

## Finding balance, finding the Middle Path

The following is from a Dharma message that was shared on Feb. 1, 2026.

By Rev. Ron Miyamura

This morning, I would like to talk about what is happening in this country right now—actually, it is two events that might seem to be opposites, and how do we look at things and somehow try to understand what is going on.

First is the Walk for Peace.

This is what is happening now. It is 24 Buddhist monks from a monastery in Ft. Worth, Texas. They are doing an approximate 110-day walk of some 2,300 miles from Ft. Worth to Washington, DC.

They walk about 20 miles a day, at a good clip. They eat one meal a day, in the morning. They have a mascot, a rescue

Click this [link](#) to hear Rev. Chiemi Bly's Dharma message from Feb. 8, 2026.



Photo from Walk For Peace's January 11, 2026 Facebook post

The Walk For Peace, a 2,300-mile cross-country trek, was made by 24 Buddhist monks as a spiritual offering—an invitation to live peace through everyday actions, mindful steps and open hearts.

dog named Aloka who has become injured, had to have an operation and is now following the monks in the van.

Along the way, they have created so much good will and have brought out the best in people along the way.

From their Facebook posts, some of the messages are:  
1) The Walk For Peace was

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#### Dharma School corner >

A special workshop on chanting gave students a chance to learn the rituals of our service. *Page 6.*

#### ■ Heat is on

Repairs have been completed and the temple has reopened. *Page 3.*



## BCA business, fellowship star at national meeting

By Allison Hagio-Conwell

MBT was proudly represented at the 2026 National Council Meeting of the Buddhist Churches of America, which was held at the Hyatt Regency Lake Washington at Seattle's Southport in Renton.

It was an energizing and inspiring weekend filled with

learning, fellowship and thoughtful discussion about the future of our Buddhist community.

As a first-time attendee, the experience was both exciting and, at times, overwhelming—in the best way. The agenda was full from Thursday evening

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# happenings

By Elaine Matsushita

**P**lease join the **Intergenerational Conversations: Ripples of the Past!** program on Saturday March 14.

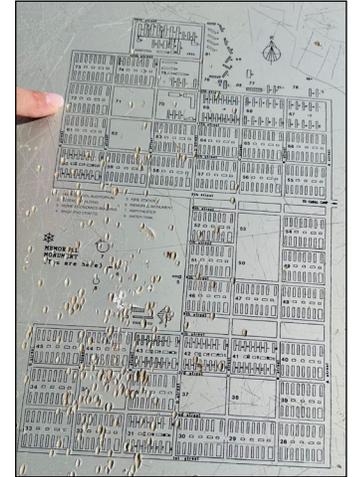
This program is hosted by JACL Chicago & Nikkei Uprising to bring Chicago-area Nikkei (people of Japanese ancestry) together to connect and process the trauma of WWII forced displacement and incarceration through personal story sharing.

It was created to address the community's need for spaces to reflect on and heal from the generational impact of mass incarceration. For those that attended this event before, "going deeper" groups are being offered for more in-depth discussions about particular topics that have shown up in the Nikkei community—such as shame, anger or perfectionism.

Please click [here](#) to learn more or contact **Rebecca Ozaki** at [rebecca@jaclchicago.org](mailto:rebecca@jaclchicago.org) for questions. RSVP here by 11:59 pm Monday, March 2.

This program will take place from 2–5 pm at the Midwest Buddhist Temple, 435 W Menomonee St, Advanced registration is required due to limited space. Masking during this event is required.

**JACL scholarships**  
The **Chicago Chapter of JACL** offers scholarships ranging from \$2,000 to \$5,000+ to undergraduate and graduate students who have demonstrated a commitment to JACL's mission. Scholarships are awarded based on an applicant's understanding



**Left:** Yamamoto descendants meet at the Arizona site of the Gila River Incarceration Camp.

**Above:** A layout of the Gila River Camp is shown on a plaque. The Yamamotos lived in Block 72.



**Left, bottom:** Butte Camp was one of two at Gila; the other was Canal.

of and alignment with JACL's mission, as well as academic performance and extracurricular involvement. Scholarships are open to all, regardless of race or ethnicity.

Funding for scholarships is provided by generous donations from JACL Chicago members and the greater

Chicago Japanese American community.

All application materials are due by email to [scholarships@jaclchicago.org](mailto:scholarships@jaclchicago.org) by 11:59 pm Central Time on Sunday, March 1, 2026. Awards will be distributed at the annual Scholarship Luncheon on Sunday, May 17, 2026.

For more information and application materials, please click [here](#).

The **JACL National Scholarship Program** also offers assistance. Guidelines, instructions and applications are posted on the JACL [website](#) and can be accessed by clicking the "Youth" tab.

Freshman applications must be submitted directly by the applicant to National JACL through the online form no later than Monday, March 2, 2026, 11:59 p.m. Hawaiian Standard Time.

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

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Don't forget to visit our website, [mbtchicago.org](http://mbtchicago.org), for more information about Shin Buddhism and the Midwest Buddhist Temple.

