



THE GEPPPO



A publication of the Buddhist Church of Ogden

155 North Street Ogden UT 84404

P.O. Box 3248 Ogden UT 84409

Supervising Minister; Rev. Jerry Hirano

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July / August 2026 Issue

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Minister's Assistant: Rev. James A.

Minister's Assistant: Charles A.

Assistant to the Minister: Annette K.

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Temple E-mail: ogdenbuddhisttemple@gmail.com



FOOD

5:00 pm - 8:00 pm

**Food Trucks, Spam Musubi, Tofu Salad,
Snow Cones**



7:30 pm - 10:00 pm

**Ogden Buddhist Taiko Group
Bon Odori Dancing**

**Buddhist Church of Ogden - 155 North Street,
Ogden UT 84404**

CULTURE AND JODO SHINSHU IN AMERICA

Rev. J.K. Hirano

How joyous I am, Gutoku Shinran, disciple of Sakyamuni! Rare is it to come upon the sacred scriptures from the westward land of India and the commentaries of the masters of China and Japan, but now I have been able to encounter them. Rare is it to hear them, but already I have heard. Reverently entrusting myself to the teaching, practice and realization that are the true essence of the Pure Land way, I am especially aware of the profundity of the Tathagata's benevolence. Here I rejoice in what I have heard and extol what I have attained.
- Shinran, CWS p. 4

This is one of my favorite passages within the *Kyogyoshinsho*, Shinran Shonin's magnum opus. When we read these words, we might think this was rare because of history. But Shinran is pointing to something deeper. He is talking about how rare it is to truly hear.

I have always had a mixed reaction to how Jodo Shinshu in the United States is so intertwined with the Japanese American communities in which it has been nurtured. I have always felt great pride in my Japanese and Japanese American heritage. That is why when I was much younger I founded the Asian American Student Association at the University of Utah in the late 70s. I was also the Salt Lake JACL's Vice President for a year or so. In 1981, however, I decided to study Buddhism. I left Salt Lake City to move to Berkeley, California and the Institute of Buddhist Studies. After graduating, I left to study in Japan at Chuo Bukkyo Gakuin. I came back in 1987 fully ordained and assigned by Nishi Hongwanji to the San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin and in 1993 reassigned by Bishop Hakubun Watanabe to the Salt Lake Buddhist Temple. Currently, I find myself supervising Salt Lake, Ogden, Honeyville, Utah and Idaho Oregon Buddhist Temple in Ontario, Oregon. I am also the director of the BCA Ministers' Assistant program and Center for Buddhist Education. I am fully encompassed in the culture of the Buddhist Churches of America. Over these years, however, I began to realize the Dharma is much deeper than any one culture.

As we can see from this passage, Shinran himself shows us that the teaching has always moved through culture. From India to China, to Korea, to Japan, and now to America, the Dharma has never existed in a vacuum. It has always been expressed through language, customs, and lived experience. Each of these cultures is distinct. Each has shaped how the teaching was heard, practiced, and transmitted. And now, here we are, part of that same unfolding.

In the past month, we have celebrated Hanamatsuri, the "Flower Festival," marking the birth of Siddhartha Gautama. In Salt Lake City, the Salt Lake and Ogden Buddhist Temples hosted Nihon Matsuri, where Japanese cultural organizations came together to celebrate heritage and community. Soon, many temples across the Buddhist Churches of America will hold Obon dances, blending remembrance of ancestors with music, movement, and shared joy.

These are beautiful expressions of culture. They create connection. They carry memory. They give shape to community life. But this raises an important question:

Where is the line between culture and the Dharma itself?

Culture gives us language, rituals, food, and festivals. This is important. Without culture, the Dharma would have no voice, no form, and no way to reach us. But Shinran is pointing to something deeper than culture. He is pointing to the human condition. Suffering. Uncertainty. Limitation. These are not Japanese. They are not American. They are simply human.

Rev. Hirano's article continued on next page

No matter how refined our traditions or how vibrant our festivals, we all experience moments of regret, anxiety, and self-doubt. We worry about the future. We look back on the past with uneasiness. We struggle with relationships, aging, and loss. Culture can express these experiences. But it cannot resolve them.

