

Midwest Buddhist Temple

Bulletin

The monthly newsletter of the Midwest Buddhist Temple

September 2026
Volume 82
Number 9

435 W. Menomonee St., Chicago, IL 60614 • 312.943.7801 • mbtchicago.org • Minister: Rev. Aki Rogers

Ginza '26 draws hundreds of visitors



*They came, they shopped,
ate and enjoyed the shows*

By Kiku Taura

Ginza 2026, our 71st festival, took place Aug. 7–9—with picture-perfect weather on Friday and Saturday, and despite a challenging Sunday, hundreds of visitors over the three days.

Guests thronged the vendor booths and the Waza, artisans from Japan who have been making the trip to display their unique crafts for many years, with second- and third-generation artisans continuing their family legacies. The stage shows played to large audiences each day—with martial arts demonstrations by Chicago Aikido Dojo and Choyokan Kendo. Na Kapuna ukelele group adorned both the stage and ground in their colorful outfits, and Mikoren Awa Odori group had most of the audience out of their seats trying their hand at the lively dance movements.

Each day featured MBT's own Minyo folk dance and taiko groups, with MBT Taiko and Ho Etsu Taiko joining for a combined show on Saturday. The

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Ginza photos by Allison Hagio-Conwell,
Nicole Sumida and Joy Zavala

happenings

By Elaine Matsushita

JASC will host a **vaccine clinic** from 11 am to 1:30 pm Thursday, Sept. 24, offering flu and COVID-19 vaccinations.

The clinic will be available to ADS clients and homemakers from 11 am–12:30 pm, and will to the community from 12:30–1:30 pm.

All attendees must RSVP [here](#) so JASC can ensure an adequate number of vaccine doses are available. They must also complete the [Walgreens Vaccine Consent Form](#) and email the completed form to pdesouza@jasc-chicago.org by Sept. 22.

Please note: Vaccines for individuals age 65 and older are covered by Medicare/Medicaid. Uninsured individuals may have an out-of-pocket cost of approximately \$78. Individuals aged 64 and under who are uninsured may be eligible to receive vaccines at no cost through Walgreens' coverage program.

'Defining Courage'

Tickets are on sale now for a one-night-only performance of "Defining Courage," a story about what it means to be an American and the legacy of the Nisei World War II soldiers, Americans of Japanese ancestry who served in the segregated military units of the 100th Infantry 100th Infantry Battalion, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, the Military Intelligence Service, and the 522nd Field Artillery Battalion.

The performance will include stunning cinematography, historic film and interviews and local musicians on piano, cello,



Photo from John Sagami
Scouting—including work toward his Eagle Scout rank—has kept Yohei Sagami very busy this summer.

violin, ukulele, guitar, drums and trumpet with the RAISE choir, curated by Music Director **Chris Wade**.

According to the program's website, event-goers can see, hear and experience the Nisei soldiers' incredible heroics through this piece of innovative storytelling. "Far from a history lesson, it is a testament to inner strength, one that inspires us in our search for courage in today's world."

The program, narrated by Emmy-winning ABC7-Los Angeles news anchor and filmmaker **David Ono**, will be held at the

Athenaeum Center for Thought and Culture, 2936 N. Southport Ave., Chicago, at 6 pm Sept. 20. Tickets are \$35–\$100 and can be purchased [here](#).

15 years and going strong

JACL Chicago will be celebrating 15 years of Kansha at its **Go Go Go Kansha!** fundraiser on Sunday, Oct. 18. Kansha alumni, family, friends and supporters are invited to gather for a fun afternoon at Kamehachi to reconnect, share memories, celebrate the community we've built, and support the future of the Kansha Project.

Kansha visionaries **Bill Yoshino** and **Pat Harada** will also be honored for their lasting impact. Kamehachi is at 1320 Shermer Rd., Northbrook. You can RSVP to join this special milestone celebration, clicking [here](#).

'Crystal City' comes to Chicago

"Crystal City: America's Last WWII Concentration Camp," a national traveling exhibit by the Crystal City Pilgrimage Committee, will be on display in the newly renovated Legacy Center Library & Reading Room at the Japanese American Service Committee from Oct. 16–Nov. 20, 2026.

The "Crystal City" exhibit tells the story of the only U.S. internment camp created to reunite families during World War II. Created as a family reunification center for immigrants arrested under the Alien Enemies Act in 1942, Crystal City remained open until 1948, long after WWII ended.

The Crystal City camp, administered by the Department of Justice, held thousands of

Japanese, German and Italian individuals and families. It was also used as a detention facility for Latin American residents awaiting deportation in a prisoner of war exchange with Axis countries.

Hours of the free exhibit are 9 am to 5 pm Mondays through Fridays, and 9 am to 5 pm on select weekend dates (Oct. 17 and 18, Oct. 24, Nov. 7 and 14). The JASC is at 5700 N. Lincoln Ave., Chicago. Learn more and plan your visit [here](#).

The Summer of '26

Miya Malfait completed her internship at IBM and enjoyed living in the city (Chicago) over the summer, says mom **Christina Szabo**. Meanwhile, Miya's brother **Justin** kept up with his soccer and continued his work at a senior home in the Barrington area. And Mom is back at work at Vantive Healthcare. "So far, it is going well and I am happy with the new role," she says. Congratulations, Christina.

The Scouting life

Life Scout, **Yohei Sagami**, is now working on his Eagle Scout rank, shares his dad **John Sagami**. He had a full summer with a "Hometown Mission Week," Summer Camp with his Scout troop, and the National Jamboree with the local council Scouting contingent.

"I just wanted to thank everyone for being such a huge part of my life," says Yohei, "and always letting us join over the past few years. ... I wish everyone the best!" Good luck on your Eagle Scout work, Yohei!

