



THE SANGHA STREAM

June 2022

THE PRIEST WHO LOST EVERYTHING

BY: SENSEI FREDRICH ULRICH

The priest was very old. His shoulders slumped as he shuffled about the naijin. Lately, he had taken to using a cane to manage the steps up to the shrine. Of course, the temple was much older than he was. It had seen many priests arrive, serve then enter nirvana right here in front of the Amida. Amida's full round face had the steady glow of the full moon, peacefully lighting the way in the hours of the night. The darkness willingly parted its curtains for the smiling face.

Sitting in the naijin mumbling the nembustu to himself had become the main activity of the day to the old man who now sat before the Buddha Statue. He hoped that the forces of death gathering within him would also defer to the light of the Amida, letting him pass through to the other side with a smile. But the priest was not sure how this would happen because he had lost everything.

He has lost his voice so that he could not utter the nembutsu out loud. Sometimes it was difficult to move his lips. How could he possibly recite the holy name if he could not move his lips? His hands shook too much to write anything, even short letters to his son who had moved to Canada. He was much loved by his congregation so they still wanted him as their minister even though he could no longer give dharma talks or lead the chanting.

The head laypeople did that for him, reverently reading and re-reading the dharma talks of his youthful years. The women of the temple brought him what little food he could eat daily. They also accompanied him on his weekly visit to his wife's gravesite. For these visits, he used two canes. It was a painfully slow visit even though his wife was interred near the temple. He always said to them that the Amida was moving toward us, the least he could do was move towards his wife's resting place.

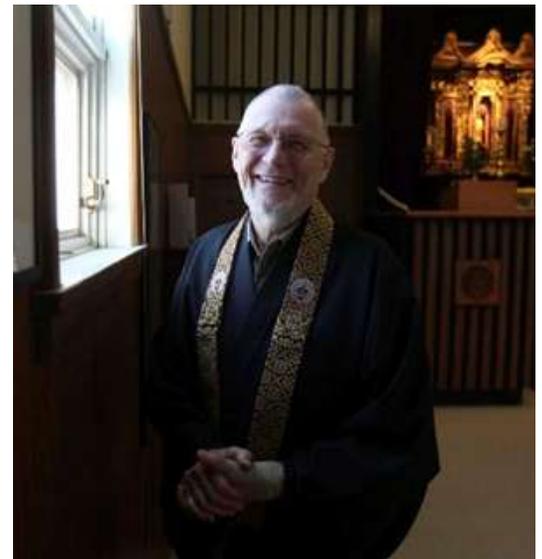


Photo credit: Winnipeg Free Press



But the fact that he could not move his lips or speak well concerned him. If he was to be saved by reciting the nembutsu, but the aging of his face muscles and voice box prevented it, would he ever be able to find his way to the Pure Land? Visiting his wife's burial spot provided him with some glimmer of hope. Still, the question nagged at him. He had served many congregation members who were for various reasons unable to recite the nembutsu at the time of their passing. Soon he would be making his journey to the other side himself without being able to recite the Name.

The priest had lost everything. He lost his wife a decade ago. His daughter had died of a childhood disease. His son found a good career in Canada, thousands of kilometres away. Now his speech was failing him and he could no longer smile at his good sangha friends. His ability to utter the nembutsu had diminished. During his long years of service to the temple, he had had many pet cats. His wife loved each one equally. If the Amida brought salvation to all creatures, what about those who could not recite the nembutsu. Were they left behind? In spite of the iron ball of doubt that had begun to weigh him down, his eyes still maintained the gentle look of a loving pastor.

As a young man, he went every year to watch the dancing cranes of Hokkaido. He had missed the last three years, mostly because the congregation felt responsible for him. They did not want him to take any trips for fear of his falling. Then too something could always happen during the journey by car. No, it was best he stayed in the temple to await his last days. The priest would try again and again to write the kanji for the crane to make the headmen understand he wanted to see them one last time. There was something in the cranes dancing that beckoned to him. A beautiful brush painting of the dancing cranes hung in the foyer of the temple. The painting was as old as the man himself. The brush-drawn cranes, however, showed an undiminished youthful vigour. The priest would stand there gesturing every time someone visited him. Of course, they knew what he wanted, but he pretended ignorance. It was for his own good, after all, they thought.

