

July  
2024



The  
Buddhist  
Temple  
of  
Chicago



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**IN THIS ISSUE**

**President's Message**

**Scheduled Activities**

**Minister's Message**

**Special Events**

**Acknowledgments**

**Calendar**

**Gratitude**

**Bill Bohlman, Temple President**

One of the greatest misconceptions among people of other faiths is that Buddhists worship the Buddha. Webster's New World Dictionary defines worship as "a service or rite showing reverence for a deity." Gautama Buddha was not a deity; he was as human as you or I. If Buddhists do not worship the Buddha why do we have the statues, why do we offer incense? We have these things as an expression of our gratitude for his sharing the teachings, or Dharma, after his enlightenment. After attaining enlightenment, Gautama Buddha could have led a life of solitude, a simple life of joy and contentment. Instead, he chose to travel throughout India for the last 45 years of his life sharing the Dharma. His actions at the time of his death set an example of gratitude. At the age of eighty, he had grown weak. While traveling with his followers a villager provided them with a meal, Gautama Buddha became ill and his condition declined rapidly. As his death approached, he summoned the villager who was distraught over what had happened. Gautama Buddha expressed his sincere gratitude to the villager for having provided a wonderful meal. This was gratitude for the intent rather than for the outcome.

Gratitude is an important part of Buddhism. In most religions, people offer thanks to their God for providing food, good health, and successes in life. Buddhists focus more on the interdependence, or "oneness," of all life. When offering thanks for a meal we are mindful of the efforts of the many people who made the meal possible. Without the work of the cook, the storeowner, the farmer, and others, the food would never reach our table. Many Buddhists are vegetarians, but those who are not are mindful of the sacrifice made by the animal to provide them with nourishment.

A Buddhist saying, "Every day is a good day," may seem confusing. How can every day be a good day if we are sick, faced with adversity, or things just do not go our way? Buddhism teaches that our ego causes us to think of a day as good or bad. When we are unhappy with events, we only see the day from this perspective. Gratitude for that which we have changes this perspective. Just being alive to experience the day is cause for gratitude. Especially in America, we have innumerable things for which we should have gratitude. Focus on gratitude rather than misery and the day is a good day.

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**Scheduled activities – subject to change**

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

Asoka Society (social gathering) –No July meeting

Qigong – No July sessions

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.

Iaido (martial art) –Mondays 7:00pm

Kokyo Taiko (drums) – Friday evenings 7:00 pm, Sunday afternoons – early afternoon please confirm time @ [kokyotaiko@buddhisttemplechicago.org](mailto:kokyotaiko@buddhisttemplechicago.org)

### 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.

### Our Mission,

To Present and Explore the Three Treasures of Buddhism.

-- *The BTC Mission Statement, First Point*

Rev. Frederick Brenion

Each service we chant the Vandana Ti-sarana together in the ancient Pali language and then in English expressing our act of taking refuge. This is the living heart of Buddhism. Not the Four-fold Noble Truth, or the Eight-fold Path. Those are road maps to begin our journey. It is the act of taking refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha that opens the Storehouse of Wisdom and Compassion to us.

It is not a Buddhist creed. We are not a creedal religion. All that matters is our desire, our need to take refuge. When we recognize our real need we are beginning to embrace this Dharmic life that is even now living you.

But what is this saying about the person taking refuge? It's saying that we are refugees. That's a hard thing to get around. We've all seen pictures of war torn countries and people fleeing for their lives. Their possessions left behind. In terror on where to go, exhausted in all respects. They go to where? Anywhere for shelter, anywhere for breath, for rest. But some places are less secure others.

We may not know who to turn to. Or we may turn to others that are not deserving of trust. But when we are lost we often take any 'port in a storm.' When we are spiritual refugees we have lost our foundation, our direction. We seek security in something we can stand on and hold on to.

So we search for a place that is reliable, open to all, to us, to me. No conditions. Just shelter. A chance to regain our bearings. When we regain our bearings we

can see our reality anew, and plan for what needs to be done. That's Buddhism. As to what changes to go through, that will depend on the person. Each of us is different. Some will be more reflective, some more active. Becoming Buddhist is to readjust to Reality, learning to at last live in Reality.

Practices are very important in almost all schools of Buddhism. Some chant, meditate, study, engage in ascetic disciplines. In our school of Buddhism, Jodo Shinshu, it comes down to listening to the Dharma. When we come to understand what we are really like, and what we really need, we can then call upon the Buddha for help. This is called the Nembutsu. It is the call to bow into refuge before infinite compassion and wisdom. Realizing that I am finite I can never attain the infinite. But the infinite contains me and all things. For this I cry out in gratitude, Namu Amida Butsu! This, for us is the heart of the most important practice in all schools of Buddhism, that of taking refuge, realizing that we are all spiritual refugees. We flee to the Buddha whose compassion and wisdom is beyond all bounds for our help and guidance.

In 1944 our ancestors, spiritual and physical, formed this temple. Their experiences of the internment camps were those experienced by refugees. They had been torn from their homes, interned in camps. They had lost everything except hope and trust in Buddha's light. When they were released they could not go back to their homes on the West Coast. So they came to Chicago to begin a new life. With the leadership of Rev. Kubose they brought forth a place of refuge for themselves and for all...and that means you and me!

This is why the very first principle of our Temple's mission is to stand on the act of trust which is in asking for refuge. And the amazing thing is that we find that our taking refuge is always in the past tense! We have been always given refuge. We have always been guided, entrusted, embraced. This is the meaning of Namu Amida Butsu. The secret life within my heart now sings: "I have been given refuge in the Buddha! I have been given refuge in the Dharma! I have been given refuge in the Sangha. Here is my healing. Here I am safe. Here I can stay. Here, finally, is my True Home"

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### SPECIAL EVENTS!

Natsu Matsuri	July 14, 2024	Noon - 4:00 PM
Obon Odori	August 10, 2024	Begins 7:15 PM



## The Buddhist Temple of Chicago

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



### July 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 laido 7pm	2	3	4	5 Taiko 7pm	6
7 11am Monthly Memorial	8 laido* 7:pm	9	10	11	12 Taiko* 7pm	13
14 Natsu Matsuri 12p-4p	15 laido* 7:pm	16	17	18	19 Taiko* 7pm	20
21 11am Regular Service	22 laido* 7:pm	23	24	25	26 Taiko* 7pm	27
28 11am Regular service	29 laido* 7:pm	30	31			

\*laido and Taiko require appointments made in advance