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

Celebrating Ohigan with workshop, music

During the times of the spring and autumn equinoxes in Japan, the Buddhist practice period of Ohigan is observed. Typically, it is observed for seven days: the three days before the equinox, the equinox day itself, and the three days following. It is a time when the weather is neither too cold nor too hot and the earth is in perfect alignment between day and night—thus, a good time to focus on the Buddha-Dharma.

Higan (彼岸) means “other shore,” the shore of enlightenment, and is in contrast to Shigan

(此岸), “this shore” of samsara filled with ordinary, unenlightened beings mired in attachments, such as the three poisons of greed, anger, and ignorance.

The Midwest Buddhist Temple will hold an Ohigan Workshop on Saturday, Sept. 19, followed by our Ohigan Music Service on Sunday, Sept. 20.

The Saturday workshop will include a short chanting service and two lectures by

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Photo from Wheel of Dharma

Both the late Michiko Ichikawa and her daughter, Elaine Miyamura, have assisted and led Bon Odori at MBT for over 50 years.

50 years in the dance circle

A tribute to MBT's Minyo leaders

Reprinted from the August issue of the Wheel of Dharma.

By Dr. Wynn Kiyama

BCA and Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii

Both the late Michiko Ichikawa and her daughter, Elaine Miyamura, assisted and led Bon Odori at the Midwest Buddhist Temple in Chicago, Illinois, for over 50 years. Ichikawa co-founded and directed the Midwest Minyo Group, studied Japanese folk dance with Tsutomu Matsuda and conferred the teaching duties to her daughter in 2008. Miyamura continues to lead Bon Odori at the temple as the leader of the Midwest Minyo Group.

*Editor's note:
In this series,
“50+ Years in the
Dance Circle,”
the Wheel of
Dharma pays
tribute to the
extraordinary
dance instructors
who taught Bon
Odori at BCA
temples for 50 or
more years.*

Michiko Yamamoto was born in Santa Maria, Calif., in 1924—the third of four children of

Shotaro and Ume Yamamoto. As a child, she played with her siblings on the large family lot and dug for clams at Pismo Beach.

During the mid-1930s, she and other Japanese American youths learned Bon Odori and *dojo buyo* (children's dances) at the Guadalupe Buddhist Church from the visiting Rev. Yoshio Iwanaga.

During World War II, the Yamamoto family was incarcerated at the Gila River concentration camp in Arizona, where Obon with Bon Odori was celebrated each year from 1942 to 1945. Michiko once again learned from Rev. Iwanaga, who visited Gila River to instruct and direct the camp's Bon Odori in July 1943.

After the war, the family moved to Chicago. Michiko took on domestic work and, eventually, met Takaaki Ichikawa at the newly formed Midwest Buddhist Temple. The two were married in 1949 and had two children: Elaine Midori, who was born in 1950, and Carl Taka, who was born in 1954.

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Sunday storm unfortunately forced an early closing, so we missed the performance of the Chicago Koto Group and the Combined Taiko finale.

This year's food menu featured our acclaimed chicken teriyaki and veggie burger dinners—both which included MBT's traditional coleslaw and steamed rice. Customers also enjoyed freshly grilled Mirai corn-on-the-cob with butter, grated cheese and togarashi red pepper, and welcomed the return of udon cold noodles.

The refreshment booth kept guests cooled with soft drinks,

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Ginza photos by Allison Hagio-Conwell,
Nicole Sumida and Joy Zavala





ginza

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Hawaiian shave ice and Kintoki (sweet red beans on ice).

The MBT Booth offered Japanese snacks and sold our newly designed Ginza T-shirt, as well as a bookstore stocked with books and nenju reflecting Jodo Shinshu teaching.

At show intermission, guests flocked to the *hondo* to hear Aki Sensei's Dharma Talk.

During Sunday's sudden downpour, the room was filled to capacity and our young members helped with hospitality, passing out complementary bottles of Pocari Sweat and assisting with umbrellas and escorting people to their cars.

Once again we had a huge turnout of volunteers who helped to set up the grounds, manage the booths, cook and

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clean during and after the festival. Volunteers donated enough food each day to keep our workers fueled and hydrated.

Teamwork spirit was at its peak when the Sunday storm hit, with everyone pitching in with positive attitudes to care for guests and each other. Our unstoppable crews continued serving throughout and after the storm.

With early closing preventing the raffle drawing on Sunday, our younger members took turns

pulling names out of the drum during Monday's cleanup day. The winners have been notified—receiving top prizes of \$1,000 and \$500 cash, and many certificates generously donated by area restaurants (see story on page 7).

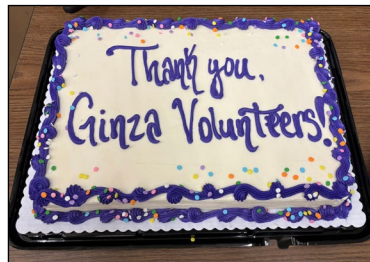
Thank you to every volunteer, supporter and guest who helped make the 71st Ginza Holiday Festival a resounding success. Together, we continue to carry forward the tradition of Ginza as a gift to our community and a reflection of our Sangha's shared values. See you all at Ginza 2027!





Food, shave ice, prizes and cake—what better way to say thank you to MBT's Ginza volunteers?

Photos by Joy Zavala



Thank you, volunteers!

A few weeks after the Ginza dust had settled, the festival volunteers were back at MBT—this time to be celebrated for a job well done.

The temple hosted its Ginza Volunteer Thank-You party on Sunday, Aug. 30, and put out a spread of various sandwiches, side dishes and, of course, a beautiful and delicious cake.

Albert Sora even made Hawaiian shave ice—what a treat!

Guests were asked to write their favorite Ginza memory for a raffle to win various prizes—including Ginza T-shirts and some pieces donated by the Waza artisans.

We are so grateful to everyone who helped at our Ginza this year.

