



The
Buddhist
Temple
of
Chicago

July
2025

IN THIS ISSUE

Special Guest Message

President's Message

Acknowledgments

Monthly Memorial

Calendar



ADDRESS

**1151 W. Leland Ave
Chicago, IL 60640-5043**

TELEPHONE

(773) 334-4661

ONLINE

BuddhistTempleChicago.org

E-MAIL

Bulletin.btc@gmail.com

**It is with great pleasure that we present to you all
The BTC 2025 Scholarship Award Essay!**

* * *

**Why BTC Matters to Me
Liam Gallaga**

The older I get, the more I can't help but realize the way the world changes. The state of the world, the people in my life, and even I myself have changed so much since I was young, and those changes only seem to get faster and faster as time marches on. Such is the marching progress of life, and yet as someone who's always been resistant to change, the way everything in my life has shifted and continues to shift has always brought me some degree of suffering.

This is part of why BTC has been such an important part of my life. My membership and the way I participate in the temple has changed a lot over the years, from being a part of the Dharma school and helping lead service alongside the other kids, to taking a crack at swinging the hammer during mochi pounding or drumming as part of the temple's taiko group when I was a little older, to finally helping in various ways during regular service or participating in temple events as a teen and young adult. Despite these varying methods of contribution, I am always sure that when I return to BTC, no matter how long it's been, there will always be people willing to welcome me back and give me a job to do to help contribute to the temple community. The heart of that community which welcomes all and asks only that people help and participate in whatever way they can, even as it has gained and lost people over time, has not changed, and in that way BTC has always been a constant for me, in contrast to the sweeping rapid changes of the rest of the world.

BTC is also important to me for the way it has allowed me to connect with my Japanese heritage throughout my life. Even as it has been difficult to always take pride in or acknowledge that ancestry in the outside world, as I don't necessarily look like a part of the Asian American community, BTC has always been a place where I feel like I can freely participate in cultural ceremonies and events without fear of judgement, doubt, or being called an outsider. I feel my life and my sense of self has been greatly enhanced by being afforded the opportunity to participate over the years in events such as mochi pounding, taiko drumming, Natsu Matsuri, and O-bon/Bon Odori, and each of these types of opportunities afforded to me by BTC have also expanded my perspective and experience of the world by allowing me to not only participate in culturally significant Japanese Buddhist activities, but also then take that experience and knowledge and share it with other people in the wider world to form connections and teach others about my own culture.

Finally, I would be remiss not to mention the impact BTC has made on my life through being the place where I learned about Buddhism. It's difficult for me to fully evaluate the impact Buddhism has had on my life, as my connection to it has ebbed and flowed over the years, but there I some moments where I know what I've learned at temple, throughout years of services and ministers messages, is flowing through me and my experience of the world.

(Continued on next page)

(Continued from first page)

A few weeks ago, my friends and I went on a trip to Indiana. On the second night, a few of us sat around discussing perspectives on religion, the universe, and our impending graduation and separation. Someone was trying to explain Buddhism and the story of the prince leaving his castle and witnessing suffering in the outside world for the first time, but they were getting the details wrong in a way which fundamentally misinterpreted the message, and so being the only actual Buddhist in the group, I realized I could use my knowledge gained from BTC to help step in and correct the record. I told those around the fire how what the prince learned that day was that we all suffer and that suffering persists as long as we remain ignorant and refuse to acknowledge the changing nature of the world. That suffering is simply a part of life. After finishing the first half of the story, someone turned to me and asked:

“If suffering is inevitable, then what's the point of living? That seems awfully morbid.”

And in that instant I thought about how much the impending change of graduation, of being separated from these people, had been weighing on me and causing me to suffer. And I’m glad I had Buddhism then, because I knew what the answer was, and I knew it was true.

“Well we’re supposed to try and transform that suffering into understanding and the strength to move forward. You accept those inevitable changes and suffering for what they are and try and live your life in a way that is both morally good and true to yourself.”

This is certainly my more flawed modern interpretation of the Four Noble Truths, and yet it seemed like a satisfying answer to everyone in that moment.

At least it was satisfying to me personally, and for that, I need to thank BTC and Buddhism for all they have given me. Moments like these are all the proof I need to see how Buddhism and BTC have affected me deeply, even if I don’t always fully and consciously acknowledge their impact.

Thank you to all the members of the BTC community who have given me this place and this way of thinking which has changed my life, and Namu Amida Butsu.

* * * * *



Scheduled Activities – subject to change

Weekly services – Sundays 11 am - in-person, Facebook Live

Qigong (Chinese exercise) – Tuesdays 10:30 am

Sunday Meditation - on vacation until September

Thursday Meditation – is on brake until September.

Asoka Society (social gathering) – 1 pm July 19

BTC Dharma Book Club – 2nd & 4th Thursday of the month, 6:30 pm

Please sign up with this group to receive zoom linkage.

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

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

Iaido (martial art) – Mondays, 7 pm

Kokyo Taiko (drums) – Friday evenings, Sunday afternoons

Natsu Matsuri
Bill Bohlman, Temple President

Summer is here and that means it is time for Natsu matsuri. This year, the festival is Sunday, July 13. As always, there will be great food, performances and a cultural exhibit.

The food is highlighted by our world-famous teriyaki chicken. Marinated in our secret recipe and grilled to perfection by Team Teriyaki, this dish is guaranteed to delight your taste buds. To complete this delicious lineup we also have inari, udon and a selection of baked goods. Preorder of food is available until Sunday, July 6 using the form on our website.

Performances include taiko, iaido, kyudo and aikido. Relax in air conditioned comfort as you marvel at the skills on display.

The cultural exhibit this year is Japanese dolls. Various individuals will share their personal collection along with a tutorial on how these dolls are made.

We will also have a silent auction of items donated by members and friends. This is your opportunity to get great deals on things you will treasure. We also have our usual group of vendors displaying artwork, jewelry, garments and other special items

Natsu matsuri is our largest fundraiser. More importantly, it is an exercise in sangha. Everyone who helps, or simply attends, is shaping the future of BTC. We look forward to joining with you to have a great festival.

* * * * *

Our Deepest Sympathies
To the families and friends
of
Masako Terada – January 11
Allison Sasamoto – February 27
Midori Sugimoto – March 24
Chihiro Sameshima – May 30
Yoneo Shimomura – June 7
Carol Ann Miyake - June 22, 2025

* * *

A Thought from
Our Founder,
Rev. Gyomay Kubose

“When we are truly able to see and understand life,
Its reality, its value and beauty as its troubles,
we are able to accept life dynamically
and walk its path with appreciation and gratitude.
This way of life is Buddhism.”

[illegible]