# And the heat is on again!

By Carl Ichikawa

After having to cancel in-person services and activities at the temple for three weeks, repairs have been completed and the temple has reopened. What started as a minor repair grew into a

more extensive project as we encountered the reality of a 55-year-old building and the need to upgrade some basic systems.

Many thanks to all who made our services on Zoom possible, where online attendance averaged 45 per week.



## Board's putting on the pots

By Joy Zavala

On Sunday, Feb. 1, the MBT Board of Trustees hosted its annual Soup Bar for the Sangha.

Board members donated toppings and sides to accompany the chicken and miso bases, including vegan. It was a nice way to warm up during our cold winter, to show appreciation to the Sangha and to socialize after service.

You could put just about anything you wanted into your soup at the Soup Bar hosted by MBT's Board of Trustees.

Photos by Joy Zavala

# Gratitude to Shinran for revealing path of Nembutsu

The following is from a Dharma message that was shared on Jan. 18, 2026.

By Jesse Zavala

Today, we gather to commemorate our founder, Shinran Shonin, and reflect on the significance of his teachings—the true essence of the Pure Land Way.

Can we first reach out to our friends and neighbors in Minnesota. To Rev. Todd and Connie Tsuchiya, please be safe and we can say to Minnesota, and the World, "Give Peace a Chance."

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Click this [link](#) to hear the Dharma message shared by Rev. Bob Oshita on Feb. 15, 2026 and this [link](#) to hear the message Rev. Bob shared on Feb. 22.

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The Nembutsu encompasses the essence of the universe within the name of Amida Buddha. The name signifies the temple, the congregation, and the Institutions of the Buddha-Dharma. We invite all Nembutsu-followers worldwide

to join and recite Namu Amida Butsu.

Thank you all for joining us today, and a special thanks to those attending online. Of course, I'd like to extend appreciation to Rev. Ron and Elaine Miyamura—Elaine, who is sometimes overlooked but is one-half of the MBT team. Shinran Shonin and his wife Eshinni established the "husband-and-wife team" of our Jōdo Shinshū temples.

Householder Buddhism is the model for Temple Life that Shinran's mission began in Japan. Siddhartha Gautama and Shinran Shonin both shared the ultimate purpose: "to end suffering" in this life.

It is my honor to speak to the Dharma School and the Sangha. Hō-Onkō focuses on the life of Shinran and the core tenets of Jōdo Shinshū, Shinran's Buddhist Teaching. Bodhisattvas are enlightened beings that teach us the Dharma in extraordinary ways.

This is the story of two young monks, Chikō and Raikō, who were friends for life. But while Chikō dedicated himself to study, Raikō gradually seemed not to worry about the monastery. Raikō spent a lot of his time sleeping as if he was not worried about going to the Pure Land.

He was a lot like me—why worry? I live in America, what could go wrong?

The name Raikō means "thunder child." Maybe a lot like me—"explosive." I was an angry young man. Foolish to think the Nembutsu could change my life.

Other times I was like Chikō, reading everything on religion and philosophy

hoping for enlightenment but doubting the Nembutsu. My intellect said, I'd be foolish to believe the Name of Amida Buddha would save my life. That saying the Nembutsu out loud could guide my life—that would be foolish.

When Raikō died first, Chikō was overcome with doubts about his friend going to the Pure Land and his fate. After months of worry, Chikō had a dream in which he found himself in the Pure Land, face to face with his departed friend. When Chikō asked how this could have happened, Raikō explained that he had, all his life, been mindful of the Buddha while walking, talking, sitting and even while sleeping.

Raikō had been committed to the constant visualization of Amida's paradise rather than rigorous study or ritual. By entrusting in the Buddha, mindfulness came naturally to Raikō.

Chikō, on the other hand, had doubts about his own ability all his life, while Raikō was content all his life living in mindfulness. His was a state of equanimity with the world. Calm, clear and at peace. He lived his religion. Outwardly foolish but inwardly wise instead of outwardly wise and foolish inside, as Shinran advised.

Upon awaking from his dream, Chikō dedicated his life to a visualization practice. And the story ends with his birth in the Pure Land.

Make sure you get enough sleep but having Dharma friends like Chikō and Raikō is just as important. Dharma friends help you control your anger.

If you are angry, there is a wooden bell in the hallway that says leave your anger at the door. You don't need it in the temple or outside. I think I made a hole in it already.

\*\*\*

Pure Land Stories were composed before the development within the Pure Land exclusive Nembutsu teachings of Hōnen and Shinran. These stories, called *ōjōden*, were stories of birth in the Pure Land.

These "Rebirth Tales" were known accounts of those born in the Pure Land and were very popular. What is interesting about these stories is that the obstacles to salvation appear not simply in terms of passions and desires but evil occurrences happen in groups.

The *ōjōden* tales suggested that "Dharma Friends" are the "key." Bad actions sometimes can occur not only by oneself but with others, as a group. Pure Land ritual manuals often recommended the formation of support groups, whereby individuals might support one another in their devotions, search, quest and worldview.