Ginza raffle winners

Here are the winners of the Ginza raffle prizes:

\$1,000 / Burt Fujishima

\$500 / Andrew Tesla

\$300 / Andy Banicki

Gaijin (5-course dinner for two curated by Chef Paul Virant, including beverage pairings; estimated value, \$230) / Lori Wolan

Oceanique (5-course dinner; \$190 value) / Todd Tsuchiya

Kamehachi (\$75 gift card) / John Napier

Kamehachi (\$75 gift card) / Doug Feinstein

Cocoro (three \$20 gift cards) / Bennett Preskill

Osteria Via Stato (two \$25 gift cards) / Burt Fujishima

Umai Japanese Kitchen and Sushi (\$50 gift card) / Kristi Hsieh

Tenjin (\$50 gift card) / James Kulich

Orso's Italian Restaurant (\$50 gift certificate) / Kiku Taura

Umai Japanese Kitchen and Sushi (\$50 Gift Card) / Kristi Hsieh

Osteria Via Stato (two \$25 gift cards) / John Adachi

Cocoro (two \$20 gift cards) / Joyce Morimoto

Tenjin (\$25 gift card) / John Adachi

Lou Malnati's Pizza (\$25 gift certificate) / Joy Zavala



Last moments: Anxieties and peace of mind

The following is from a Dharma message that was shared on Aug. 2, 2026.

By Rev. Aki Rogers

For this monthly memorial service, I would like to talk about “Last moments, ‘Right Mindfulness:’ Anxieties and peace of mind.” These are some of the things we might think about or worry about concerning death, whether it is our death or the death of friends and family.

First, I would like to talk a little bit about Shinran and his daughter Kakushin-ni.

Kakushin-ni was the youngest of Shinran and Eshin-ni’s seven children. She was born in what is known as the Kanto region in present-day Ibaraki prefecture and most likely close to the modern city of Mito.

Click this [link](#) to hear Aki Sensei’s Dharma message on Amida Buddha and the Five Kalpas of Planning—shared on Aug. 23, 2026.

This is where Shinran and his family were living at the time. Shinran was sharing the Nembutsu teachings in this region after he had been pardoned from his exile in Echigo (modern-day Niigata prefecture) on the Sea of Japan side. After being pardoned, instead of returning to Kyoto, he and his family went east across the mountains to the Pacific coast side of Honshu.

After many years in this Kanto region, Shinran eventually decided to return to Kyoto but, in his advanced age, he needed someone to care for him and so Kakushin-ni went with her father to Kyoto. Her mother and some of her older siblings returned to Echigo to take care of her mother’s family lands there.

Kakushin-ni and Shinran spent many years together in Kyoto and so she was there when Shinran fell ill and eventually passed away. Yet, somehow after Shinran’s death, Kakushin-ni had worries: Did my dad have a good death? Did my dad actually go the the Pure Land?

She had all these worries, so she wrote to her mother sharing her concerns. While that letter that Kakushin-ni wrote has been lost to time, her mother’s reply, however, was preserved and rediscovered in 1921 in the Hongwanji archives. So we have the physical letter that her mother wrote. Eshin-ni, herself, was literate as the daughter of bookkeepers and a bookkeeper herself so we also know that these letters were her own writings and not of someone else writing on her behalf.

You may be imagining an elderly, frail woman bent over a desk writing. However, in those times, people wrote holding the

sheet of paper up in the air and using a fine point brush. So think of an old lady in her 80s, by candlelight, writing to her daughter. And it is pretty clear that Eshin-ni had received a letter where Kakushin-ni was upset and had all these questions about her father and whether he had a “good death” by Buddhist standards.

In her reply, Eshin-ni reassures Kakushin-ni about the worries she had. Even though Shinran himself did not have any auspicious signs at the time of his death nor at his cremation, Eshin-ni was certain there was nothing to worry about.

Despite being raised with the Nembutsu teachings all her life, Kakushin-ni still had worries about death and what happens after: Did my father have a good death? Did he really go to the Pure Land like the teachings say?

And her mother confidently replies, “Do not worry about that. He definitely went to the Pure Land.”

So what are we talking about when we talk about “good death” or “auspicious signs” that were “missing” according to Kakushin-ni?

This has to do with some ancient Buddhist ideas about “right mindfulness” at the moment of death. Thus, a “good death” is being of right mindfulness, and in the broader Pure Land thinking, it meant thinking on the Buddha as you are dying. Right mindfulness means having “right thoughts,” “right words” and “right actions” all the way up to that last breath you take in this life.

So for many ancient Buddhists, this meant things like having your hands in gassho, calling Amida Buddha’s name nonstop, and imagining Amida Buddha and the Pure Land until you absolutely couldn’t—and then passing away.

It also isn’t just you as the dying person being in this state of “right mindfulness” but also everyone else around you. So whether it was family, friends, or other monks or nuns, everyone needed to be in the state of right mindfulness in the three modes of thoughts, words and actions.

Master Genshin, the sixth of the seven great teachers of Jodo Shinshu, even detailed this out in his main work, the *Ōjōyōshū* “The Essentials of Birth in the Pure Land,” which was written around 985 CE, almost 200 years before Shinran was born. Thus it was already well-established in Japan that this was the way to have a “proper” Buddhist death, and the key was to be of the right mind.

And what would prove that you had the right mind at the moment of death would be that auspicious signs or good omens appeared. This included things like purple

or multicolored clouds arising, pleasant melodies would start sounding from nowhere, and pleasant scents would arise out of nothing.

If these were witnessed, then it was assured that the deceased had gone to the Pure Land.

Even though we do not have Kakushin-ni’s letter, clearly she had worries that none of these auspicious signs appeared when Shinran died or when he was cremated. And so she wrote to her mom saying, “Mom, I didn’t see any of this. I didn’t hear any of this. I didn’t smell anything pleasant. Did dad really go to the Pure Land?”

