The Buddhist Temple of Chicago

November 2026

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A Successful Open House Chicago Weekend at the Buddhist Temple of Chicago!

Maciej Milowicki

This past weekend, the Buddhist Temple of Chicago was proud to participate in Open House Chicago, welcoming visitors from across the city and beyond to learn about our temple, its history, and its place in Chicago's architectural and cultural landscape.

We were delighted to welcome 1,232 visitors on Saturday and another 671 on Sunday, for a total of 1,903 visitors over the two-day event! The tremendous turnout was a wonderful opportunity to introduce so many people to our temple and share the rich history and traditions of our community.

A particularly meaningful part of the weekend was the opportunity to educate visitors about the connection between the Japanese American incarceration camps of World War II and the founding of the Buddhist Temple of Chicago. We extend our special thanks to the Japanese American Service Committee for generously loaning us the historical posters documenting the incarceration camps. These materials helped visitors better understand the experiences of Japanese Americans during this difficult period in our nation's history and the profound connection between that history and our temple. The Buddhist Temple of Chicago was founded by members of the Japanese American community, including people who had been incarcerated in these camps. Sharing this history allowed us to help visitors appreciate the resilience of our founders and the important role our temple has played in the community.

We would also like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all of the volunteers who made this event such a success. From preparing the temple and welcoming visitors to answering questions and sharing our history, every volunteer contributed to making the weekend a positive and memorable experience. Your time, energy, and dedication helped create a welcoming environment for everyone who walked through our doors.

The success of this weekend reflects the strength and generosity of our temple community. We are grateful to everyone who helped make Open House Chicago a meaningful opportunity to share our history, our traditions, and our home with so many people.

Thank you to JASC, all of our dedicated volunteers, and everyone who visited the Buddhist Temple of Chicago. Your support helped make this a truly special weekend!

Itadakimasu
Bill Bohlman, Temple President

Thanksgiving, a celebration of gratitude. For those of us able to gather with family and friends it is that time we reflect upon that which we have. Of all the holidays celebrated in America, Thanksgiving, in my opinion, is the one most in tune with Buddhist teachings.

I have noticed that Thanksgiving is the one time when almost everyone says some sort of blessing before eating. Most people direct this thanks to their Creator. They express their gratitude for all He has provided. We simply say "Itadakimasu". The phrase "Itadakimasu" expresses broader thanks. When we say, "I will receive," we are thanking everyone and everything responsible for our meal. We thank the cook, the grocer, the delivery person and the farmer for bringing this food to our table. We are grateful to the turkey that gave its life for our meal. Mindful of all that has occurred, we humbly receive the offering.

Thanksgiving is also a time when we are more aware of others less fortunate. Newspapers and television report stories about volunteers serving meals to the homeless and needy. A smiling politician, or celebrity, gives a homeless person a turkey leg or some stuffing. But, what about the rest of the year? What do we do then?

The Buddhist teachings speak of the Oneness of all things. This means that nothing exists independently. Everything is dependent on, and connected to, everything else. All actions have infinite effects. Suffering has the same effect. No one will ever overcome their own suffering as long as another still suffers. Thanksgiving can be the time that we rededicate ourselves to overcoming all suffering.

A basic idea in Buddhism is that of "Dana," or giving. Dana is different from charity. Usually, we think of charity as assisting others suffering due to poverty, disaster or conflict. Although Dana includes all this, it goes beyond just material needs. Dana is any thought, word or action that helps relieve suffering whether it be spiritual, emotional or physical. We perform Dana without the expectation of any recognition or reward. The only reward is on a universal scale. The suffering of one is the suffering of all.

This year, as you sit down to your Thanksgiving meal, think about the blessing you recite. As you thank whomever or whatever for the food in front of you and the company you are with reflect on all that has occurred so that this moment could exist. All that has gone before has led to this moment. Then, humbly and with great joy begin. Itadakimasu.

Scheduled Activities – subject to change

Weekly services – Sundays 11 am - in-person, Facebook Live
Qigong (Chinese exercise) – Tuesdays, 10:30 am
Sunday Meditation – 9 am
Thursday Meditation – 7:15 pm
Asoka Society (social gathering) Saturday, 11/21, 1 pm
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

A Reflection for our Ho-on-ko Service and Thanksgiving Day
Rev. Frederick Brenion

Every year at our Ho-on-ko service we express our respect and gratitude to our founder, Shinran Shonin.

Respect, we know, is something that must be earned. When disaster hit Shinran as he was exiled, the villagers that he came to live with must have found him a very odd sight.

He was a former monk, now arriving as a criminal. He didn't have any skills that would be useful for them. He couldn't farm, hunt, or build anything. He had to receive everything from everyone.

Yes, there was something odd about this man. In receiving everything, he accepted everyone, as they were, without judgment or complaint. He was simply open to all.

This was the practical heart of the teachings he received Which began to grow into real living of life for him.

This know-nothing. This do-nothing in their eyes, knew the most practical thing of all – how to live life.

He earned their respect. So much so that he wasn't even called a sensei, but Shonin – the venerable one, the respected one. Ever since at each of our Ho-on-ko services we gather to show our respect to one who showed to us the living heart of Buddhism. The life that is even now living us at all our moments.

By listening to this Dharma, living out this Dharma, we show our deepest respect to our Shonin.

As we move on to the festivities of this day, as well as to the holidays ahead, we can carry forward this respect by living life as Shinran showed us – by accepting each other and ourselves as we are. Ever embraced, never abandoned.

That each of us, at each and every occasion, will be a vessel of the Dharma for all.

An Aspiration for use at our Thanksgiving Day Dinners

Entrusting in the Primal Vow of the Buddha,
Calling out the Buddha-name that embraces you and me,
We shall pass together through this journey of life with joy and strength.

Revering the Light of the Buddha,
Reflecting upon our imperfect selves,
We shall proceed to live a life of gratitude.

Following the Teachings of the Buddha,
Listening to the Right Path,
We shall share the True Dharma with all.

Rejoicing in the Compassion of the Buddha,
Respecting and aiding all sentient beings,
We shall work towards the welfare of society and the world.

Therefore,
May all beings dwell in our hearts.
May all beings be free from suffering.
May all beings be healed.
May all beings be at peace.

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

November 2026 Calendar

Events may be canceled or moved:
Check www.facebook.com/budtempchi for the most up-to-date changes.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 **9 am Meditation** **11 am Monthly Memorial**	**2** Iaido 7 pm	**3** Qigong 10:30 am	**4**	**5** Meditation 7:15 pm	**6**	**7**
8 **9 am Meditation** **11 am Regular Memorial**	**9** Iaido 7 pm	**10** Qigong 10:30 am	**11**	**12** Meditation 7:15 pm	**13**	**14**
15 **9 am Meditation** **11 am Regular service**	**16** Iaido* 7 pm	**17** Qigong 10:30 am	**18**	**19** Meditation 7:15 pm	**20**	**21** Asoka Society 1 pm
22 **9 am Meditation** **11 am Ho-On-Ko service**	**23** Iaido* 7 pm	24 Qigong 10:30 am	**25**	**26** **Thanksgiving Day**	**27**	**28**
29 **9 am Meditation** **11 am Regular Service**	**30** Iaido 7 pm					