Daily life is perfect for practice, where dealing with complex relationships and emotions serve as a direct means to cultivate patience and empathy. The rituals and traditions of our Jōdo Shinshū services kept Shinran writing and teaching until the age of 90.

Celebrations in the temple take place here in the hondo, on the altar. The Dojo of Buddhist practice or meditation is under the Bodhi Tree where Buddha attained Enlightenment. Shinran found the Dojo in the home on the kitchen table. Here is the altar where you find the stuff of enlightenment.

In medieval Japan, the death of a pious Buddhist—particularly a great teacher—was often accompanied by extraordinary phenomena. These signs were interpreted as proof that the individual had successfully attained rebirth in Amida Buddha's Pure Land.

What differentiates Japanese *ōjōden* from the Chinese Tales of Birth is that these biographies are not intended to showcase pious monks but rather to demonstrate how anyone can achieve birth in the Pure Land.

Alongside the highly educated, Japanese tales of rebirth had both monastic and ordinary folks, the poor, the illiterate, even children. Stories of individuals whose birth in the Pure Land were confirmed by supernatural signs. The appearance of purple clouds from the west, mysterious lights, or golden rays filling the room.

These stories served to reassure followers and validate the teacher's spiritual merit, often recorded by "good friends" attending the deathbed.

When Shinran Shōnin passed away, his daughter Kakushinni worried. She felt his death was too ordinary. There were no visions, no unusual signs, none of the miracles people expected when a holy person left this world. But Shinran's passing was quiet, human and uneventful. Shinran Shonin died quietly at his brother's place in Kyoto.

Much of what we know about Shinran's inner life comes from his wife, Eshinni—especially through her letters.

Shinran would say, "The only way to repay the benevolence of Amida Buddha is to understand the teaching oneself and then teach it to others." After attempting to chant the Three Pure Land Sutras 1,000 times each, he gave up.

This is a decisive moment in exile. Shinran does not abandon compassion. He abandons the belief that compassion

see *ho-onko*, page 5

## ho-onko

*Continued from page 4*

can be manufactured through religious performance. This realization did not happen in a monastery. It happened in the shared life of husband and wife.

While Shinran traveled and taught, Eshinni supported the family through land management, kinship ties and daily labor. She remained grounded in the realities of food, children, illness and survival. We know that during tough times, she sold some of her clothes to feed the household.

Shinran, while in exile in Echigo, made himself useful. He had six children. Together, they formed a religion of everyday life. This is why Shin Buddhism could take root among farmers, artisans, women, and families.

Shinran's death was uneventful because his teaching had already moved beyond the need for signs. It was Kakushinni, his granddaughter, who ensured that this living teaching would continue, not as miracle stories, but as listening.

We repay Amida's compassion in the only way possible: by listening deeply, by entrusting fully, and by sharing the teaching. This is why Shinran's death was ordinary. And this is why the Nembutsu continues to be extraordinary.

Shinran's wife, Eshinni, and her family, belonged to the Miyoshi clan and was an Independent landowner, who inherited property from her family. Her status allowed her to support Shinran financially during his exile, ensuring their family's survival while he focused on spreading the Nembutsu teachings.

Eshinni was the daughter of Miyoshi Tamenori, a high-ranking samurai. This suggests Shinran's exile was not a period of total isolation.

When Gotoku Shinran, unshaven, looked in the mirror, he saw the face of a criminal. So, he took to study and reflection during



his exile. His extended family helped Shinran and provided critical support. His father-in-law's influence and resources ensured the couple lived in a household that was relatively well-off. The couple lived with servants, so they did not have to perform manual labor to survive.

His marriage to Eshinni allowed Shinran to transition from a celibate monk to a householder and provided the stability needed for Shinran to father six children and focus on his spiritual mission. Their marriage proved that religious liberation was accessible to ordinary people living secular lives.

While tradition claims he was an orphan, his father and brothers simply retired from the world to become Tendai Buddhist monks. He was still in touch with his family.

Eshinni was not a farmer. Her letters reveal her as a spiritual equal. Her letters describe a busy household with servants, indicating that she took care of the home and managed complex social and economic problems.

During severe famines in Echigo, she managed the welfare of her grandchildren and dependents, even selling her own clothing to ensure their survival.

Shinran's radical rejection of monastic hierarchies got him in trouble with the authorities. Branded a rebel at first, he laid the foundation for modern Shin Buddhism. His concept of Universal Empathy and doctrine of "self-acceptance" offers a framework for universal kindness in a divided modern world.

Eshinni's letters confirm Shinran's teaching of Deep Faith was a lived reality, not just an abstract theory, but the real world we live in every day and minute. His realization that the only true way to repay Amida's compassion was to "understand the teaching for yourself and then teach others."

This completed Shinran's shift from ritual performance to an evangelical focus on the Deep Faith he called shinjin.

Eshinni supported Shinran's mission by entrusting their youngest daughter, Kakushinni, to care for him in his old age. When Kakushinni expressed concern that Shinran's death was "uneventful" and lacking the supernatural signs expected of a holy person, Eshinni wrote back with absolute certainty asserting that his rebirth in the Pure Land was guaranteed solely by his complete reliance on Amida's Vow, rather than his personal conduct or the manner of his death.