Over time, something very natural happens. We begin to protect culture. We work hard to preserve traditions, maintain rituals, and pass down customs to the next generation. This is done with sincerity and care. But without realizing it, the center can begin to shift. We start to think that preserving culture is the same as preserving the Dharma.

Because culture is the container. The Dharma is the nourishment.

A container can be beautifully crafted and carefully maintained. But no matter how beautiful it is, it cannot nourish us by itself. We can attend every festival, chant every service, and participate in every activity, and still feel a kind of spiritual hunger.

Today, information is everywhere. Teachings are accessible in ways that Shinran could never have imagined. What is rare is not access. What is rare is truly hearing. Hearing in a way that reaches our own lives. We all experience regret, anxiety, and limitation. We try to fix ourselves and improve ourselves. But there comes a moment when we recognize that we cannot do so fully. And that recognition is not failure.

It is the doorway.

What Shinran encountered was not simply a teaching to follow. He encountered the Vow of Amida Buddha. A compassion that does not depend on our effort. A compassion that does not wait for us to become worthy. A compassion that simply says: “Just as you are, you are embraced.”

So we ask ourselves: Have I truly heard? Shinran says,

“Here I rejoice in what I have heard...” If even for a moment we begin to hear in that way...

Something very rare is happening.

This is the true nature of the Dharma. This is its beauty beyond culture. It is the call of Amida Buddha. It is “Namo Amida Butsu.” It is my life’s goal and aspiration to allow as many people as possible the opportunity to hear this call—no matter their culture, background, gender orientation, or even religion.

If someday, somewhere, someone else may express the same joy Shinran did, of being allowed to hear the teachings that have traveled from ancient India, China, Korea, Japan, and now the United States of America, then we may begin to understand what an American form of Buddhism truly is.

Namo Amida Butsu.

Do you hear?



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Well, I only have 6 1/2 months to go until I turn things over to Steve K. I would like to thank everyone, things just have a way of working out with much success. We will be preparing for Obon on Saturday the 18th of July. Please don't hesitate to come to dance practice and volunteer your time to help out the day of the event. We set up the lights, put out the chairs, and erect the yagura all on the day of the 18th. The Sunday before we will be doing yard cleanup. On Sunday, we will visit the cemeteries followed by service and lunch.

The property to the east has poured some foundations and by time obon rolls around they will probably have started framing. If you are by the church, take a look at what is happening.

After Obon, the BWA will be replacing the kitchen gas ranges. They have found ranges that are very similar to the ones we have now with the exception of the large one will be all burners and no griddle. After some 50+ years of use, it will be exciting to get new ranges, and let's hope they service us as well as the old units did.

In Gassho,
Mike



OBON DONATIONS NEEDED

Any help with food items needed for Obon this year would be greatly appreciated. Please let Ruth S. know if you are able to donate. (But to avoid duplication, please call before you purchase)

Phone: <omitted>.

8 - Costco/Sam's Club packs (64 cans) Spam
3 - 100 sheets nori
5 - 20 lb bags Botan rice

1 - 17 oz bag furikake mix
Cases - Bottles of water (16 oz)
Cases - Bottles of water (8 oz)



OBON DANCE PRACTICE

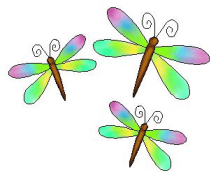
We are doing 2 new dances this year, so be sure to come to our practices from 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm.
We have lots of fun!

Monday, June 29
Monday, July 6
Monday, July 13

Wednesday, July 1
Wednesday, July 8 Friday, July 10
Wednesday, July 15

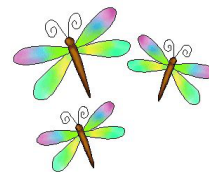
PLEASE note that the FRIDAY, JULY 3 practice has been cancelled.





BWA NEWS

By Brenda K.



Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them, humanity cannot survive. – Dalai Lama

Hard to believe the year is already half over. Looking back there has been much that has occurred at the temple, and the Buddhist Women's Association's involvement has consumed much of the time with the many activities.

