

"THE LIGHT OF COMPASSION ILLUMINES US FROM AFAR; THOSE BEINGS IT REACHES, IT IS TAUGHT, ATTAIN THE JOY OF DHARMA, SO TAKE REFUGE IN AMIDA, THE GREAT CONSOLATION."

Hello everyone, welcome to spring!

It is that time of year when many start to think of vacations, relaxation, and my favorite, the sunshine. We are very lucky here in Colorado because, no matter how much snow or rain we get, we still enjoy an abundance of sunshine all year round. Because we get so much sunlight, it can seem extra-gloomy when we get lots of rain and snow. It is hard to imagine the warm and sunny days when we are bundled up and out in our driveways with snow shovels, but ultimately, we know that it will be a day or two or sometimes just a few short hours before the sun comes out.

Amida Buddha's wisdom/compassion is often described using the imagery of light. This light, as in the above quote, is something that 'illuminates us from afar'. It is something that is always there, but we are not always aware of it. In this way, it can be like our Colorado sunshine. We take for granted that the sun will always be there, but we are more aware of it when the sky becomes overcast. When the snow is blowing all around us, it may seem endless, but then we experience great joy when the clouds begin to break and the sunlight comes through. The sun has never gone away, we just weren't experiencing its full brilliance.

This is like the dharma. It is always there, surrounding us with its light and yet sometimes, it isn't until we encounter some darkness that we realize how bright its illumination can truly be. Though sometimes it can seem out of reach, it nonetheless illuminates us from afar and when we begin to realize its presence, we attain the joy of dharma.

12/31/2023

New Year's Eve service

On New Year's Eve we hit the bell (Bonsho) to "ring out" our attachments and "ring in" our aspiration of Enlightenment.



Soba noodles which symbolizes "a wish for a long relationship" are also served.



1/27/2024

Kohaku Utagassen

Deep gratitude to the BDA (Buddhist Dana Association) and YBA (Young Buddhist Association) for their hard work in making this years Utagassen a success !



Kohaku Utagassen
/drēm/ noun
Red and White team performing contest

I answered !



Common Question

Q. If Buddhism doesn't have a God, what do Buddhists pray to?
How does prayer work in Buddhist religion?

A. Personally, I think the object of worship does not necessarily have to be a God or gods. If there is a clear path to the experience of ultimate reality or spiritual awakening, that is a religion. In this respect, depending on each denominations, some Buddhists worship the Buddha; historical Buddha Sakyamuni and some Buddhist pray to the many other Buddhas that is said to exist in the ten quarters. Our denomination of Shin Buddhism is a little different.

First of all, we don't do petitionary pray. There are many definitions of the word "pray" but I understand it as "to make an entreaty or supplication to an object of worship." In other words, pray is an action of wishing or asking for something to happen or things to go well, like praying for peace or happiness.

I do not deny the action of praying for peace or happiness but rather Buddhism teaches that peace and happiness is not something we can find outside of ourselves, but something we can/should discover within. When this is understood and reflected in our heart, we naturally come to appreciate the Buddha's teaching that makes us realize the truth of life. And we express our gratitude towards Buddha by putting our palms together in gassho and recite Namo Amida Butsu. I am not particular in terms so if you want to call this "praying" that is fine with me. However, we understand that it is not that we wish or pray to Buddha but recognize Buddha's wish, a deep realization of the truth of life for all of us.

Book store connection

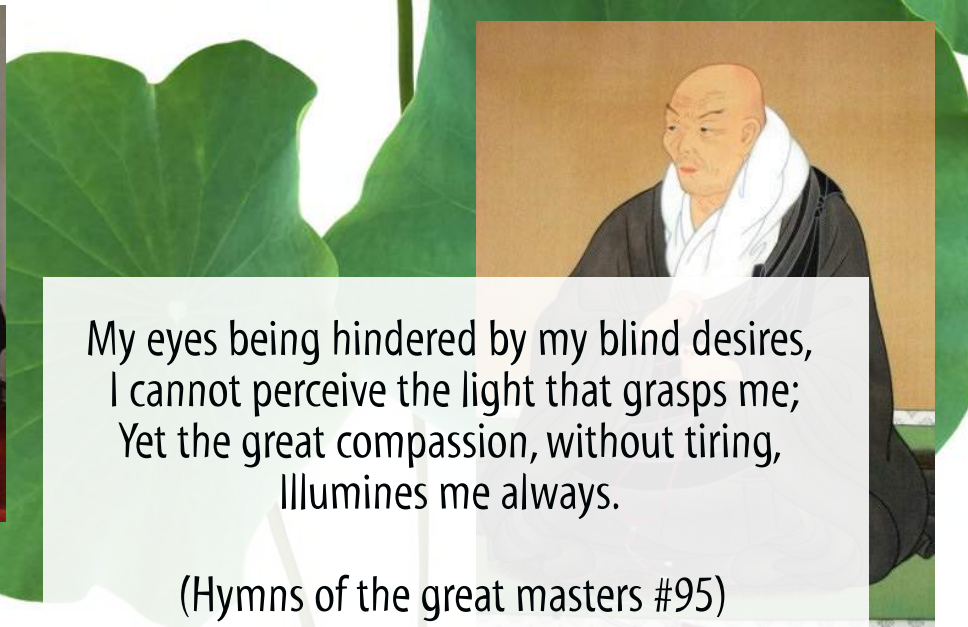
Our book store is now open! We have a great deal of items; Nenjus, Nenju holders, Kesas, Books and also items for your home altar. Thanks to Alison for taking the lead. The book store is currently open after Adult service when one of the staff's are in attendance.