While Eshinni was a high-ranking daughter of the Miyoshi clan, she enjoyed economic independence. This wealth allowed Shinran to devote himself to writing and "evangelizing" without needing a traditional job.

In Jōdo Shinshū, Shinran's life as a Buddhist monk and taking on a spouse is regarded as the first living proof that marriage and secular duties are not obstacles to enlightenment. The very stuff of Enlightenment is Ordinary Life and Life Partnerships.

Thank you for listening. Please put your hands together.

*Namo Amida Butsu*



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Photos from Jennifer Toguri

Terry Cichocki led a special workshop on chanting for the Dharma School students. Dharma School parent, Tiana (above), helps teach the students about the musical notes for chanting.

# Dharma School students find their voices

By Jennifer Toguri

The Dharma School had a meaningful February and found our voices through chanting and participating in the Nirvana Day service.

### February highlights

We were very fortunate to have Minister's Assistant Terry Cichocki lead a special workshop on chanting. This was a great chance for students to learn the rituals

of our service. We will continue to plan practices so we can lead the chanting in services with confidence.

For the online Nirvana Day service, we were happy to have our students conduct the readings. We look forward to having the Dharma School lead future services.

### Upcoming

• Join us for Dharma School classes on March 1 and 15. We will begin planning

for the Dharma School-led service for Hanamatsuri on April 12 and also share activities the families can do at home.

• Save the date for the annual Dharma School brunch on May 3. It's a highlight for the Dharma School families to host this Sangha Appreciation Brunch. The kids do a great job in the preparation, cooking, serving and cleanup. Please come out to support them!

## Learn more about temple at 1st MBT 101 session

On Sunday, March 22, we will hold our first MBT 101 Info Session following the Sunday Service. Come learn about temple history, services and operations—and enjoy refreshments and a raffle.

We want to hear from you! What do you wish you knew earlier? What are you curious about? What do you think new members should know?

Whether longtime

generational member or a newcomer, there's plenty to learn and share!

Contact your MBT 101 host Taryn Hutt (temple office manager) for more details or to suggest topics. This will be the first in a series, so if we don't mark your topic for this session, please know that we'll get to it.

Email questions and topics of interest to [office@mbtchicago.org](mailto:office@mbtchicago.org).



## Musicians, singers: Come join the MBT Band

By Joy Zavala

Calling all musicians and singers: The MBT Band is recruiting new members. If you play an instrument and/or would like to participate as a singer, please sign up [here](#) or on the signup sheet on the MBT Bulletin Board in the

Social Hall.

The MBT Band will perform in upcoming services and events. Scheduling will be based on musician/singer availability.

So, if you would like to share your talents and be a part of the band, please sign up.



### Kasutera (Japanese Pound Cake)

#### Ingredients

- 6 eggs, separated
- 1 pinch salt
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 Tbsp. honey
- 1 Tbsp. mirin
- 1 Tbsp. lemon juice
- 1 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 1 cup flour

#### Directions

1. Heat oven to 350°. Separate eggs. Add a pinch of salt to egg whites and beat to stiff peaks. Set aside.
2. To egg yolks, add sugar, honey, mirin, lemon juice and oil, beating continuously. Add whites to yolk mixture. Blend in flour.
3. Pour batter into greased and floured 9"x9" pan. Bake for 35 minutes.

*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.*

## buddhist women's association

# NLOB friends close Irving Park doors

By Jeanne Toguri

We have been informed that the New Life for Old Bags sessions at the United in Faith Lutheran Church on West Irving Park Road in Chicago had its last working gathering on Feb. 7. It has been a pleasure working with Chrissy Batorski Peacock, NLOB board president, and Mary Moy, NLOB vice president, over the past 11-plus years.

According to their stats, which include sleeping mats made by MBT friends as of February 2026, 7,476 mats have been made since NLOB began repurposing plastic bags in Chicago. Their records also note that 5,233,200 bags have been repurposed and volunteers have logged 598,080 hours of work.

Our group was formed in fall of 2014. And with the help of our Sangha and community friends and groups like the Breakers Senior Residences at Edgewater Beach, Stephane Spencer and her group, Jewish United Fund Volunteer Network, Comer Middle School and various sororities, we were able to complete 343 mats from 2014–2025. All were distributed in the area from the Loop to Uptown areas where the unhoused lived.

We will continue to collect completed mats and give them to the MBT Homeless Project to deliver to the unhoused. We will still supply plastic bags and any plarn, plastic yarn, until supplies are

depleted. Call the MBT Office, 312.943.7801, and we will get in touch about providing supplies.

**2031 WBWC Planning Committee:** The planning committee for the 2031 World Buddhist Women's Convention, which is to be hosted by the BCA/FBWA in Las Vegas, is actively involved in the selection of venue and program for the event. They have selected an event planner and will be collaborating closely with them. Also, a Concept Proposal has been in the works with discussion and input from all the temples. They would like to celebrate inclusivity, Buddhism and music. They would like to hear what we might be interested in hearing about or seeing at the convention. So please share your thoughts with Elaine Miyamura or Jeanne Toguri know so they can convey them to the committee.