Finally, a younger member of the temple, about the same age as the old priest's son, came with some equipment. Several temple members helped unpack a projector and a large screen along with some special devices. Then they fetched the minister from the naijin. He came haltingly sure to use his canes to descend the steps. They led him to the foyer, then gestured at the beautiful brush painting showing the cranes dancing. The headman gestured back and forth from the screen to the painting several times. Finally, the priest understood. He stood up and began to make his way to the large steps leading down from the temple. A team of temple members fell in line determined to help him negotiate the steep descent.

Once on the temple grounds, the priest headed towards the first seat in the first row. The congregation had a special chair there waiting with a sweater folded on the back to protect him from the evening air. There he sat expectantly for half an hour waiting for the evening darkness to be just right for streaming the pictures onto the giant screen. In the meantime, the congregation gathered until every last seat was taken. When it was dark enough, the young man stepped up and pushed the correct buttons. The priest had been a young man once himself, but at a time before there were any computers at all. Now he sensed something magic was about to begin.



There it was, a screen was full of cranes, dancing, circling and turning in the celebration of being there, just there and nowhere else. They gyrated in the light performing a mating ritual, weaving in and through each other simply out of the joy of movement.

Then the priest stood up balanced between cane and chair. He stood there with some of the dancing cranes projected on his back. His shadow present against the world of light on the main screen, right among the dancing cranes. Was the priest dancing? How had he managed to get himself up on the projection screen? These thoughts were rippling through the congregation sitting there in astonishment.

The priest thought to himself, “Is this not the dance of life and light, just as Amida is the Buddha of life and light? Were not the cranes experiencing the very nature of the Amida? The priest lifted one arm, grasped the chair again and lifted the other. He then balanced on the cane, he lifted one leg. The congregation gasped, ready to run forward if necessary. The old priest shifted the cane to the other hand. He lifted the other leg. All the while the cranes continued their dance projected on his back while the image of the shadowy priest joined the birds on the screen.

The dances ended. The projector ceased streaming causing the temple grounds to grow darker. They all sat there in the light of the moon under the chuckling stars. With one cane the priest pointed to the temple steps. With the other, he shuffled slowly along towards the Amida. It took five men to help him up the steps, then three to help the priest up the stair to the naijin. The priest continued his shuffle until it brought him directly in front of the Buddha of Infinite Life and Infinite Light. Once in front of the statue, he leaned on his cane and raised one arm. Moved the cane to raise the other hand. Balanced on both canes, he raised one foot and then the other. The priest bobbed his head and shrugged each shoulder, right then left, then together at once.

He chanted silently to himself with his inner voice, “Is this not the dance of light and life? Are you yourself, Lord Buddha, not the Buddha of Life and Light? Your one foot is moved forward because you are coming towards us. Is this not the first step in the great dance of your vows? The cranes prayed with their whole bodies. I come before you now reciting the nembutsu with my whole body in a dance of joy and gratitude.”

The priest, who had lost everything, now fell to his knees. His gassho appeared imperfect in his arthritic hands. So in the end, he even lost his ability to gassho.

It was then that the congregation felt the whole temple fill with silence. It emanated from their beloved priest’s moment of grace. Amida’s forward foot beckoned them, beckoned them to join their old priest in the dance that was their life together in the nembutsu.



OBON AND CEMETERY SERVICES FOR 2022

Saturday, July 16, 2022

- Mountain View Cemetery 9:00 am
- Strathmore Cemetery 10:30 am
- Temple Columbarium/Nokotsudo 2:00 pm

Sunday, July 24, 2022

- Eden Brook Cemetery 11:00 am
- Queens Park Cemetery 1:00 pm
- Temple Obon Service 3:00 pm

JUNE 2022 MEMORIAL (SHOTSUKI) SERVICE

Joyce Burkey
Brenda Cox
Michael Gubenco
William Lane Sr.
Tamiko Miyanishi

Shizu Nagai
Heidi Terakita
Misao Teshima
Takao Teshima

JC SURVIVORS HEALTH & WELLNESS FUND

Announcement: Acknowledgement of Internment and Japanese Canadian Legacy

The BC Office of the premier made an announcement on May 21, 2022, on the 80th anniversary of Japanese Canadian internment across B.C. and the first arrivals of Japanese Canadians to the Greenwood, Kaslo, New Denver, Slocan City and Sandon Internment Camps in 1942 . Premier John Horgan, Rachna Singh, Parliamentary Secretary for Anti-Racism Initiatives, Kelly Greene, MLA for Richmond-Steveston, former MLA Naomi Yamamoto, and members of the Japanese Canadian community and representatives from the National Association of Japanese Canadians made this announcement about the Japanese-Canadian community.