1 / 21 / 2024

Ho-onko service

Ho-onko literally means "Repaying our debt of gratitude" and is an observance during which we reflect on the Nembutsu teaching taught by our founder Shinran Shonin. As we contemplate on his teaching we express our gratitude for the life guided by the wisdom and compassion of Amida Buddha that is contained in the Nembutsu, the words "Namo Amida Butsu."



My eyes being hindered by my blind desires,
I cannot perceive the light that grasps me;
Yet the great compassion, without tiring,
Illumines me always.

(Hymns of the great masters #95)

2 / 7 / 2024

Online Buddhist Class

We have started online Buddhist study classes on the first and third Wednesday of each month. For details and the Zoom link please email us at info@tsdbt.org.

Dharma school connection

Hope everyone has enjoyed their spring break and eager to start spring activities.

In January, dharma school students learned about “causes and conditions” with a seed planting activity. With the right amount of water, sunlight and care I hope everyone has started to see some sprouting plants that they will be able to plant this spring.

In February, we started out with a snow day and then spent the rest of the month learning about impermanence.

And in March we have focused on dana, the act of giving. We spent our time during Clean-up Sunday tidying up the hondo, basement areas, and nokotsudo. The following weeks we moved all the big items in the kitchen and auditorium to have the floors professionally cleaned. The temple looks great! Thank you to everyone who helped with all those tasks from week to week. With only a couple more months of our dharma school year, we hope you join us for Hanamatsuri (April 7), Hatsumairi (April 21), and our annual EOY picnic (June 2).

We will also be cheering on the Dharma Runners in the Colfax Marathon Relay on May 19.

Please contact dbtdharmaschool@gmail.com with any questions or comments.

Communication Committee connection

Our communication committee has been making a tremendous improvement on our Zoom system for Sunday service's and website. Thanks to Clarynne, Dan for the their lead on improving our zoom system and Sarah, Yukari for stepping up to be one of the moderators for the Sunday services. Many thanks to Iain for designing and managing our website. Everyone is benefiting from all of your effort towards the temple.

Shinran group connection

Shinran group is a Japanese speaking group and meets every first Thursday of each month. We hold a service from 11 am and enjoy lunch afterwards.

The service is mainly in Japanese but anyone interested is welcome to join.



BDA connection

The Buddhist Dana Association, BDA continued to provide support to families who lost a loved one this past month. BDA's primary role is to help with the reception, or otoki which occurs immediately after the funeral service. In an effort to provide the best support for families during an emotionally difficult time, Rev Hayashi, Rev Thompson, the sodan committee and BDA officers met to review the guidelines for those wishing to hold services and otoki at the temple. The sodan is a separate committee that focuses on the funeral service itself. Everyone agreed that the best way to help the family through an already difficult time is to make sure there is clarity on what to expect. A brief overview is provided in this newsletter. The full guidelines for the otoki and sodan have always been available and can now be viewed online at the TSDBT website.

BDA will work with the family to clarify what BDA can and cannot do as they are a volunteer group of temple members. The family will identify the contact person to coordinate with BDA and can choose what, if anything they would like to serve for the otoki. The family will also make arrangements to have the food, paper good, and utensils brought to the temple. BDA will help set up the auditorium, will provide tea and coffee if requested by the family and will serve the food provided by the family. They will also help with kitchen and auditorium clean-up with the intention that the clean up will occur within three hours after the beginning of the service. On another note, BDA members attended the Mountain States District meeting in Salt Lake City this past fall. During their report, they informed the local chapters that TSDBT BWA had changed its name from Buddhist Womens' Association to the Buddhist Dana Association to be more inclusive. This in no way minimizes the importance of the role of women or acknowledging their contributions to Jodo Shinshu Buddhism but made this more open to encourage others to join. The SLC chapter liked what we presented and is considering making a similar change.

3 / 17 / 2024

Pet Memorial service

Buddhism values the spirit of inclusivity.

Thus, we also acknowledge our pets to be "Sentient beings" just like we are and this is what we celebrate on this occasion.