#### Save the dates

**April 26:** MBT BWA General Meeting, after service in the large conference room on the east side of the Social Hall.

**Sept. 27:** MBT BWA General Meeting and Luncheon in Social Hall at noon. More information will be forthcoming. If you would like to add something to the agenda, please let Jeanne Toguri know.

#### Acknowledgment of donations

Carol Baba  
Elaine Ogawa

**Bulbs**

**Seeds**

**and more!**

## Spring flowers

— MBT FUNDRAISER —

Proceeds from The Spring Flower Fundraiser will benefit MBT. The funds will benefit the Legacy Garden. Thank you!  
<http://mbt.fpfundraising.com/>

**Now thru 5/15**



# Dharma School students

By Joy Zavala

The proceeds from our Bake Sale on Sunday, Feb. 1, will help fund our Outreach projects. It was a great

start to the year with lots of pastries and other delicious goodies donated for our fundraisers. Thank you, everyone, for donating and purchasing all of our treats!

## Find out ways to volunteer

Are you interested in volunteer opportunities with the Midwest Buddhist Temple? If you are, just fill out this [form](#) and join the 2026 MBT Volunteer Mailing List. No commitment, just information!

We'll contact you when new volunteer opportunities are announced (new, fun projects in the works). We definitely appreciate your interest.



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## March 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 March, and who we will remember during the MBT service on March 1. To add a family member, please contact the MBT Office.

March			
1934	Teizo Tomihiro	2001	Masae Nakayama
1935	Kimi Masai		Ishiko Tanaka
1942	Kiyoshi Muraoka	2002	Tomi Tsuboi
1947	Satokichi Taguchi		Elizabeth Isoda
1949	Kamesaburo Shimizu	2003	Masahiko Kodama
1959	Fukuko Suzuki		Linda Sugiyama
1963	Torakichi Fukumoto	2005	Mary Hashimoto (Mitzi) Shio
1967	Senzo Murakami		Schectman
1968	George Mizuhara		Chikateru Inouye
1969	Shin Kunisada		Lillian Yoshiko Nakamoto
1971	Sumi Osako		Elizabeth Kimiko Nance
1972	Joe Takeshita		Masa Terao
1973	Shimeno Ichikawa	2006	Yoko Matsumoto
1974	Chokichi Okazaki	2008	George Eji
1975	Masa Kinoshita		Henry Inouye
1978	Yoshi Kayano		Eugenia Tomasula
1979	Uheiji Matsumoto		Judith Wilson
1980	Kishino Watanuki	2009	Sam Isamu Suekama
1983	Misao Fujii	2011	Hiroko Matsumoto
1984	Shige Hikida		Janina Bikulcs
1985	Itaro Oda		Dora Laliberte
1986	Mae Koyanagi		Pereira
1987	Rinzo Ozaki	2012	Doris Keiko Coulter
1988	James Hamano	2013	Roland Haru Hagio
1989	Mamoru Muraoka	2015	Akiko Toba
1990	Tsuyo Ishiyama		Ray Kayano
1991	Robert T. Yoshimura	2016	Teruo Yamashita
1992	Shigeru Yoshimura	2017	Shizuye Hikida
1993	Sumi Sameshima	2019	Frank Tanaka
1994	James Hiroshi Inouye		Fred Tsuji
1995	Glenn Tsusaki	2022	Amy Katahira
1996	Tsuruyo Nishimura		Wayne Takeshita
1997	Masato George Yada		Nick Chavarria Iii
1998	Tom Noboru Arima		Hideki Maeda
1999	Sam Owens		Yoshinobu Sekiguchi
2000	Sumi Shimizu	2024	Paul Doi
2001	Okoto Yamamoto	2025	Susan Marie Hollars
2002	Yoshiko Katsuda		Sumiko Kosobayashi
2003	John Jiro Fujii		
2004	Ralph Yatsuo Imaoka		
2005	Kentaro Nakajima		
2006	Suzanne Oto-Beverly		
2007	Cdr. Scott Nagatani		
2008	Ruby Akiko Yamasaki		
2009	Dennis Lin		
2010	Frank Yanari		

## middle path

*Continued from page 1*

created with a simple and sincere purpose: to cultivate peace through compassion, loving-kindness, and mindfulness, and to bring peace to individuals, communities, our country, and the world.

2) The Walk For Peace itself is not a political movement, nor is it focused on advocacy or legislation. Rather, it is a spiritual offering—an invitation to live peace through everyday actions, mindful steps, and open hearts. We believe that when peace is cultivated within, it naturally ripples outward into society.

It is a sincere wish to spread peace. And the monks have been embraced by the communities they are walking through. And I compare the Walk For Peace to the events of ICE and, in particular, in Minnesota and the deaths of two people in the past few weeks. And this does not take into account the 31 deaths of people in ICE detention in 2025.