We would like to welcome our new member, Julie R. She has already thrown herself into the fray, by coming to help with Nihon Matsuri, our annual sushi sale and manju making. We are so happy to have her join us and share her time with us.

Thank you to all who helped with the annual sushi fundraiser held on May 17. All the sushi was sold with the proceeds going to support the temple's general fund. Our appreciation to those who assisted with this two-day endeavor.

Upcoming will be our temple's annual Obon Festival on July 18. The BWA will be making manju to sell for the event. On June 20 fukashi manju was made with July 12 at 9:00 a.m. set for the preparation of yaki manju and July 17 at 9:00 a.m. set as the time to make mochi manju. If you are available, we would appreciate your help. Be sure to join us for lunch following our Obon/Hatsubon service on Sunday, July 19. Tami H.'s toban group will be preparing this delicious lunch.

The BWA has purchased new stoves for the kitchen! The current stoves have given us their all but are wearing out and not helping us cook as well as we would like. They will be delivered after Obon and will be installed in July.

Darlene M. has already been hard at work for our next quilt. Each year they get more beautiful than the last. Be sure to watch for ticket sales.

Our next meeting will be on Sunday, August 23rd at 11:00 a.m.



BWA DONATIONS

Donations will be posted in the September/October issue of the Geppo.

Thank you.





DHARMA SCHOOL NEWS



Our Dharma School is on break for the summer. We hope our students are having a fun and safe summer. The Dharma School finished the school year in June with several activities in the past few months as follows:

In conjunction with Gotan-E service held on May 17th, we welcomed our newest Dharma School students during our annual Hatsumairi (infant presentation). The following infants and parents were recognized during our presentation:



Infant / Parents - from left to right:

Georgiana Joan Q.
Megan & Seth Q.

Tya-Faye Sakae G.
Keiko & Tyrell G.

Dominic Tetsuaki B.
Courtney & Andrew B.

We welcome the new infants to the Dharma School and appreciate their families' participation in this event. Thank you to **Annette K.** and **Kris Y.** for organizing and coordinating the Infant Presentation.

WELCOME

WELCOME

On Sunday, June 14th, we honored our special 2026 graduate:

Siena H., Lone Peak High School

At Lone Peak High School, Siena received special recognition for her languages proficiency in German and Portuguese. She also speaks Spanish. Siena has been accepted into BYU's prestigious animation program. She will begin her pursuit of a degree in the animation programming this fall. Siena's parents are Seth and Thais H.

We were able to honor Siena with a certificate from the BCA, recognizing her accomplishments.

We appreciate Siena's contributions to our Dharma School classes and look forward to her future achievements. Congratulation, Siena!



Congratulations!

Our annual Dharma School Lagoon Day was held on June 21st. The event was well-attended by both the Ogden and Salt Lake Dharma Schools. We appreciate the help from our temple members who contributed and purchased items at our Hanamatsuri bake sale to help finance our Lagoon lunch.

Our thanks to **Kris and Steve Y., Betty and Kirk Y. and Tami and Stan H.** for organizing the main dish and other items for the lunch. We hope everyone enjoyed the rides and attractions, along with getting together with the Sangha from both temples.

I want to express my personal thanks to the Sangha for their support and for their help during the school year for the benefit of our Dharma School students. A special thanks to **Charles A., Megan Q., Kris Y., Brenda K., Maya C., Christy F. and Cy Z.** for volunteering to teach our Dharma School classes this past year. We also appreciate the help from our parents, grandparents and other adult temple members.

We will see you all at our Obon festival on July 18th and service on July 19th.

Our Dharma School classes will resume on September 13th. Enjoy the rest of the summer!

In Gassho,

LaVerne K.
Dharma School Superintendent



DHARMA SCHOOL DONATIONS

OMITTED for online version

TAIKO GROUP DONATIONS

OMITTED for online version



MEDITATION AND DISCUSSION - SUMMER SCHEDULE



Beginning June 14th, regular family services will be on summer break until September at the Buddhist Church of Ogden.

The meditation and discussion group will continue to meet. Time has been moved to 10:00 am for meditation and 10:30 am for discussion. We look forward to seeing you at the new time.

