

**MAY**  
**2024**



**The Buddhist  
Temple of  
Chicago**



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**The BTC Mission Statement**

Founded in 1944 as an administratively independent temple, The Buddhist Temple of Chicago aspires to the following:

- ❁ To present and explore the Three Treasures of Buddhism – the Buddha (teacher), the Dharma (teachings), and the Sangha (community).
- ❁ To be guided and inspired by the historical Buddha, Gautama Shakyamuni, and the teachers who have followed – Shinran Shonin, Manshi Kiyozawa, and Haya Akegarasu.
- ❁ To present the Buddha-Dharma in a language and manner relevant and understandable in contemporary America.
- ❁ To welcome all who seek the Dharma without any exceptions.
- ❁ To be a positive presence in our local community working to enhance the vitality of our neighborhood.
- ❁ To honor and continue the traditions of our founding members.
- ❁ To always live the Nembutsu – Namu Amida Butsu.

**"Your mission,  
should you decide to accept it..."**

**Rev. Frederick Brenion**

In our back issues of our temple bulletin I saw something important. So important it bears repeated looking at. Our BTC Mission Statement! If you want to know what our Temple is all about, its hopes, dreams, goals, then this is it!

You've seen mission statements before. On a grand level, the Preamble to our Constitution is one such. It would be good to compare our Statement with the Preamble. They're very similar

A new form of government was being presented for ratification. What was this government for? Its purpose? The Constitution proclaims this through its opening 'mission statement', the Preamble. It starts with identifying who "We" are: "We the People of the United States." Thoroughly clear! States in the process of uniting! Sounds a bit like the "Oneness" we seek at the heart of our BTC teachings!

So...who are the "We" here in Chicago? Why, we are! The BTC! The Buddhist Temple of Chicago! We have a history. We were founded in 1944, as an "administratively independent temple." There's a lot to unpack here, and we'll do that in the next issue!

The Preamble now reflects our fundamental national aspirations, "...in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity". We haven't always lived up to this in so many ways. But the Preamble is a constant clarion call, an exhortation to get in focus. This is what a Mission Statement is for.

Now we can address our own aspirations. A strong word in our Shin Buddhist tradition!

In our own Mission Statement we have a list of what we aspire to. You can read it right now in the side box. We're here to explore, be guided, to present, and to welcome; to be positive, honor and to continue what it is to be BTC! That is what we try to live up to!

Finally the Preamble closes with how we're going to implement our goals: we "do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America." This "Do ordain and establish" is in the present tense, so we are all called to continuously "ordain and establish". The country is a work in progress. There's work still to be done, but there is a focus.

Our own mission statement too sums up our focus: "To always live the Nembutsu – Namu Amida Butsu". This is what underlies our entire life and underlies every action within our Mission. This is how we implement our goals, for ourselves and for all who may join us.

Let's embrace our mission as something we can grow with and to live. Our coming to temple, engaging with each other in Oneness is our ratification!

Let this be our study. Join us next month!

**Dharma Behind Bars**  
**Bill Bohlman, Temple President**

*"Even a good man attains birth in the Pure Land, then how much easier should it be for an evildoer."* The truth of this quote from Chapter 3 of the Tannisho is exemplified by the inmates to whom we send books. These individuals are requesting books about the Dharma because they are seeking answers to their suffering. They have no illusions about their "goodness."

For the past six years, I have been corresponding with a woman who is incarcerated in the Maricopa County Jail in Phoenix, Arizona awaiting trial. The impact of the Dharma on her life has been incredible. When we first started corresponding, she was on a number of medications for depression and anxiety. Within the first year, she was able to stop taking all the medications. When Covid struck, the small privileges she has were even more restricted. Rather than complain, she accepted the situation knowing there was nothing she could do about it and that it would eventually pass. During the past few years she has continually been told that her trial would soon occur only to have it be postponed once again. The Dharma has taught her to live in the moment and not project her desires into the future. She understands that it is cause and condition that has brought her to the current situation and that it is up to her to determine how she reacts. She has learned to live in the moment.

This is just one example of how this program has impacted the lives of others. Currently, I am corresponding with inmates of various state and federal institutions. For many of these inmates, they are just beginning their journey on the Dharma path. Through the generous assistance of the Numata Foundation I am able to provide the inmates with copies of some basic materials. In addition, temple members and friends have donated books for this program but we always need more. I ask people to go through their Buddhist library and to donate those books they may never read again. Most desirable are books by Rev. Gyomay Kubose, Thich Naht Hanh or the Dalai Lama. In addition, any basic texts such as the Dhammapada or books about basic Buddhism are desired. All of the institutions require that the books be soft cover only. In addition, donations to help purchase books would be appreciated.

After spending twenty years of his life in the monastery surrounded by monks and people of privilege, Shinran saw the true Dharma being practiced by Honen as he shared the nembutsu with the common folk. Today, too often the Dharma is treated as an intellectual pursuit. Through interacting with the inmates I can see the true Dharma in action. Just as the Buddha sought the answer to his suffering, these people are seeking a way to move beyond their past. I have come to see them as my teachers in many ways. Their bodies may be interred but their minds are free. This is the true Dharma.



**Scheduled activities – subject to change!**

**Weekly services** – Sundays 11 am - in-person and on FB Live

**Children's Dharma School** – second & fourth Sunday of the month May 12 & 26

**Sunday Meditation** – 9 am – in-person only

**Thursday Meditation** 7:15 pm – in-person and on FB Live

**Asoka Society (social gathering)** – 3<sup>rd</sup> Sat. 1 pm / May 18

**The above activities are open to the public and free (donations appreciated).**

**If you are interested in the two activities below, please leave your contact information and the group will set up an appointment for you to visit them.**

**Laido (martial art)** – Mondays 7:00 pm

**Kokyo Taiko (drums)** – Friday evenings 7:00 pm, Sunday afternoons – early afternoon -

Please confirm time at [kokyotaiko@buddhisttemplechicago.org](mailto:kokyotaiko@buddhisttemplechicago.org)

**DEEPEST SYMPATHY**

To the family and friends of:

Haru Ito

February 24, 2024

Yusuke Arakaki

November 12, 2023



# The Buddhist Temple of Chicago

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## May 2024 Calendar

Events may be canceled or moved:

Check [www.facebook.com/budtempchi](https://www.facebook.com/budtempchi)  
for the most up-to-date changes.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 Meditation 7:15pm	3 Taiko* 7pm	4 Qigong 10:00a
5 9:00am Meditation 11am Monthly Memorial	6 laido* 7:00pm	7	8	9 Meditation 7:15pm	10 Taiko* 7pm	11 Qigong 10:00a
12 9:00am Meditation 11am Dharma School /	13 laido* 7:00pm	14	15	16 Meditation 7:15pm	17 Taiko* 7pm	18 Asoka 1pm
19 9:00am Meditation 11am Regular Service Tanjo-e	20 laido* 7:00pm	21	22	23 Meditation 7:15pm	24 Taiko* 7pm	25 Qigong 10:00a
26 9:00am Meditation 11am Dharma School Service	27 laido* 7:00pm	28	29	30 Meditation 7:15pm	31 Taiko 7pm	

\*laido and Taiko require appointments made in advance