Other accounts of Shinran’s death also described him in a traditional deathbed pose such as in many Pure Land traditions and the idea that Amida Buddha comes to meet you at the moment of death. So Shinran was in his room with his head to the north, lying on his side facing the west—because Amida’s Pure Land is in the west—with a scroll or painting of Amida Buddha on that western wall. Some cases would have multicolored strings coming from Amida’s *byakugo*, that tuft of tightly coiled hair between the eyebrows, and the strings would be held by the dying person so that there would be a physical connection between the person and Amida to help them constantly think on the Buddha, to think and say “Namo Amida Butsu.”

Probably to most of us this sounds really weird and superstitious, right? How unusual since we don’t have those kinds of traditions or practices now. But this is what they thought of back then. And it wasn’t new to Shinran’s time, but had been going on for centuries before him.

Now going back to the *byakugo*, that spot that looks like a white pearl or bump between the eyebrows on our statue of Amida Buddha. That spot has long been recognized as one of the 32 marks of a “great being.” Master Genshin also wrote a meditation specifically on this feature of the Buddha to help people attain birth in the Pure Land based on the meditation from the Sutra of Contemplation on the Buddha of Immeasurable Life (Kangyo), the second of the three major sutras of our tradition.

So with all of these so-called “necessary” practices and “right mindfulness,” is it possible to have a “good death” by ancient Buddhist standards? Is it possible for an ordinary person to have a “good death”—let alone a strictly practicing monastic? And remember, Right Mindfulness is one of the parts of the Eightfold Path. And it means not just in words, but also thoughts and actions—all three aligned with only thinking on Amida Buddha, only thinking about birth in the Pure Land.

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good death

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How many of you think you can do that when you are dying?

First off, how many of us know exactly when we're going to die? How many of us know the exact moment, down to the second, that you are going to die? None of us know.

Most of us probably think "Oh, I'll probably live in to my 70s or 80s," right? We have our ideal age that we would like to pass away at, things we want to accomplish before we die. If you're already older, you might be thinking to yourself "At least another year would be good."

We have those events we want to experience that kind of push us through wanting to live a bit longer. But we definitely aren't ready to die now—and not even tomorrow.

But we don't know. It could be tomorrow. It could be later today. We could walk outside, cross the street thinking everything is fine and then *bam*, we're hit by a speeding car out of nowhere. We could be like those this past week in Kumamoto Prefecture in Japan. One moment everything is normal. The next, a magnitude 7 earthquake brings down the building on top of you and suddenly your life is gone.

Or it could be an act of war. In August, we reflect on the lives lost during World War II, particularly the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. One moment everything is going on as usual. The next, a fiery hellscape if you managed to survive the initial blast, but thousands dead all at once.

Thankfully, the U.S. is not currently experiencing war here. But so many places around the world are—including the U.S. involvement in them. So many lives lost to war on a daily basis. They might be fighting to protect what they believe in one moment, and the next, because of war, their life has ended.

How do we know when we are going to die so that we can be in this mode of "right mindfulness" at the moment of death?

Historically, in Japan during major battles,

there would be Buddhist monks out on the edges of the battlefields chanting "Namo Amida Butsu" so that the warriors could hear the Nembutsu as they lay dying and have a chance at attaining birth in the Pure Land—or, at least, hopefully have a better rebirth. But again, we don't have those practices today, so how can we be in that state of Right Mindfulness when we die?

On top of not knowing when we will die, what about what kind of death? Of course, we all hope for a "peaceful" death, an "easy" death. And by that, it usually is something like you go to bed and just don't wake up again. But how many of us are guaranteed that—a quiet, quick, painless death?

Whether it is dealing with cancer, a heart attack, or another ailment that causes great pain, we might end up in a less fortunate situation. In those last moments, through such pain, can you really be thinking clearly and sincerely in your words, thoughts and actions?

I know even for me that would be very difficult. I haven't had anything major other than a kidney stone, but, oh boy, did that hurt. Kidney stones are said to be more painful than giving birth, but I've never had a child so I cannot compare. But it was excruciating. At one point, I was lying on the floor and couldn't get up because the pain was so bad.

Luckily, it eased up eventually so I could get up, climb into the passenger seat and my mom drove me to the emergency room. But the waves of pain did not stop, and each time it hit, I sure as heck was not thinking "Namo Amida Butsu." And if this is my end, I wasn't thinking about birth in the Pure Land. The pain was just too much to think about anything other than how terrible I felt.

So again, how possible is it if we have all of these rules, all of these expectations to have a "good death" and then to have others witness "auspicious signs" as "proof" of our attaining birth in the Pure Land? It seems impossible.

For Shinran, those rules, made up by ordinary beings, didn't matter because he had a different understanding of what it meant to entrust in Amida Buddha, to

entrust in the Buddha-Dharma teachings.

And we know this through Eshin-ni's letter. In her reply to Kakushin-ni, Eshin-ni relates the story of how Shinran started his Buddhist studies at the age of 9, becoming a monk and, then, at the age of 29, had a kind of crisis of faith.

Shinran had been practicing and studying for 20 years, doing all sorts of difficult practices—studying all the sutras, reflecting on himself. And he comes to the point where he realizes: "I've done all this, and I don't feel a step closer to enlightenment. I don't feel a step closer to the great awakening. I'm supposed to be a better person, but each time I look inside, I see darkness, more attachments in me. I must be doing something wrong or I'm completely flawed."

So he leaves Mt. Hiei and Eshin-ni tells us that Shinran goes down into the city of Kyoto to a temple called Rokkakudo. It's a hexagonal temple, which is where the temple gets its name from. And inside the temple, it is dedicated to Kannon Bodhisattva, or Avalokitesvara, the bodhisattva of compassion. The temple was established by Prince Shotoku many centuries before Shinran.

At Rokkakudo, Shinran undergoes a 100-day meditation retreat where he just sits and contemplates, sits and contemplates. On Day 95, Shinran has a vision of Prince Shotoku, who comes to him and says that he understands Shinran's struggles and that there is another monk from Mt. Hiei who also struggled with the Buddha-Dharma but has found a new path. Go find him, he says, his name is Honen.