In Memory

The Buddhist Church of Ogden Sangha extends its deepest sympathies to the families of the following member who recently passed away.

*May the family members find solace and comfort in the Nembutsu.
Namo Amida Butsu*

Travis Hirabayashi - March 27, 2026

BONBU STORIES

On May 3rd, we were privileged to have several members of Bonbu Stories join our family service. Rev. Sydney S. gave us a wonderful Dharma talk and members Miharu O. and Miko S. performed several of their beautiful and meaningful songs. Many of our Sangha were in tears following their performance.

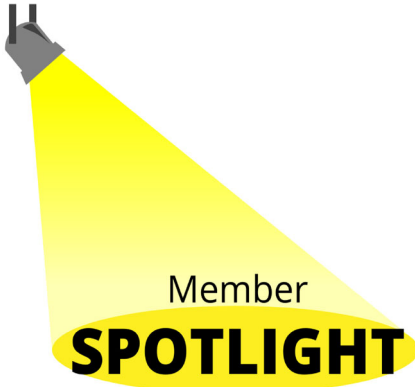
Bonbu Stories is an Asian American arts collaborative dedicated to using music as a medium for raw storytelling and building connections. Bonbu is a Jodo Shinshu Buddhist term meaning “ordinary/imperfect/unenlightened being.” This term carries with it a sense of compassion and acceptance for human life and our flaws, mistakes, and potential for growth.

In 2024, the group created “Lantern Song,” a new song and Obon dance. Please join us for Obon to dance and listen to the words and music of this special song.



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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



On May 9, 2026 Tialani B. was awarded a Black Belt Certificate for completing the 1st Dan level Taekwondo Promotion Test from Master Lee's World Class Taekwondo. This achievement is registered with Kukkiwon Taekwondo, which is the world's most prestigious, globally recognized accreditation for taekwondo belt ranks.

This makes her eligible to compete in official international competitions, such as the Olympics. Tia would like to continue her training with the hopes of obtaining additional black belts in the higher levels.

Congratulations, Tia! We are so proud of you for this achievement!



IN-KIND DONATIONS

If you are making any in-kind donations (non-monetary) to the church for Obon, Bazaar or for general use, please submit your receipts or give me the dollar amount spent, so that I can include it on your year-end statement of contributions.

Thank you,
Betty Y.

SAVE TAXES AND HELP THE TEMPLE



In 2026 non-itemizing taxpayers can deduct cash contributions up to \$1000 for singles and \$2000 for married couples filing jointly. Thus, donating to the temple in cash or in-kind (purchased goods) will be able to reduce your taxes even if you do not itemize.



LAWN SCHEDULE

Thank you to everybody who pitches in every summer to help keep our temple grounds looking fantastic!



WEEK OF	SCHEDULED PEOPLE
7/5/2026	Steve K., Bruce F., Ryan Y.
7/12/2026	Mow Lawn During Obon Outside Clean-up
7/19/2026	Kirk Y., James A., Steve Y., Charles A.
7/26/2026	Blaine Y., Bart H., Kevin H.
8/2/2026	Mike K., Tom F., Craig S.
8/9/2026	Ernie K., Andrew K.
8/16/2026	Geoff R., Ray L., Brock C., Jonathan B.
8/23/2026	Steve K., Billy Z., Cy Z.
8/30/2026	Kirk Y., James A., Steve Y., Charles A.
9/6/2026	Blaine Y., Bart H., Kevin H.
9/13/2026	Mike K., Tom F., Craig S.
9/20/2026	Ernie K., Andrew K.
9/27/2026	Geoff R., Ray L., Brock C., Jonathan B.
10/4/2026	Steve K., Blaine Y., Bruce F., Ryan Y.



BIG thank you to **Sheldon S.** for trimming the hedges around the church.

They look fabulous!



OBON PREP SCHEDULE

Outdoor Clean-up	Sunday, July 12 at 8:00 am
BWA Yaki Manju	Sunday, July 12 at 9:00 am
BWA Mochi manju	Friday, July 17 at 9:00 am
Obon Set-up	Saturday, July 18 at 8:00 am (Includes Yagura set-up, chairs, lights, parking set-up)

July Shotsuki Hoyo
July 19, 2026 at 11:15 a.m.