Meet our New President of the Board of Directors

Greetings! It is a thrill and honor to serve as the President of the Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temples. Thank you to Chad Nitta, our outgoing President, for guiding us through the pandemic years, and to providing on-line religious services--a phenomenon which would have seemed impossible just a few years ago. There is an exciting future ahead for the Tri-State Temples, the only certainty being the inevitability of change. I look forward to the future we will carve together, while always honoring our past.

Humbly yours, in Gassho

Randy Matsushima

President of TS/DBT



3 / 3 0 / 2 0 2 4

Keirokai

Keirokai is lead by the YBA (Young Buddhist Association) and is a gathering to express gratitude to the elder Sangha members for their extended support to the temple.



日本には桃太郎や浦島太郎、猿かに合戦などの日本昔ばなしがありますが、アメリカに来てから、しばしば日本の昔話は最終的に何を伝えたかったのかがわからないと言われます。おそらく日本の昔話には、全体を通して具体的に「だからこのようにしましょう、このようなことに気をつけましょう」と言った明確なメッセージがないからなのかもしれません。しかし、仮にそうであったとしても、明確な答えがないからこそ私たち読み手は自身に“問う”機会を与えられるのだと思います。

ある方の言葉に、

「救い」とは答えではなく、“問い”が見つかることである

答えは一生を決めつける、“問い”は一生を歩ませる

というのがあります。

私たちは何に関してもすぐに明確な答えが欲しくなります。しかし答えが手に入ると“問い”は消えて無くなり、その一つの答えに執着してしまいます。そしてそこから別の新たな答えを求めたり、問題そのものを問い返したりすることはあまりありません。だからこそ、“答え”ではなく、自分で考える“問う”歩みが私たちには必要なのではないのでしょうか。

昔、庄松さんというお念仏を多変喜ばれた妙好人がいました。

庄松さんは無教育の日雇い人でしたが、仏教を見事に理解、会得

していました。庄松さんの仏教理解は、鋭い頭脳を持つ哲学者で

さえも深すぎて理解できないぐらいで、それゆえ庄松さんは遠く

離れた村の人たちにも知れ渡っていました。

ある日、噂を聞いたある旅人が庄松さんに会うため遠く離れた村

から歩いて来ました。当時はもちろん車や電車などの交通機関が

ありませんので、隣町に出かけるのも一苦勞のようでした。そしてようやく庄松さんの住む家に到着した男は、庄松さんを見るなり、必死に尋ねました。「どうぞ教えてください。どうしたらお浄土に生まれることができるのでしょうか。阿弥陀さんは本当に私を救ってくださるのですか。」しかし、庄松さんは全く注意を払わず作業をしていました。男は再び庄松さんに尋ねましたが答えがかえってきません。諦められない男はしばらく粘りますが、応答が全くないので落胆し、故郷に帰ることにしました。彼は絶望に打ちひしがれ、散々たる有様でした。そんな男にようやく庄松さんは口を開きました。

「なぜ阿弥陀のことを私に聞くのですか？私は阿弥陀ではないですよ。そういうことは私に聞くのではなくて、阿弥陀自身に聞くべきではないのですか」と言いました。男は庄松さんのその言葉に感銘を受け、故郷に帰っていかれました。

このお話の中で男は庄松さんから明確な答えが得られると期待していました。しかし庄松さんは男の質問に対して“答え”ではなく、“問い”を与えたのです。それによって男は新たな問いを自分の中に見つけることができ、人生の歩みを続けたと味わうことができます。

これが、先ほどの「救い」とは答えではなく、“問い”が見つかることである
答えは一生を決めつける、“問い”は一生を歩ませる

ということではないでしょうか。
この言葉は、私たちにとって本当に必要なのは歩みを止める“答え”ではなく、歩ませる“問い”であるということをおしえてくれます。

Future connection

April 7 at 10:15 am - Hanamatsuri (Birth of the Buddha) service

April 21 at 9:30 am - Hatsumairi (Children's first visit to temple) service

10:15 am - Eshinni, Kakushinni service

(Commemorating Shinran Shonin's wife and daughter)

May 11 at 8:00 am - Manju making for Cherry Blossom festival (Volunteers needed)

May 18 at 11 am - Amache pilgrimage service at Amache National park

May 19 at 9:30 am - Family Gotan-E (Birth of Shinran Shonin) service

10:15 am - Adult Gotan-E service

We will only have Adult services from 10:15 am during summer time (June - August)

June 2 - End of year Dharma school picninc (Last day of Dharma school)

June 21 at 8:00 am - Mochi making for Cherry Blossom festival (Volunteers needed)

June 22 and 23 - Cherry Blossom Festival (Volunteers needed)

August 3 at 3 pm - Obon service

6 pm - Obon dance

***The dates and time are subject to change**

Pictures provided by Richard Yoshida