view over 150 of our [videos](https://www.youtube.com/@mbtchicago) at: [youtube.com/@mbtchicago](https://www.youtube.com/@mbtchicago) 435 (also find links on our home page and our Online Dharma Talks page at our [website](http://www.mbtchicago.org).)

On our channel, you'll find Dharma Talks, special music videos and some great videos of Ginza Holiday Memories. If you have an idea for video



content you'd like to see on our channel, just drop us a line at mbt.webadmin@mbtchicago.org.

So check out our channel and become a subscriber by clicking the "Subscribe" button. If you hit the bell icon, you will be notified when we post new content.



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Midwest Buddhist Temple

Pledge Drive 2025

**Year of
the Snake**

**Growth
Wisdom
Transformation**

**2024 Goal:
\$105K
Achieved!**

**2025 Goal:
\$110K**

Last year we celebrated the 80th anniversary of our temple. We looked to the past and found ourselves humbled by the hard work and dedication of those who came before us. Reflecting on the past allows us to look forward with more clarity.

Like the snake, our temple moves in cycles of growth, wisdom, and transformation. Growth is clearly on display over the past eight decades, with wisdom earned through both unimaginable hardships and joyful celebrations. Now, we move into a cycle of transformation, one that will create more opportunities to share the Dharma with longtime members and first-time visitors alike.

Today we ask for your financial support as a marker of dedication to our temple and an investment in its future, to ensure that we are laying the foundation for another 80 years of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha.

[here](#).

While there is no financial requirement to be considered a member of the sangha, you may wish to participate as a Pledge Member with an annual donation of **\$450 per individual**. More details and our *Guide to Financial Giving* is included below.

In gassho,

MBT Board of Trustees

save the dates

OCT 5 Please come and shop for some wonderful baked treats or consider donating baked goods to support the temple's Outreach projects.

Time: 11:30 am. **Location:** MBT Social Hall. **More information:** Contact the MBT Office, 312.943.7801.

OCT 5-9 Tidy up and save your hidden gems and then bring them to temple for MBT's annual Yard Sale, which will be held on Oct. 11. Remember: One person's junk is another's treasure! Please note that clothing, large items and furniture will not be accepted. You can donate items for the temple to sell or you can reserve a table for \$25 and sell your own items.

Time: 9 am-noon Oct. 5; 10 am-2 pm Monday-Thursday.
Location: MBT, 435 W. Menomonee St. **More information:** Contact the MBT Office, 312.943.7801.

OCT 11 Come shop the annual MBT Yard Sale. You just might find the treasure your life needs!

Time: 10 am-3 pm. **Location:** MBT, 435 W. Menomonee St.
More information: Contact the MBT Office, 312.943.7801.

OCT 19 Join us on our visit to the beautiful Anderson Japanese Gardens in Rockford. These beautiful gardens were designed and built by Hoichi Kurisu, who also designed our MBT Legacy Garden. If we're lucky, we may catch a beautiful display of fall colors.

Time: Noon-6 pm. **Location:** Leave from MBT. **Cost:** \$15, includes lunch, charter bus ride and garden entrance fee. **More information:** Contact the MBT Office, 312.943.7801, or sign up at MBT if you would like to join us.

OCT 25 Join us for our Homeless Project sandwich-making day. We will make sandwiches at the temple and also accept sandwiches made at home and dropped off at the temple.

Time: Sandwich-making at noon; dropoffs of sandwiches made at home at 1 pm. **Location:** MBT. **More information:** Please contact the MBT Office, 312.943.7801, if you would like to participate.

OCT

at midwest buddhist temple

5

SUNDAY

10:30 am Monthly Memorial Service / Rev. Ron Miyamura
11:30 am Bake Sale

12

SUNDAY

No service / Chicago Marathon

19

SUNDAY

10:30 am Family Service / Dr. Paula Arai
After service / Roundtable discussion with Dr. Paul Arai

25

SATURDAY

Noon / 1 pm Sandwich-making/dropoff for Homeless Project

26

SUNDAY

10:30 am Family Service / TBD

pebble

Continued from page 3

As he said this, there was a twinkle in his eyes.

"I found this little stone while we were in the relocation center of Jerome, Arkansas. It was quite by accident that I found it. It was embedded in the black clay of the locality, with its smooth face gazing upwards at the barren trees. A small trickle of water was falling upon it ... from a height of three inches, washing it and marking it with the depression you see here. I was struck by it, perhaps, by its color in the drabness of the place. In digging it out, I felt the roughness of its underside and in its contrast to its smooth water-worn face, and a thought occurred to me that this little stone was an embodiment of life; its harmony and its perfection. I saw that it was in tune with the ultimate reality of

life: that is to say that it was true to its own character and true to the character of the universal whole.

"Although not comprehending it fully nor understanding its broad manifestations of the truths, I somehow sensed it and felt the warmth of this revelation enveloping me. Pocketing the stone then it has never left my reach since.

"Whenever dreams and hopes become clouded by disappointments and frustrations, like so many dreams and hopes of man, I gaze at this little piece of stone, finger it, and find strength in its being. Feeling its rough underside, I feel the passing of the thousands of year which smoothed and shaped this little piece of stone. I come to realize the endless, tireless workings of the water and its constant

beating upon the stone; the never-ending beating which hallowed a memorial in the hardness of the stone. It seems to speak to me of patience, of persistence and determination; and of becoming and the never-ending trying. It fascinates me, this drama of the years. I find solace in its truths. It inspires me, refreshes me ... and, too, it speaks to me of impermanence, and the law of constant change; for even the seemingly permanent stone is undergoing change. In this dynamic perspective, mankind is directed toward the noble, and the worthy which are compatible with all truths. ... It's getting late." He said suddenly, and his voice trailed off.

Looking westward, I noticed that the sun had set quite

some time ago. The burning clouds now stretched tinged with charcoals of the coming night. A soft breeze sighed in the trees, while a firefly glowed; matching lights with the dusk.

Picking my way through the forest of abundant thoughts just shown me, I thought about the wisdom of the stone. There were many thoughts begging to be found. Unconsciously, I picked up a little piece of stone. Perhaps it was just the mood of my thinking, the burning focal point of my thoughts ... or was it just my imagination? Strange ... I felt the vibrant profundity of the stone.

My father, watching me, smiled; wise in the tutelage of Time. This was the awareness of the becoming.