



The Buddhist Temple of Chicago

JULY 2020

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“One moment can change a day, one day can change a life and one life can change the world.” - Buddha

“Cautiously reopening”

By Rev. Patti Nakai, Resident Minister

At this point (mid-June) we are planning to open the temple for Sunday services with restrictions in place starting July 5; However, we may have to change or cancel this re-opening if there is a sudden spike in local COVID-19 cases or for other conditions. Because of the possibility of changing our plans at the last minute, we strongly urge people to RSVP for Sunday services by giving us an email or phone number to contact.

The restrictions are those most of you are already observing: wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth, wash hands upon entering the temple, wear clothes that minimize skin contact with surfaces such as chair seats and backs. While in the temple, keep a distance of six feet between you and those not in your household. In the Hondo household members (families, couples) can sit together but no one should be sitting directly in front of those in the row behind you. The service format will be adjusted to minimize possible exposure to the virus. During the service, people will remain seated except for offering incense. People who wish to offer incense will go up the aisle one household at a time but it is perfectly fine if you wish to stay seated. We will have chanting and reading but will not have singing.

After the service, the refreshment time will be brief and only hot tea and individually wrapped snacks will be offered.

We strongly discourage anyone from coming to the temple if they are elderly, reliant on public transportation and/or have any medical conditions. We will continue to offer the Sunday service online through Facebook Live.

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We are hoping this cautious re-opening will be a step towards having the temple again as a place of gathering. Non-religious activities such as taiko and martial arts will not be meeting at the temple for the summer. We will make an evaluation if it will be safe to resume some of the regular activities at the temple in September.

To me, it is especially sad to cancel our annual Bon Odori in August. The gathering for joyous dancing was always something fun to look forward to.

Everyone please keep well and stay safe!



Scheduled activities – subject to change

Weekly services – Sundays 11am (RSVP for in-person), online Facebook Live

Mindful midday (meditation and qigong) – Tuesdays 11am (RSVP for in-person), online Zoom

Buddhism in the Movies chat – Wednesdays 4:30pm, online ONLY Zoom

Bon Odori exercise – twice a month, time and day TBD, online ONLY Zoom

Monthly “Treasured Teachings” study class – date to be announced later, online Zoom

For Zoom sign-in information see Event announcements on Facebook or contact Rev. Patti.

Thank You!

Special thanks to our maintenance volunteer Tomio Tademoto who continues to come to the temple throughout the week to clean up trash and trim foliage.

Also thanks to Gary T. Nakai, Michael Kudo Jr. and others (the nameless ninjas) who have come by to clear away the trash around the temple.

In Deepest Sympathy to the families of:

Kazuo Hori	May 30, 2020
Vic Masao Omachi	May 30, 2020
Ryo George Tanaka	June 2, 2020

Lessons from a Prisoner

By Bill Bohlman, BTC President

“First know yourself and your path will become clear”.



Bill Bohlman, BTC President
Contact Bill at budtempchi@aol.com



A few years ago, BTC started a program of sending books to prisoners upon their request. Usually we never hear from the prisoner again, or if we do it is only one time. We often don't know if the books were received or if they have had any effect on their lives. However, one woman has corresponded with me for the last two years. Her letters show the impact of the Dharma in a difficult situation.

The books we send are basic Buddhism; nothing obscure or academic. Usually the books are those of Rev. Gyomay Kubose, Thich Naht Hahn and the Dalai Lama; easily understood without access to a teacher. The letters from this woman show the path of liberation from suffering. She has now been in the Maricopa County Jail, Arizona for over two years and is facing a possible sentence of 25 years to life. Yet, she has found peace in the Dharma.

Her words are powerful; in one letter she writes, “But on my bus ride to my arraignment, handcuffed and shackled, I had this overwhelming feeling that I was OK and felt this love surrounding me and I knew with the Buddha, Dharma and everything I have learned, that I will be OK and get thru this, even being alone.” Her journey has continued on the path to liberation from suffering.

Recently we received another letter from her. Nothing has changed with her physical confinement, but her mind has become freer. She said that she had been on three medications for depression, anxiety and a mood stabilizer. Through her reading of the Dharma and meditation she has been able to stop taking all these medications. She wrote that in the beginning she needed these medications and most of the women prefer to be medicated. However, through her readings and meditation she is now able to cope with situations as they arise. She says that even in a negative environment, “I feel like I have a protection shield around me.” Her mental health provider was so impressed with her progress that, “she said she wished I could teach a class on it.”

She hasn't started teaching a class but she shares the books with other inmates. Her roommate is Catholic and the roommate has begun to incorporate the Dharma into her own religious studies. Other inmates have started to ask about Buddhism and the chaplain provides printouts from some of the books. A Sangha is beginning to form.

As I read her letters I am struck by the power of the Dharma. I reflect on how her feeling of being OK and a “protection shield” is so much like the embrace of Amida as I understand it to be. In my recent letter to her I thanked her for the wonderful teaching she has provided to me; a realization of how lucky I am. She shows that no matter how dire our situation, our liberation from suffering is ours to determine.

Namu Amida Butsu.



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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



JULY 2020 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	2	3	4
5 11am Monthly Memorial	6	7 11am Mindful Midday	8	9	10	11
12 11am Regular Service	13	14 11am Mindful Midday	15	16	17	18
19 11am Regular Service	20	21 11am Mindful Midday	22	23	24	25
26 11am Regular Service	27	28 11am Mindful Midday	29	30	31	