Highlights included:

- New community programs focused on senior's health
- Culture
- Education
- Recognition of historical wrongs against the Japanese Canadians during World War Two by the Province of British Columbia



This is the link to the May 21, 2022 acknowledgement announcement lasting 1 hour and 17 minutes:
https://youtu.be/_RzA5y73Gjk

Following is an excerpt from the news release. The entire proceedings can be located at:
<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2022PREM0031-000800>



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2022PREM0031-000800
May 21, 2022

Office of the Premier
Ministry of Attorney General

Japanese Canadian legacies honoured as part of redressing historical wrongs

RICHMOND – New community programs focused on seniors' health, culture and education are part of a new initiative announced by Premier John Horgan to provide lasting recognition of historical wrongs committed by the Province of B.C. against Japanese Canadians during the Second World War.

Premier Horgan made the announcement at the Steveston Martial Arts Centre, the oldest Japanese-style dojo in North America, alongside Rachna Singh, Parliamentary Secretary for Anti-Racism Initiatives, Kelly Greene, MLA for Richmond-Steveston, former MLA Naomi Yamamoto, and members of the Japanese Canadian community. This year marks 80 years since the internment of Japanese Canadians across B.C., and May 21 is a day of significance that recognizes the first arrivals of Japanese Canadians to the Greenwood, Kaslo, New Denver, Slocan City and Sandon Internment Camps in 1942.

The \$100-million initiative is the result of engagement with the community, through the National Association of Japanese Canadians (NAJC), and will include funding for: enhanced health and wellness programs for internment-era survivors; creating and restoring heritage sites for all British Columbians to explore and learn, including a monument to honour survivors of the internment era; and updating B.C.'s curriculum to teach future generations about this dark chapter in B.C.'s history.

It builds on a 2012 apology by the B.C. Legislature and responds to a redress proposal advanced in 2021 by the NAJC. The Province will continue to work closely with the NAJC to support these important initiatives during the coming months and years.

"Eighty years have passed since the internment of thousands of Japanese Canadians. Families were uprooted and incarcerated, forced to leave behind the lives they had worked so hard to build. It was a cruel, racist act, and the injustice still resonates today," said Premier Horgan. "We are committing this new funding to honour the legacies of Japanese Canadians, to continue the healing of intergenerational trauma, and to serve as an important reminder of this dark chapter in B.C.'s history."

Beginning in early 1942, more than 90% of Japanese Canadians living in British Columbia were detained under the War Measures Act and were stripped of their homes, possessions and businesses. After the war ended, Japanese Canadians were given the choice to move east of the Rockies or go to Japan, a country many had never known. In 1949, four years after the end of the Second World War, Japanese Canadians were allowed to return to the West Coast. They were still subjected to racist policies and treatment for years, and many communities never recovered.



UPCOMING WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS

AWAKENING TO THE CLIMATE CRISIS: A BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE

Sunday, June 5th, 2022 @ 1pm

The Calgary Buddhist Temple Sangha Engagement is honored to host an encore online presentation with Ray Nakano who will talk about what he has learned as a climate activist, and what you can do about the greatest crisis of our time. Register to attend an important, thought-provoking conversation about our Climate Crisis and what we can do about it as Buddhists.

Register on EventBrite:
<https://bit.ly/ClimateCrisis-5Jun22>



CALGARY BUDDHIST TEMPLE - ONENESS!

June 12, 2022

The Calgary Buddhist Temple is excited to support women’s mental health programs at Calgary Health Foundation by participating in the LOVE YOU by Shoppers Drug Mart™ Run for Women.

It’s not easy, but it’s easier together. As many are experiencing, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on our mental health. We do the best we can every day. Sometimes our hearts are on our sleeves, sometimes our hearts are on the ground. But when we put our hearts together, when we’re there for each other, we’re amazing.