July 16 2016 Minoru Aoki
 July 2 2023 Marjorie Imaizumi Fletcher
 July 16 2016 Manabu Fujimoto
 July 25 2023 Martha Misao Harada
 July 21 2012 Ryuji Dick Hirasuna
 July 7 1990 Bessie Toki Hokoda
 July 22 1995 Mito Imaizumi
 July 17 1961 Kantaro Inouye
 July 10 1977 Kinshiro Itakura
 July 5 1984 Yuki Kawashima
 July 3 1982 Reiko Koga
 July 24 2016 Kay Kazue Kuroiwa
 July 3 1982 Shigeru Sam Matsumura
 July 28 1986 Taki Mayeda
 July 12 1977 Manji Miya
 July 6 1977 Kichiro Morimoto
 July 20 1965 Monkichi Murakami
 July 1 1995 Sam Sunao Nagata
 July 1 1977 Bukatsu Nakahara
 July 30 2010 Jack Nisogi
 July 14 1991 Tome Sakiyama
 July 25 2015 Roy Hideo Shiki
 July 22 2022 Jane Fumiko Shioji
 July 25 2004 Emma Yayoi Stewart
 July 7 1971 Heibei Sugimoto
 July 24 2013 James R. Summers
 July 3 1984 John N. Takabayashi
 July 8 1982 Tome Taura
 July 30 1999 Minoru Watanabe
 July 23 2005 Lily Watari
 July 10 2007 Tomio Yamada
 July 22 1986 Hiroshi Yamasaki
 July 17 2004 Seiichi Yei

Obon and Hatsubon Memorial Service
July 19, 2026 at 11:15 a.m.

*This memorial service is held in dedication and gratitude
 for all the members of our Sangha who have died over the
 previous year.*

Hatsubon observance will be held for the following
 members:

Marian Emiko Hirasuna
Gary Shoji Miya
Linda Kay Endo
Yoshio Aoki
Masami Miya
Travis Hirabayashi

**2026 Memorial Service Schedule for those who
 passed away in:**

2025 - 1 year	2014 - 13 year	1992 - 33 year
2024 - 3 year	2010 - 17 year	1977 - 50 year
2020 - 7 year	2002 - 25 year	1927 - 100 year

AUGUST Shotsuki Hoyo will be posted in the September Geppo

For those years not having a specific memorial service such as 2nd, 4th, 5th, etc., the temple is holding these monthly Shotsuki Hoyo. During these services, the temple will list the names of those members who have died during the month in the preceding years. The families then attend that monthly service in memory of their loved one.

These services are not meant to replace the specific memorial services. Please contact Rev. Hirano to make arrangements for those services. Rev. Hirano contact information - Office: 801-363-4742, Emergency: 801-819-2648.-

For any corrections or updates, please contact Ruth S. at <omitted>



OBON

Sunday, July 19, 2026

Cemetery Service Schedule:

9:30 a.m. Syracuse

10:15 a.m. Washington Heights

10:45 a.m. Ogden

Obon / Hatsubon Service

July Shotsuki Hoyo

11:15 a.m.

Otoki Lunch following service

This special service is held on the Sunday following the Obon Festival. This memorial service is held in dedication and gratitude for all the members of our Sangha who have died over the previous year. Its basis is the same as our Obon Festival. Kangi-E is the name used traditionally in our Jodo Shinshu Tradition. This name represents the joy we feel for Amida Buddha's vow to save all sentient beings and the joy in knowing our deceased Sangha members are likewise embraced in that compassion.

"Hatsubon" literally means the first obon. Hatsubon is a Buddhist ceremony commemorating the first anniversary of a loved one's passing.