So Shinran leaves Rokkakudo and finds Master Honen and begins studying under him. Master Honen teaches about a different understanding of Amida Buddha, one that goes beyond needing to be a perfect monk, one that doesn't need you to be perfect at anything. Amida Buddha's wisdom and compassion is for everyone, but especially those who cannot do Buddhist practices to perfection.

In sharing this story of Shinran's Buddhist

*see **good death**, page 10*



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good death

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path and entrusting in Master Honen's understanding of Amida Buddha's wisdom and compassion for all beings, just as they are, Eshin-ni assures Kakushin-nin that Shinran was certain in his entrusting and eventual birth in the Pure Land.

Shinran couldn't be the perfect monk on Mt. Hiei and that caused him great anxiety. But what Master Honen taught brought him peace of mind such that he could truly experience the wisdom and compassion of the Buddhist teachings.

So no matter what, whether Honen's teachings were wrong or not, it at least gave Shinran peace of mind and something to work toward. And so Shinran became a follower of Honen and the teachings of Amida Buddha for the rest of his life.

Eshin-ni ends her letter saying this, "You should ponder these things well." It was a reminder to reflect on the different stages of Shinran's life—from his crisis of faith and finding renewal through the teachings of Amida Buddha as taught by Master Honen. That, thereafter, Shinran led his life with supreme dedication and devoutness to the teachings that he never once had a doubt about what the Buddhist teachings mean and what wisdom and compassion for ordinary, flawed beings was about.

Eshin-ni's last words were, "Thus, you should have no doubt concerning Shinran's birth in the Pure Land because Shinran himself had no doubts." So, regardless of how his death may have been—with purple clouds, without purple clouds, with beautiful scents or without them, with beautiful music or without—none of that matters. What matters was Shinran's own peace of mind given to him through the teachings of the Nembutsu and Amida Buddha's nondiscriminating wisdom and compassion.

One last part of reassurance from Eshin-ni's letter was that she wrote about hearing that one of their sons, Masukata, was also present at Shinran's death. She says "It is a great joy for me to know how strong the bond is between parent and child." She's reassuring Kakushin-ni that her father had a good death.

Why? Because Shinran was deeply invested in the Dharma and had no doubts about it. It was so strong that the teachings were passed on to his children such that Kakushin-ni and Masukata were there with their father at the moment of death because they, too, had connections to the Dharma.

If they didn't have that connection and entrustment, they would likely have

rejected their father and not attended him in his dying moments nor cared about his death and birth in the Pure Land.

Thus, this letter from Eshin-ni gives us insight into what is necessary in Jodo Shinshu to have a "good death," which is entrustment, *shinjin*, in the teachings.

Earlier today we chanted this verse from the Shoshinge:

本願名号正定業 至心信樂願為因

成等覺証大涅槃 必至滅度願成就

Hon gan myō gō shō jō gō Shi shin shin gyō gan ni in

Jō tō gaku shō dai ne han His-shi metsu do gan jō ju

In English, it means:

The Name embodying the Primal Vow is the act of true settlement,

The Vow of entrusting with sincere mind is the cause of birth;