Join our team, Calgary Buddhist Temple – Oneness! with Team Captain: Susan Huntley for a virtual 5K/10K Walk/Run to walk, run or roll by signing up at <https://bit.ly/CBT-Oneness> Individuals have the option to participate in person rather than virtually if they chose - Calgary date is June 12, 2022, and the location is Edworthy Park.

Email calgarytemplesangha@gmail.com if you have any questions.

Let’s come together for mental health.

The Shoppers Drug Mart Run for Women celebrates the strength and courage of women across the country while supporting those who need it the most in our community.





EVERYTHING JAPANESE SALE

August 2022

As part of the 2022 Omatsuri Festival taking place in August, the Calgary Buddhist Temple will once again have our famous "Everything Japanese" table selling Japanese knick knacks and items. Our table is the busiest in the marketplace with people standing in line to acquire their new treasures. In order to fill these tables we request donations from our membership of Japanese items. Many of these items come from families that are downsizing or have come into these items from their parents or relatives. If you would like to find a new home for any Japanese items in your possession where they will be greatly loved, please consider donating those items to the Temple. Donations will be picked up by one of our excellent volunteers. If you have any questions or would like to make a donation please feel free to contact Dan McCormack at dan37mcc@gmail.com to arrange for your items to be picked up.

PAST WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS

OUR GRATITUDE TO BREATH



On Sunday, May 15, the Sangha was able to take part in an interesting, online workshop with Sensei Tanis Moore of the Manitoba Buddhist Temple. Breath: Our connection to life – sometimes we forget the preciousness of breath and the connection to all living beings.

We learned about the anatomy of breathing, did some breathing exercises and become aware of the movement of breath through our bodies, and how it can bring awareness, relaxation and healing. Thank you Sensei!

CALGARY BUDDHIST TEMPLE SANGHA ENGAGEMENT

Thank you for your ongoing support of Sangha Engagement – it's been a pleasure to engage with such a fantastic community! There will be no online presentations or workshops for the months of July and August but please plan to join us again in September! Watch for the registration information, coming soon, for this upcoming, engaging online session:

Sunday, September 11 from 2-3:30pm: Mindfulness Meditation Workshop

This workshop will be led by Ray Nakano and will introduce participants to the mindfulness practice of Thich Nhat Hanh. In this typical mindfulness meditation session, the program will start with guided sitting meditation, introductions, a dharma talk, and a dharma sharing between participants. Mindfulness is a practice that we can do in every waking moment, not just in a meditation session. We learn how to be both in the boat on the sea of life with its ups and downs, stormy waves and calm water, and on the shore watching ourselves in the boat. This workshop will show you how to reduce your stress, and create more joy and happiness in your life.



Would you be interested in sharing your background or knowledge with the Sangha, or do you have an idea for a future workshop? Please email calgarytemplesangha@gmail.com – we'd love to hear from you!