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
July 2026						
			1 7:00 pm - Obon Dance Practice	2	3	4 
5 10:00 am - Meditation 10:30 am - Discussion	6 7:00 pm - Obon Dance Practice	7	8 7:00 pm - Obon Dance Practice	9	10 7:00 pm - Obon Dance Practice	11 Salt Lake Obon
12 8:00 am - Outdoor clean-up 9:00 am - BWA manju making 10:00 am - Meditation 10:30 am - Discussion	13 7:00 pm - Obon Dance Practice	14 7:00 pm - Board Meeting	15 7:00 pm - Obon Dance Practice	16	17 9:00 am - BWA mochi making	18 Ogden Obon
19 Obon Cemetery Service: 9:30 Syracuse 10:15 Washington Heights 10:45 Ogden 11:15 Ogden Obon/Hatsubon Service / July Shotsuki Hoyo* 12:00 Otoki Lunch	20	21	22	23	24	25
26 10:00 am - Meditation 10:30 am - Discussion	27	28	29	30	31	

Toban Group:
Obon Clean-up

*Service with Rev. Hirano



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
August 2026 						1
2 10:00 am - Meditation 10:30 am - Discussion	3	4	5	6	7	8
9 10:00 am - Meditation 10:30 am - Discussion	10	11 7:00 pm - Board Meeting	12	13	14	15
16 10:00 am - Meditation 10:30 am - Discussion	17	18	19	20	21	22
23 10:00 am - Meditation 10:30 am - Discussion	24	25	26	27	28	29
30 10:00 am - Meditation 10:30 am - Discussion	31					

TOBAN GROUP:

Tom & Marcie F. (Toban Cleaning Leader)

Steve & Ellen K.

Ryan & Amanda Y.



Buddhist Church of Ogden Donations

OMITTED FOR ONLINE VERSION

Thank You !! Thank You!!

On behalf of the Board, I would like to Thank everyone for their generous donations. It is only through your donations, that our temple can meet it's financial obligations.

If you have any questions or concerns about any donations made, please feel free to contact me at 801-725-6096 or my email address is yamiek@netscape.net.

Thank you, Betty Yamashita



Las Vegas Obon August 14-17 2026

Leave Salt Lake Buddhist Temple 9:00 AM on 8/14/26 and will return 8/17/26 around 4:30.

Stay at the Main Street Station Hotel and Casino.

Cost will include the following.

- Bus ride to and from Las Vegas
- Hotel room at the Main Street Station
- Bus ride to and from the Obon Festival 8/15/26
- Bus ride to dinner and possibly other activities.

Cost:

- Double occupancy \$624 per couple or \$312 per person
- Single occupancy \$483
- May accommodate triple occupancy but on limited basis. Please call for information.
- Each room includes a refrigerator and safe.

Please send checks payable to:

Tena Miya

3079 W 4600 S

Roy, Ut 84067

Deadline for reservation will be July 10.

It would be greatly appreciated if you could please text me with your name so I could put you on the list.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call or text me at 385-298-3226.

Please fill out and return the information sheet on the following page with payment.

Thank you,

Tena Miya

Las Vegas Obon August 14-17 2026

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

ADA accessible room yes no

Adjoining rooms (limited) yes no

Double \$624 or \$312 per person

Single \$483

Total amount enclosed: _____

Please provide emergency contact.

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____



OBON MEMORIAL LANTERNS

The Buddhist Church of Ogden is selling “Memorial Lanterns” for our OBON Festival.
You can purchase a lantern in the name of family or friends that are no longer with us.
Your lantern will be personalized with their name and hung on the Yagura during the OBON Festival.

This is a GREAT way to pay tribute to your ancestors and
to watch them “DANCE” right alongside of you!

Obon Memorial Lanterns order Form

You can purchase a lantern to honor a friend or family member that has passed away.
The lantern will be personalized and hung from the Yagura during the OBON Festival.
You will be given the lantern at the completion of OBON.

YOUR NAME: _____ Total Amount Due: \$_____

In MEMORY of: (Please PRINT first and last names below)

**Lanterns are \$5.00
per name**

Please fill out this form and
return it to Ellen Kato. or
any board member.

You can also mail this form
with your payment to:

Buddhist Church of Ogden
P.O. Box 3248
Ogden, UT 84409

Or you can pay with Venmo
@BuddhistChurchOfOgden

Note lantern and names