We realize the equal of enlightenment and supreme Nirvana

Through the fulfillment of the Vow of attaining Nirvana without fail.

~~~~~

The Shōshinge was written by Shinran as a summary of the Jodo Shinshu teachings and this passage was included. It is reminding us that entrustment in the teachings, knowing something is true and real that you can rely on it without doubt is one of the great gifts of the Buddha-Dharma. It helps us when we have those difficult situations when we're faced with the ultimateness of death. We can be at ease knowing we have lived a life such that we do not have regrets at the end, and, to me, that is a good life, a good death.

Such that even if it is painful, even though we know we don't want to part from our loved ones, if we have lived a life without regret, or at least been able to reconcile the regrets we do have or learned to let go of them, we're able to not cling at the end, to not be filled with shame and anger or other negative emotions when we leave this physical body behind.

That is one of the gifts that the Dharma gives us.

How do we, as living beings, process the death of our loved ones or think about our own inevitable death? Did they have a good death? Will we have a good death? Were they able to have peace at the end, but also peace for us? We have our anxieties, our worries and when we know that those who have gone before us have had a peaceful death, it helps us to accept that it's a difficult time, but there can be peace and ease.

There can be comfort and an ability to move on because we're not worried that they've fallen into "hell" or a punitive rebirth, because we don't have that in our tradition. We don't have to worry about what's going to happen next.

We know our loved ones have gone from this world, but they remain in our hearts to continue to teach us, to guide us, to provide comfort that we had a good life with them.

Yes, they are no longer here physically, but they are here in our heart and carry on with us.

Amida Buddha—whether you believe in literal birth in the Western Pure Land or as a more metaphorical story or somewhere in between—is here as the Buddha-Dharma teachings of wisdom and compassion to give us peace of mind so that we're not filled with anxiety for our deaths or the deaths of those around us. When we realize that we are already embraced in the wisdom and compassion of the Buddha-Dharma, it helps us lessen our worries about what happens after.

Many of us may feel like Kakushin-ni, wondering what happened after, what happened to my dad when he passed away? What happened to mom after she passed away? Did they really go to the Pure Land or did they end up somewhere else and are suffering?

But by understanding the reality of this life as unrepeatable, we see just how precious it is and we can live more fully in the moment without regrets and with more gratitude for what we do have. Gratitude for the relationship we had with a person who is dying or has already passed away. To know that we had a deep connection with someone beyond ourselves and, hopefully, they had an impact on us and us on them. And all together, that is a good life, that is a good death. So that we don't have to worry about what comes next.

So again, the August memorial and all of our memorials help us to remember that connection to our loved one, to acknowledge that we may still carry worries, but the Buddha-Dharma is always here for each of us to support us through those difficult times and to get us to be able to take the next steps afterward.

I think sometimes that's one of the most challenging things—what do you do next because it's not the same anymore when a loved one is gone.

Sometimes it means just being here in temple or being with us online to hear the Buddha-Dharma and be reminded that "Oh, yeah, others go through this too, I'm not alone in this." The Buddha-dharma offers us many ways forward, and ways forward together with peace and ease.

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

**W**e have moved our YouTube channel to a new location.

[Here](#) you can view and listen to 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.



## dharma school corner

### Help keep Dharma School going

Urgent—we need teachers!

The Dharma School is at risk if we cannot find volunteers. We would appreciate help with teaching classes and event

planning throughout the year.

Even if you can only help occasionally, we would like to talk with you.

# MBT Dharma School

- Planning
- Teaching
- Leading select services
- Arts & Crafts
- Students of all ages

Email: [jennifer.toguri@mbtchicago.org](mailto:jennifer.toguri@mbtchicago.org)

- Experience preferred but not necessary
- Background check provided by MBT

Fall 2026

# *Teachers Wanted*



MIDWEST BUDDHIST TEMPLE

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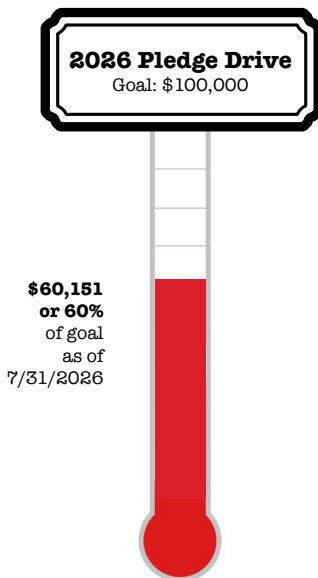
## MIDWEST BUDDHIST TEMPLE 2026 PLEDGE DRIVE

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



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# domo

The Midwest Buddhist Temple gratefully acknowledges the following donations received between **July 16 and Aug. 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 corrections.

### July Memorial

James & Amy Chikaraishi  
Myrna Hogan  
Susan Ivery  
Tom Matsumoto & Linda Ogawa  
Joy & Jesse Zavala

### August Memorial

John Adachi  
Mark & Susan Brown  
Dr. Michael & Yvonne Harada  
Pat Harada & Tom Rowland  
Gail & Bob Ikoma  
Ted & Gayle Kodama  
Elaine Matsushita & Bob Sutter  
Fumiko Matsushita  
Dr. Rick & Joyce Morimoto  
Steve Arima & Elaine Ogawa  
Kachiko & Koji Okubo  
Albert & Judy Sora  
Joann Umeki  
Phil Umeki  
Dr. Leslie Yamamoto & Gordon Purtell  
Tommy Yamashita  
Joy & Jesse Zavala

### Memorial

Mickey & Jean Hamano  
Kayoko Kawaguchi  
Maureen Loughnane & Evan Henschel  
Craig Nakamoto  
Kiku Taura & Takamasa Onose  
Rev. Todd & Connie Tsuchiya

### Obon

Mickey & Jean Hamano  
Dianne Ichishita  
Kayoko Kawaguchi  
Yumi Masuoka  
Jan & Robert Mita  
Rev. Ron & Elaine Miyamura  
Linda & Michael Naito  
Steve Arima & Elaine Ogawa  
Kachiko & Koji Okubo  
Melissa Omori  
Kaye Shinozaki  
Esther Takeshita  
Joanne Toguri  
Roxane Tono  
Joy & Jesse Zavala

### Founder's Day

Yumi Masuoka

### Legacy Garden

John Bikulcs  
Jean Inouye (in memory of Michiye Hirota)  
Linda & Michael Naito (in memory of Michiye Hirota)  
Jennifer Toguri

### Dharma School

Steve Arima & Elaine Ogawa  
Aaron Victor

### Pledge / Membership

Stacy Arima Castillo  
John Barnes  
Derek & Kristine Provo  
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Mark & Susan Brown  
Dr. Michael & Yvonne Harada  
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Brian Key  
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### General Donation