We have seen ICE in the Chicago area and, now, Minneapolis seems to be making the most headlines, especially with the death of Alex Pretti. What is most disturbing are the methods of the arrests, compared to local police arrests with legal court-ordered warrants: To be in combat-like gear, with rifles and face coverings, and then to use excessive force to arrest people, to take people to the ground with force. To see doors being broken down, people thrown to the ground and then handcuffed. And then often being brutally carried face-down by each arm with their wrists being handcuffed.

The tactics are brutal and violent, and the officers do not want to be followed nor do they want their pictures taken or filmed.

How do we understand what is going on in this country? How can a Walk For Peace and the expression of loving kindness be happening alongside the brutality of ICE terrorizing our cities?

These might not be the very extremes— but close enough for us today. We can use them as symbols of extremes.

As Buddhists we have to find the Middle Path. Yet, there seems to be no Middle Path because each extreme seems

so different.

On one hand, very few of us have the purity of heart that those disciplined Vietnamese monks have. Each of them wanted to walk those 23 hundred miles with only a heart filled with thoughts of peace. The physical difficulties were minor compared to having a focus on only peace. We cannot be those monks right now.

On the other hand, we cannot imagine being trained in ways that create the most fear and brutality among the people these officers are arresting. We cannot be those ICE officers right now.

We have to find a balance, we have to find a Middle Path.

We look at each side, and we cannot be either, but we have to choose which is closer to how we see the world. Say we take the Walk For Peace path, and we try to live up to the idea of peace as an expression of loving kindness. So we try to find peace in everything we do every day.

And, when we choose the Walk For Peace path, we do not ignore the brutality of ICE. We have to guard against it and allow our chosen path of peace to enter our lives.

Of course, it is never this simple when we make our choices in life. But you get the idea. The idea of a balanced Middle Path that allows us to survive in these difficult times.

We need to keep a historical perspective on our situation today. We have to remember, these are not really the difficult times that people have faced in the past.

I think of my parents' generation, faced with the decision of following Executive Order 9066 to leave their homes for an unknown future or to resist and face jail and prison time. Or the difficult times that Shinran faced with civil wars, famine and social unrest all at the same time.

All times are difficult times, so we have to make the best of our situation and to find our own balance to live our lives to the best of our abilities.

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



## national

*Continued from page 1*

through Sunday morning, concluding after the Eitaikyo service. The gathering blended celebration and business, offering opportunities to connect with fellow Sangha members from across the country while also engaging deeply in the work of the BCA.

### Preparation and council sessions

In advance of the meeting, more than 50 documents were shared with delegates for review. While highlights were presented during the two-day council sessions, the breadth of information reflected the scope and complexity of BCA's work. Delegates—who carry voting proxies from their respective temples—posed detailed and thoughtful questions to the BCA board, particularly regarding the budget. Discussions centered on revenue and expenses, line-item transparency, and year-over-year comparisons, reflecting a shared commitment to accountability and sustainability.

One topic of concern is the financial strain faced by several rural temples. Currently, BCA dues are approximately \$200 per member, and some smaller temples are working hard to remain affiliated while navigating financial challenges. In response, an important proposal under consideration would offer temples five years of waived dues, provided they commit to investing those funds into membership growth while working closely with BCA to track progress. This proposal is expected to be

10 mbtchicago.org



voted on next year.

It was also announced that BCA ministers will receive a raise—the first in seven years—an important step in supporting our clergy amid a nationwide minister shortage.

### Fellowship and shared learning

The Thursday evening newcomers' session, led by BCA President Steve Terusaki and President-Elect Glenn Inanaga, provided a helpful overview of BCA's structure and initiatives. It was a valuable introduction and set the tone for the days ahead.

We were also joined by two guests from

the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, which has 29 temples and 19 ministers. They attend as guests to fellowship and exchange ideas, as they face many of the same challenges as BCA temples.

The EcoSangha Committee shared its efforts to expand environmental initiatives across more districts, encouraging temples to form local EcoSangha committees and deepen their commitment to environmental stewardship.

### Celebrating community

Evenings were filled with warmth and

*see national, page 11*



# All wars are world wars

The following is excerpted from "Buddhism of the Heart: Reflections on Shin Buddhism and Inner Togetherness" by Jeff Wilson.

By Jeff Wilson

Every country is no more than a few degrees of separation from any conflict. In this way, all wars are world wars. In the contemporary situation, it is easy to see how the entire world is always involved in every war. But as Buddhists, we should recognize that this has always been the case: every war, in every period, is always a world war. There is no such thing as an isolated conflict.

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*There is no such thing as an isolated conflict. All things arise together and are completely interconnected.*

---

All things arise together and are completely interconnected, inter-penetrating to a degree impossible for the foolish human mind to fully comprehend. What affects the strangers in Iraq, for instance, affects me and every other person on the planet, even if I don't immediately perceive the effects. Shatter one gemstone in Indra's net, and the trauma is reflected in all.

If we turn away from conflict, thinking we can escape the pain that others experience, we are mistaken about how the universe operates, and we betray the bodhisattva vow. There is nowhere that one can go in samsara to get away from our connection to the sufferings of others.

The only thing I can do is turn toward the pain that others feel and say, "This involves me too. When you hurt, so do I."

