



The Buddhist Temple of Chicago

June 2021



2014 wedding of Tracy Ito and Patsy McEnroe
Photo by Christopher Yap

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Inconceivable Identities and Bonds by Rev. Patti Nakai

Manshi Kiyozawa (whose memorial we commemorate this month) often wrote of how so much of real life is beyond our human understanding. As a teen he worked as an interpreter for the foreign doctors helping at his neighborhood hospital so he was well aware of how advanced medical science was in understanding our bodily functions. Yet then as much as now, he points out sleep as something we can't fully explain – we don't know why we go unconscious for hours each day and what is going on in our minds during that time. Even though current sleep research can tell us about the dangerous effects of sleep deprivation, researchers don't know why sleep seems to have a restorative effect on our brains and bodies. Things like sleep are what Kiyozawa points to as *fukashigi* which his early translator Floyd Shacklock called "mystery."

In religion, "mystery" could sound like having to believe in things we can't see and prove, but in the word *fukashigi* Kiyozawa was saying "the very things going on in front of our eyes can only be called indescribably strange" (p. 148, *Selected Essays of Manshi Kiyozawa*, Bukkyo Bunka Society, 1936). As much as Kiyozawa studied science from the scholars who came from Europe and America to teach in Japan, he could appreciate Shinran's humility in admitting to being too vastly ignorant about life to make sure judgments. One area which challenges our faulty judgments about people is the mystery of human sexuality and gender identity.

Most of us were led to believe that humans were always monogamous heterosexuals who identified as either male or female, but social scientists are finding that throughout the world and for all of history there have been relationships that were not "one man and only one woman" and that there have been people who physically and psychologically did not fit in the neatly defined categories of masculine versus feminine. Sadly for those people whose relationships and identities did not fit the dictated norm, they had to hide their true feelings which led to much mental anguish and sometimes suicide.

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Now we live in a time when there is more recognition of the wide spectrum of human sexuality and gender identity, yet much needs to be done in helping young people grapple with those issues and find self-acceptance. (Shout out to the local group “i2i” helping Asian American youth and their families find support and greater understanding.)

Buddhism teaches us to acknowledge the inconceivability of life which is dynamically changing and goes wider and deeper than any of us can perceive with our limited education and experiences. It may seem incomprehensible that a person can be attracted to someone of the same sex or to people of various sexes, but it’s a fact that is happening all around us. We may think it is natural to identify as the gender our baby body was assigned but it is a fact that some people’s bodies develop other gender characteristics as they mature or discover characteristics that were not recognized at birth. And just as Kiyozawa pointed out that we can’t explain what goes on in our own minds when we sleep, it is hard to explain why some people’s minds identify as a gender different from their physical characteristics, but at our temple we’ve come to know people who attest to gender dysphoria as very real.

So as we have been doing for the past few years, our temple celebrates June as Pride Month. We want it to be known that we welcome lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and anyone else whose identities and bonds don’t fit into traditional patriarchal categories. It is very much part of putting the Dharma teachings into practice that we encounter and get to know those whose bodies and minds challenge the fixed concepts we had of human identities and bonds. It is in hearing Namu Amida Butsu that we bow down to the inconceivability of the lives around us and look up to all of them with utmost respect.



Scheduled activities – subject to change (TBD = to be determined later)

Note that in-person activities are subject to COVID-19 restrictions (mask required)

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

Second Sunday is Children’s Dharma School service (no in-person classes)

Qigong (Chinese exercise) – Tuesdays 11am - online Zoom and in-person

Iaido (martial art) –Mondays 6:30pm – in-person only

Thursday Meditation – on break until September (some pop-up events to be announced)

Sunday Meditation 9:30am – In-person only – summer break starts TBD

Aikido – Sundays 3-5pm – in-person only

Asoka Society – Saturday June 19 at 1pm

Kokyo Taiko – Friday evenings, Sunday afternoons

For more information, see our website or contact BTC

Deepest Sympathy

To the family and friends of

Darrell Farley	February 8, 2021
Fuki Terada	April 5, 2021
Hideo Motoike	April 24, 2021
Adrienne Kubose	May 20, 2021
Tom Omachi	May 22, 2021



Welcome Back By Bill Bohlman, BTC President

Contact Bill at budtempchi@aol.com



Each year as the cold Chicago winter begins to turn to the warmth of the spring and summer, our spirits lift as we anticipate more pleasant days to come. This year, we have even more reason to feel hopeful; with the vaccines the pandemic may finally be coming to an end. As we slowly return to our pre-pandemic lives, a return to the temple is one of the things we can celebrate.

Thanks to the desire of Rev. Patti to assure that the Sunday service continued to be available, she and Gary first broadcast from their home on Facebook Live. As the state and city restrictions loosened, Rev. Patti wanted service to return to the temple. The hondo walls were opened so that the entire open hall could be used for socially distant seating. With the help of some dedicated volunteers, a covid protocol helped to keep visitors safe. Thanks to Zoom, many of the other temple activities continued online. Now, as more and more people are vaccinated many temple activities have returned to in-person.

When establishing a new routine, it is said that it takes twenty one days to form a new habit. Unfortunately, we have had a year of a new way of life filled with fears and restrictions. For many, it will be awhile before they feel safe to return to their previous activities. For the foreseeable future, we will continue with the covid protocols at service so that all attendees can feel safe. As the pandemic wanes, we will be able to have the memorial services that were unable to be held during the pandemic. In addition, the after service luncheons and other special events will slowly return.

The pandemic forced us to try new ways of sharing the Dharma. On a personal level, I have been able to participate in many seminars that I previously would not have been able to attend. Previously, I was unable to attend Rev. Patti's midweek classes, but thanks to Zoom I have been able to take advantage of her monthly online class. The Sunday service, and Rev. Patti's class, is attended by people literally around the world. The Sunday service is now available to former temple members who have moved from Chicago, one as far away as Sweden, and has attracted new members and friends.

For those of you in the Chicago area who are able to come to the temple I urge you to return. The Dharma is meant to be shared in the company of others, the Sangha. For those who are unable to attend, we look forward to continuing to make the Dharma available wherever you are.



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June 2021 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 11am Qi-Gong	2	3	4 Taiko 7pm	5
6 9:30am Meditation 11am Monthly Memorial 3pm Aikido	7 Iaido 6:30pm	8 11am Qi-Gong	9	10	11 Taiko 7pm	12
13 9:30am Meditation 11am Children's Dharma School Service 3pm Aikido	14 Iaido 6:30pm	15 11am Qi-Gong	16	17	18 Taiko 7pm	19 1:00pm Asoka meeting
20 9:30am Meditation 11am Regular Service 3pm Aikido	21 Iaido 6:30pm	22 11am Qi-Gong	23	24	25 Taiko 7pm	26
27 11am Pride Sunday 12:30 Board Meeting 3pm Aikido	28 Iaido 6:30pm	29 11am Qi-Gong	30			