John Barnes  
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Debra Levie  
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Lynn Palmgren  
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Ho Etsu Taiko  
Cynthia Thinnies  
Robin Wylie  
Makoto Yamaguchi

*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.*

## September 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 July, and who we will remember during the MBT service on Sept. 6. To add a family member, please contact the MBT Office.

### September

|      |                     |      |                     |      |                     |
|------|---------------------|------|---------------------|------|---------------------|
| 1933 | Kesataro Ichikawa   | 1986 | Mary Ellen Kitagawa | 2015 | Vicky Ito           |
| 1938 | Masu Hiraiwa        | 1989 | Tom T. Chikaraishi  | 2017 | Fred Yamaguchi      |
| 1950 | Torano Sugano       | 1990 | Fumio Kodama        |      | Chiyeko Edith Tsuji |
| 1951 | Riyo Yoshida        | 1992 | Setsuko Hakariya    | 2018 | Walter Pyer         |
| 1956 | Masuyo Nagao        | 1993 | Kazuo Tsunemura     | 2019 | George Ichishita    |
| 1958 | Ken Takaki          | 1994 | Mary Naito          |      | Alice Yoshiko Sato  |
| 1960 | Une Hirano          | 1995 | Suna Maneki         |      | Kazuko Jane Yaguchi |
| 1961 | Yoneji Kataoka      | 1997 | Amy Dianne Kaihara  | 2020 | Yayeko Adachi       |
| 1962 | Kiichi Kusatsu      |      | Dick Kodani         |      | Donna K. Kamihana   |
|      | Mitsuhiro Taketa    | 2000 | Elsie S. Kaihara    | 2021 | Tsune Nakagawa      |
| 1963 | Kotama Kawachi      |      | Yeko Shishida       |      |                     |
| 1965 | Keiichi Kunisada    |      | Earlene Hardimon    |      |                     |
| 1968 | Toku Fujii          | 2001 | Eiko Ono            |      |                     |
| 1970 | Sakuye Kinoshita    | 2002 | Harriet Kawaguchi   |      |                     |
| 1972 | Hisao Sakumura      |      | Diane Guerrido      |      |                     |
|      | Katsumi Suzuki      | 2003 | Jennie Ogata        |      |                     |
| 1973 | Hsi Hong Chen       |      | John Uehara         |      |                     |
|      | Mitsuru Nishioka    | 2006 | Memi Asakura        |      |                     |
| 1978 | Paul Kiyoshi Tahara | 2009 | Jean Setsuko Tahara |      |                     |
|      | Yukie Takaki        |      | Kari Morita         |      |                     |
| 1979 | Chiyoka Nihei       | 2010 | Charles Endo        |      |                     |
| 1980 | Shi Chong Chen      |      | Emi Jane Shiozaki   |      |                     |
| 1981 | Hisa Hikida         | 2013 | Taro Mukai          |      |                     |
|      | Ken Ishikawa        | 2014 | Jerry Burgdoerfer   |      |                     |
| 1984 | Hisano Ito          |      | Tomiko Ishikawa     |      |                     |
| 1985 | Chizuko De Silva    |      |                     |      |                     |
|      | Kaname Yamamoto     |      |                     |      |                     |

## ohigan

*Continued from page 3*

Aki Sensei. Each lecture will also include some time for questions and answers.

Everyone is welcome to attend. The workshop is free and offerings of *dana* (selfless giving) are always appreciated.

The Ohigan Music Service is also open to everyone and no registration is required.

### Saturday Workshop schedule

|                       |                                                                     |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>8:30 am</b>        | MBT opens                                                           |
| <b>9-9:20 am</b>      | Welcome and chanting Service in <i>hondo</i> (main hall)            |
| <b>9:20-10:10 am</b>  | Lecture (in <i>hondo</i> ): Buddhism, Ohigan, and the Six Paramitas |
| <b>10:10-10:40 am</b> | Break                                                               |
| <b>10:40-11:30 am</b> | Lecture (in <i>hondo</i> ): Jodo Shinshu, Ohigan, and Amida Buddha  |

### Sunday Music Service

|                 |                                              |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------------|
| <b>10:30 am</b> | Service begins                               |
| <b>11:30 am</b> | <i>Otoki</i> (light meal) in the Social Hall |

*Dana* (donations) can be made [here](#).



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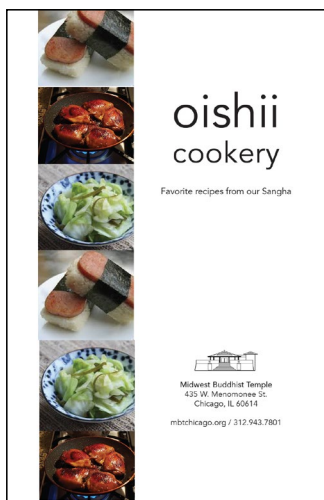
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# Thanks to Ginza volunteers

By Jeanne Toguri

**T**hank you to all the volunteers who have made this year's Ginza Holiday Festival a successful one. A special thank you to the MBT BWA volunteers who assisted with food preparation, cooking, workers' meals, and cleaning.

**MBT Oishii Cookery cookbook:** We only have 16 cookbooks left, so if you are still interested in purchasing one, please let us know. The book's are \$15 if picked up at the temple, \$20 if mailed and can be paid by cash or check made out to MBT BWA.



We are still looking for individuals interested in being on a committee to update the cookbook. We would like the committee to discuss and decide if they would like to keep the Oishii Cookery going forward. Please let us know if you are interested.

**Save the date:** The MBT Buddhist Women's Association will hold its General Meeting and Luncheon on Sunday, Sept. 27, 2026 after the Sunday Family Service.

Please be prepared to discuss additions to our Board as well as candidates for officers.

Again, we will have bingo as our entertainment with prizes donated from those who have any White Elephant items. (If you are cleaning or downsizing and have an item in good condition or hasn't been used that you would like to recycle, please bring it to the luncheon).

Tickets for the luncheon—\$10 for 2026 MBT BWA members and \$15 for nonmembers—will be sold in early September. Details on the meal will be announced soon.

## minyō

*Continued from page 3*

Elaine attended Ogden Elementary School in the Old Town neighborhood, Stewart Elementary School further Uptown, and Nicholas Senn High School, where she participated in the school choir and Latin Club.

In the 1960s, Michiko Ichikawa assisted with Bon Odori at the Midwest Buddhist Temple before being asked to lead in 1964. She taught Rev. Iwanaga's repertoire and choreography, and, in 1965, co-founded the Midwest Minyo Group, a dance group that led Bon Odori at the temple and performed at festivals and cultural events.

Ichikawa hosted annual visits by Tsutomu Matsuda, founder of the Nippon Genchi Minyo Hozon Kai (Japanese Regional Minyo Research Institute), beginning in 1966. Matsuda taught dances such as