## national

Continued from page 10

connection. The Hospitality Room, hosted by Northwest temples, was a highlight—complete with homemade dishes from White River Buddhist Temple (Thursday), Seattle Betsuin (Friday), and Tacoma Buddhist Temple (Saturday). The generosity and spirit of dana were truly on display.

Saturday evening's program brought creativity and joy to the forefront. Techno Hoyo delivered a unique multimedia experience—an immersive video installation set to live chants and gathas, accompanied by live DJing. It was both meditative and energizing, and, yes, everyone danced.

We were also treated to a moving performance by Bonbu Stories, whose music and storytelling offered heartfelt and serene reflections of Shin Buddhist life. Their rendition of "The Golden Chain" and the Lantern Song brought the community together in song and dance, including a spirited version of "Tanko Bushi" the coal miner dance, Seattle Betsuin style.

### Reflections for MBT

Throughout the weekend, when I shared that I was from MBT, I was met with warm recognition and positivity. It was a proud reminder of the strong reputation and spirit of our temple.

The national meeting also highlighted opportunities for growth at MBT. The BCA offers a wide range of resources, programs and events that we can further embrace and promote within our Sangha. With so many committees and initiatives underway, there is much happening at the national level that can support our local efforts.



This experience also underscored the importance of cultivating younger leadership and encouraging broader participation in temple governance.

I am deeply grateful to MBT for the opportunity to attend and represent our temple. I took extensive notes and would be happy to share more with anyone interested.

*In Gassho,  
Allison Hagio-Conwell  
Vice President,  
MBT Board of Trustees*

**MIDWEST BUDDHIST TEMPLE  
2026 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/](http://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



**\$9,765**  
**10%**  
of goal  
as of  
2/9/2026

# domo

The Midwest Buddhist Temple gratefully acknowledges the following donations received between **Jan. 21 and Feb. 17.**

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 corrections.

**Sogi Memorial**

Bora Kim  
Tae Shimizu

**Hoji Memorial**

Barry & Keiko Bretschneider

**Memorials**

Sandra Dolan

**January Memorial**

John Adachi  
Dr. Michael & Yvonne Harada  
Paul Imaoka  
Melissa Omori

**Ho-onko**

Terry Cichocki  
Dr. Michael & Yvonne Harada  
Carl & Harumi Ichikawa  
Roger & Arlene Suekama  
Jennifer Toguri  
Jeanne & David Toguri  
Joy & Jesse Zavala

**February Memorial**

John Adachi  
Barry & Keiko Bretschneider  
James & Amy Chikaraishi  
Erin Chikaraishi & Kevin Carsten

Dr. Dona Chikaraishi  
Steven Fischer  
Allison Hagio  
Myrna Hogan  
Kathy Isoda  
Kachiko & Koji Okubo  
Kaye Shinozaki  
Michael Takada  
Jennifer Toguri  
Jeanne & David Toguri  
Joanne Toguri  
Tommy Yamashita  
Teri Yasunaga-Blasco

**March Memorial**

Gail & Ben Wong

**Nokotsudo**

Kathy Isoda

**Legacy Garden**

Diane Kayano-Hata

**Outreach Programs**

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**Pledge / Membership**

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*If you have arranged donations through a giving fund or automatic payment, please ensure that your name is included so that we can properly record and acknowledge your generosity.*



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## happenings

Continued from page 2

Applications for the non-freshman scholarship categories (undergraduate, graduate, law, creative/performing arts, and financial aid) are also to be sent directly by the applicant to National JACL through the online form no later than Friday, April 3, 2026, 11:59 p.m. Hawaiian Standard Time.

All applicants must be a youth/student or individual member of the JACL; a couple/family membership held by a parent does *not* meet this requirement.

### Sharing history

**Carl** and **Harumi Ichikawa** traveled to Arizona for the **Gila River Connections: A Celebration of Shared History** which was a gathering of descendants of internees. "There were two days of films, music, discussions and fellowship," says Carl, "but the highlight was a visit to the former camp site which sits on the Gila River Indian Reservation.

"The solitude makes it hard to imagine that over 13,000 internees lived there, including my mom's family from Santa Maria, Calif. (**Michiko Yamamoto** and siblings **Pete, Yoko** and **Aki**). We were joined by cousins **Janet Takahashi** (California) and **Susan Brown** (Illinois)—both daughters of the late **Yoko** and **Katsuo Matsumoto**—and their spouses **Rex** and **Mark**. Susan's daughter **Alison** and grandson **Parker** (Louisiana) also came, making it a three-generation gathering. Many thanks to the Arizona JACL and Gila River Indian Community for their warm hospitality."

### Day of Remembrance vigil

A photograph of **Tonko Doi** was featured on the front page of the Chicago Tribune last month, with the coverage of a Day of Remembrance vigil at the Broadview ICE facility. Day of Remembrance commemorates the 1942 Executive Order 9066 that forced the mass incarceration of people of Japanese ancestry during World War II. Japanese Americans tie the WWII incarceration to Trump's immigration crackdown.