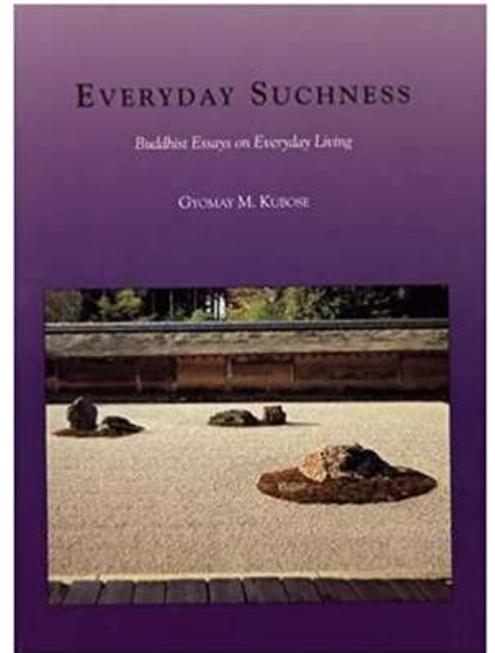
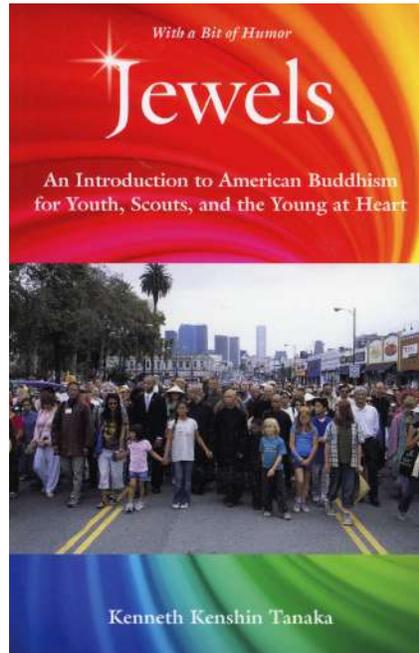
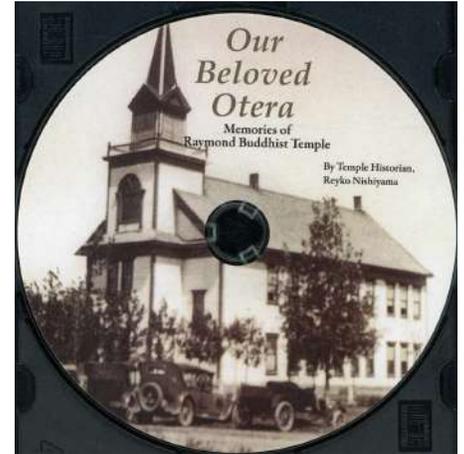
LIBRARY NEWS

The Calgary Buddhist Temple has library housing books, electronic media and assorted other print material. Both adult and children's books are available, and there are also a limited number of Japanese language books. The library is located on the lower level of the temple and is typically open the third Sunday of each month immediately following service.

Pre-pandemic, having tea and browsing the books was encouraged, and hopefully can resume once again after all restrictions for social meetings and gatherings with food have been lifted.

Any member of the Calgary Buddhist Temple who has a library card can borrow materials.

- Library card is available for a one-time fee of \$20
- The loan period is 2 months; books may be renewed once
- Five (5) books can be borrowed at a time





APRIL DONATIONS:

Temple Donations

Anonymous
Cruickshank, Doug
Goudie, Jane
Gubenco, Robert & Lori
Hayashi, Deborah
in memory of Butch Hayashi
Huntley, Susan
in memory of Ronnie Takeda
Kitagawa, Susan
Masuda, Jean
Masuda, Misae

McCormack, Dan
Oishi, Jits
Orlesky, Kimberly
Ota, Fumi
Robb, Barrie and Jackie
Sano, Tracee & Robert Alexander
Sugimoto, Takako
Tajiri, June
Tanaka, Margaret
Tanaka, Masaye
Webster, Kerry

Canada Helps Donations

Anonymous
Chor, Greg
Delisle, Yuri
Ghann, Jameela
Giggs, Melanie
Howard, Leslie
in memory of Jo and Jack Howard
Martin, James
McCullagh, Bob

Miyanishi, Kiyoko
Nagata, Erin
Nguyen, Loc
Robson, Tomiko
Shimoda, Irene
Stewart, Matthew
Sugimoto, Laura
Sugimoto, Sumire
Wright, Charlene





CALGARY BUDDHIST TEMPLE MEMBERSHIP

SUPPORT OUR TEMPLE

Please take a few moments to complete the attached form and return it to the temple. Cheques can be made out to The Calgary Buddhist Temple. Mailing address: 207-6th St N.E. Calgary, Alberta T2E 3Y1. Tel: (403) 263-5723. Alternately, membership fees payments can be made online through [Canada Helps](http://CanadaHelps.org/en/dn/39361) (canadahelps.org/en/dn/39361) or via e-transfer (calgarybuddhisttemple@gmail.com). Just make sure to write "membership" in the message field. PDFs of completed forms can then be emailed to calgarybuddhisttemple@gmail.com.

Name:

Name:

Address: Line 1

Address: Line 2

City, Province,

Postal Code:

Telephone:

E-mail:

- Full Membership (\$100 per member)
- Student (Under 18) Membership –No Charge
- Honorary Senior (65 & over) Membership – Complimentary

Check to receive the CBT newsletter if you do not already receive it

___ by email

___ by mail

___ Please contact me regarding volunteering