"Ecchu Owara Bushi," "Sado Okesa" and "Yagi Bushi," and awarded Ichikawa with a teaching certificate in 1981.

Ichikawa choreographed "Oyama Ondo" for the Midwest Minyo Group and learned new dances at the Buddhist Churches of America's annual Eastern Buddhist League conferences, including Michiye Hirota's choreography of "Chowa Ondo," and repertoire from the New York Buddhist Church and the Toronto Buddhist Church.

In addition to these activities, Ichikawa worked at Kemper Insurance, ultimately retiring as the secretary to the president.

Elaine joined the Midwest Minyo Group in 1968 and earned degrees from Kendall College and Loyola University. She worked at Northwestern University's health clinic and the Ann and Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago,

eventually staying at the latter hospital for almost four decades.

In 1975, she married Rev. Ron Miyamura and took on the additional duties of a minister's spouse. The couple generously shared Bon Odori and taiko resources and supported Buddhist communities in Cleveland, Detroit, Minneapolis, St. Louis and the East Coast.

In 2008, Ichikawa retired as the director of the Midwest Minyo Group but continued to advise for many years. As the group's director since that time, Elaine Miyamura has perpetuated the Bon Odori tradition at the Midwest Buddhist Temple with a repertoire that reaches back to Rev. Iwanaga, Tsutomu Matsuda and Michiko Ichikawa, and outwards to temples throughout the Midwest and East Coast.

## oishii / recipes from mbt friends

### Egg Foo Yung

Helen Ideno

#### Ingredients

- 4 eggs
- 1 onion, thinly sliced
- 1 cup bean sprouts
- 1 cup nappa cabbage, sliced
- ¼ cup bell pepper (optional)
- Salt, pepper, to taste
- Garlic, chopped
- Protein (optional): may add shrimp, cooked chopped chicken or pork)
- 1 Tbsp. oil

#### For sauce:

- 1 cup chicken broth or water
- 1 Tbsp. cornstarch
- 2 Tbsp. soy sauce

#### Directions

1. Mix eggs, onion, bean sprouts, cabbage, bell pepper, salt, pepper, garlic and, if using, choice of protein in a bowl.
2. Heat oil in small pan over medium heat. Add 2 cups of the egg-vegetable mixture into pan. Cook about 5 minutes. When edges are done, flip over and cook until done.
3. Place on plate, cover to keep warm and continue making batches until mixture is used up.

#### For sauce:

1. Mix chicken broth (or water), cornstarch and soy sauce in saucepan; bring to boil, then lower to simmer until ready to serve.

*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.*

# Volunteers make, deliver 300 sandwiches

By Joy Zavala

**T**hanks to the volunteers who made sandwiches, bagged grapes and filled bags for the MBT Homeless Project on Aug. 29.

Although we had only two drivers, they delivered 300 sandwiches to Sarah's Circle, NorthSide Housing for Men and Lincoln Park Community Services.



Photo by Joy Zavala

Volunteers—at the temple and some at their homes—made 300 sandwich bags to be delivered to Sarah's Circle, NorthSide Housing for Men and Lincoln Park Community Services.



Clayton Hamano - President

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## save the date

**SEPT 6 and 20** An Introduction to MBT: Meet Aki Sensei or one of our Minister's Assistants to learn about MBT and some basics of how our Sunday Services are conducted. These introductions will be held the first and third Sundays of each month. No signup is needed.

**Time:** 9:45–10 am. **Location:** Meet upstairs in the main hall of the *hondo*. **More information:** Contact the MBT Office, 312.943.7801.

**SEPT 6** We will have an Ice Cream Social after service. Please join us for a special cool treat.

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

**SEPT 9, 16, 23, 30 and OCT 7, 14, 21 28** Eight MBT Study Classes will be held via Zoom on Wednesday evenings. These are informal discussion groups about general Buddhism and our Jodo Shinshu tradition. They will focus on ways in which the Buddhist teaching and practice impacts our daily lives. Emphasis is on discussion/participation as we learn best through our interaction with each other sharing our life experiences.

No prior knowledge or commitment to attending all sessions is required. Attendees can also submit questions via email or online form prior to each class.

**Time:** 7 pm. **Location:** Via Zoom. **To register:** click on this [link](#). **More information:** Contact the MBT Office, 312.943.7801.

**SEPT 10, 17, 24 and OCT 1, 8, 15, 22 29** Come attend our Jodo Shinshu for Bonbu People lecture-style class with a Q&A session for bonbu (ordinary, imperfect) beings. Each eight-week session will be focus on a certain topic or theme.

**Time:** 7 pm. **Location:** Via Zoom. **To register:** click on this [link](#). **More information:** Contact the MBT Office, 312.943.7801.

**SEPT 13 and 27** Join Aki Sensei for Bonbu Chats, informal discussions regarding Jodo Shinshu, the teachings and how to apply them in our daily lives. These discussions will be held the second and fourth Sundays of each month.

**Time:** 11:30–12:30 pm. **More information:** Contact the MBT Office, 312.943.7801.

**SEPT 26** 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.

## happenings

The Chicago Air and Water Show took place on Aug. 15 and 16, the weekend after our Ginza Holiday Festival. **Nancy** and **Greg Rivera**, fresh from managing chicken teriyaki grilling and serving, offered paid parking to event visitors on a rainy Saturday, assisted by **Ken Kadoyama** and **Gary Tsuchiyama**. **Rich Taura** and **Marcus Moore** took up their posts on Sunday. We applaud these volunteers who provide this coverage each year to raise additional revenue for MBT.

### Happy birthday to...

We would like to send happy birthday wishes to our friends who were born in the month of September. Happy birthday to:

Elaine Ogawa / Sept. 5  
Sandra Adams / Sept. 7  
Alan Arima / Sept. 9  
Rev. Ron Miyamura / Sept. 10  
Michael Harada / Sept. 10  
Fumi Matsushita / Sept. 13  
Nancy Endo / Sept. 21  
Alex Yu / Sept. 23  
Emiko Morimoto / Sept. 23  
Luca Macri / Sept. 26

# SEPT

at midwest buddhist temple

**6**  
SUNDAY  
10:30 am Monthly Memorial Service / Rev. Aki Rogers  
11:30 am Ice Cream Social (see details at left)

**13**  
SUNDAY  
10:30 am Family Service / Rev. Aki Rogers

**20**  
SUNDAY  
10:30 am Fall Ohigan All-Music Service

**26**  
SATURDAY  
Noon Homeless Project Sandwich-Making (see details at left)

**27**  
SUNDAY  
10:30 am Family Service / To be determined

ORDER NOW THRU 10/15\*

## Flower Power Fall Fundraiser

DAFFODILS | TULIPS | HYACINTH | MORE!

Proceeds from The Fall Flower Fundraiser will benefit future Garden Cleanup Days. \*All orders will ship starting in mid to late September in time to plant. Thank you for supporting our fundraising efforts.

<http://mbt.fpfundraising.com>