### Mi casa es su casa

The **Macri Family**—**Nick, Lisa, Dominick** and **Luca**—will be hosting a high school exchange student from Japan for a week in March. And then, says Nick, "we plan to spend spring break in San Francisco!" Exciting times!

### La La Lone Star State

**Bob Sutter** and **Elaine Matsushita** were off for Austin, Texas, in mid-February. Not only was the weather beautiful (shorts and sandals time), but so were the two performances "La La Land Live in Concert," which featured Bob on piano with the Central Texas Philharmonic. The shows were also conducted by Justin Hurwitz, who composed all the music for the hit film.



**Top and left:** "La La Land" composer and "Live in Concert" conductor Justin Hurwitz brings Bob Sutter to the front of the stage after the "La La Land Live in Concert" in Austin. Concert-goers gave Bob a lot of love outside the stage door at Bass Concert Hall, stopping to take pictures with him and to chat.

**Above:** A photo of Tonko Doi, taken at the Day of Remembrance vigil at the Broadview ICE facility, appeared in the Chicago Tribune.

Photo, top, by Tyler Vahldick; photo, left, by Elaine Matsushita; photo, above, by the Chicago Tribune.

### Wedding bells ringing

**Kylor Ikoma** (son of **Bob** and **Gail Ikoma**) and **Marisa Laccone** were married in Florida on Feb. 5. The courthouse ceremony was followed by small reception attended by parents and cousins. Congratulations!

### Sad news

We were deeply saddened to learn of the passing of longtime MBT member **Asako Nishimura**. Mrs. Nishimura, who moved to Minnesota several years ago, passed away on Feb. 6 at the age of 98. She is survived by her daughters **Jackie** and **Janice Nishimura** and was predeceased by her husband, **Tosh**, a former president of the Buddhist Churches of America, and son, **Gary Nishimura**. A memorial

service is being planned for later this year at MBT.

### Happy birthday to...

We would like to send happy birthday wishes to other friends born in the month of March:  
**Michi Hirota** / March 1  
**Connie Tsuchiya** / March 2  
**Carley Matsumoto** / March 6  
**Amy Chikaraishi** / March 14  
**Christina Szabo** / March 14  
**Whitney Arima** / March 15  
**Joy Zavala** / March 22  
**Lauren Arima** / March 24  
**Dane Matsumoto** / March 25  
**Mary Doi** / March 30  
**Kyle Ogawa** / March 31

If there is someone's birthday you would like mentioned in future issues, please send their name and birthdate to [elaine.matsushita@mbtchicago.org](mailto:elaine.matsushita@mbtchicago.org).



# Volunteers make, deliver 190 sandwiches to unhoused

By Joy Zavala

Our hard-working volunteers were at MBT on Jan. 31, helping with our first Homeless Project sandwich day of the year.

Despite some setbacks, we made over 110 sandwiches at MBT and 80 sandwiches made at volunteers' homes and delivered to the temple. We delivered sandwich bags to Sarah's Circle, North Side Housing and Supportive Services, and Ewing Annex Hotel for Men.

We have such dedicated members—even ones who couldn't make it but had 20 sandwiches delivered 25 miles by Uber. We also had different people shopping and new volunteers who made



More than 110 sandwiches were made in the MBT kitchen. Along with 80 sandwiches made at volunteers' homes, all the sandwiches were packaged by volunteers in the Social Hall.

Photos by Joy Zavala

deliveries today to make

this a successful start to 2026. Thank you, everyone!



Clayton Hamano - President

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## save the dates

**MAR 22** Is there something about our temple you are curious about? Are there things new members should know? Come learn about MBT history, services and operations—and enjoy refreshments and a raffle—at our first MBT 101 Info Session. (See story on page 6 for more information.)

**Time:** 11:30 am, following service. **Location:** MBT. **More information:** Contact the MBT Office, 312.943.7801. You can also email questions and topics of interest to [office@mbtchicago.org](mailto:office@mbtchicago.org).

**MAR 28** Join us for our Homeless Project sandwich-making day. This is a hybrid event with sandwiches either made at the temple or 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:** Contact the MBT Office, 312.943.7801, if you would like to participate.

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

We have moved our YouTube channel to a new location: [youtube.com/@mbtchicago-youtube](https://youtube.com/@mbtchicago-youtube).

Here you can view Dharma messages from the comfort of your home. We keep about 12 months of the latest videos online.

If you have any questions just drop us a note at [youtube.admin@mbtchicago.org](mailto:youtube.admin@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.

# MAR

at midwest buddhist temple

## 1

SUNDAY

10:30 am Monthly Memorial Service / Cynthia Mee

## 8

SUNDAY

10:30 am Family Service / David Martin

## 15

SUNDAY

10:30 am Nirvana Day Service / Rev. Chiemi Bly

## 22

SUNDAY

10:30 am Spring Ohigan & Pet Memorial Service / Rev. Ron Miyamura  
11:30 am MBT 101 event

## 28

SATURDAY

Noon/1 pm Homeless Project Sandwich-Making (see details at left)

## 29

SUNDAY

10:30 am Family Service / Roger Suekama

