

Connection

Spring Edition

2025

Rev. Thompson's Connection

Behind the desires and worldly passions that the mind entertains, there abides the fundamental and true essence of mind, which is clear and undefiled.
Water is round in a round receptacle and square in a square one, but water itself has no particular shape. People often forget this fact.
— Suramṅama-sutra

This is the Buddha's description of the mind. The true essence of mind is like water, which has no particular shape unless it is somehow constrained. Like the vast ocean, the mind takes many streams into itself. The streams meld with the waters of the ocean and though they may come from specific times and places, they do not maintain their shape or characteristics. They dissipate and become one with the rest of the ocean. For the mind, these streams are thoughts and feelings and, ideally, they should be taken in like the streams into the ocean. They should be allowed to enter, but should not be constrained. They should flow in and then spread out, becoming part of the larger whole.

However, the ocean does not have only streams and rivers flowing into it. Unfortunately, it is also a receptacle for garbage. Trash (for the most part) retains its shape and floats endlessly, clogging the ocean and choking its inhabitants. This is also like our mind. Sometimes what enters it is garbage. This junk clogs our thoughts and keeps the smooth streams from flowing freely. Our discriminative mind holds on to thoughts and feelings, giving them shape and solidity, convincing us that they are fixed and permanent.

All things are impermanent, this is what the Buddha teaches. Nothing has fixed or inherent existence, and it is the belief that things do which causes confusion and suffering. To understand change is to understand the nature of all things; a constant, dynamic flow that takes in all things and rather than trying to capture it and make it conform to the shape of a receptacle, we must let it flow. It is through this that we experience freedom.

THE MIND IS EVERYTHING; WHAT YOU THINK, YOU BECOME
- THE HISTORICAL BUDDHA, SAKYAMUNI -

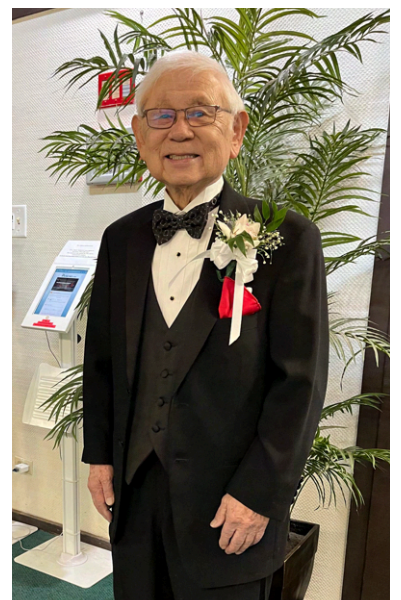
Utagattsen 1-25-2025

The 48th Kohaku Uta Gassen was held on January 25th at the Denver Buddhist Temple. Unfortunately, it was snowing that day so we weren't expecting many people to come, but it seemed like three-quarters of the seats were filled. This year in particular, Mr. Mareo Torito, owner of the Kokoro Restaurants, graciously donated Makunouchi Bento lunches to DBT. This Obento was received by not only the audiences but also by entertainers and volunteer staff. Usually twelve singers are chosen for both White (Men) and Red (Women) team and Mr. Richard Yoshida, who is a member of DBT, was again chosen as in previous years. To our surprise, he announced that this year will be his last performance at the Kohaku Uta Gassen. Many people were saddened to hear this. If I remember correctly Richard had participated in every competition from the first in 1973 to the present, the 48th. I'm sure he will go down in history as the longest participant in the singing contest and the most popular singer in this event.

" DENVER'S KING OF KARAOKE. "

Besides Kohaku Uta Gassen, Richard is a passionate instructor of Karaoke Enka songs at the DBT Karaoke Club. "Karaoke" literally means "empty, or without an orchestra." "Kara" means empty and "Oke" is a shortened word for orchestra. Richard said that the benefit of teaching Japanese songs was that he was able to improve his Japanese language skills. He could read and understand the Japanese Kanji, characters, which are displayed on the video screen used for singing practices. Needless to say, he is crazy about Japanese Enka songs. At practice sessions he always sets up audio equipment by himself before the club members arrive. Current club members are Mr. and Mrs. Susumu Yoshikawa, Mrs. Michiko Chikuma, all from the Temple and a few other members. In addition, Richard has been performing on stage at various public events, approximately five events throughout the year. These include the annual Kohaku Uta Gassen, Hinamatsuri or Doll Festival at the Simpson United Methodist church, Sakura Matsuri or Cherry Blossom Festival at the Denver Buddhist Temple, Japanese New Year Banquet sponsored by the Nikkeijin Kai of Colorado, as well as participating in the Temple Choir. His contributions to the JA community through singing, I would say, makes him "Denver's King of Karaoke."

By Shigeo Kimura



IN MY END IS THE BEGINNING
- MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS -

Did you know?



Our Mother temple, Nishi Hongwanji in Kyoto, Japan has two main halls instead of one, the Amidado (Hall of Amida Buddha) and the Goeido (Founder's Hall). It has been designated as National Treasures and Important Cultural Assets of Japan. In addition, the Hongwanji received the designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1994 as part of the Historic Monuments of Ancient Kyoto.

Dharma School Connection



Happy Spring! As we come out of the winter funk into the longer days of spring, we are constantly reminded of impermanence. The seasons, our mood, and our daily activities are always ever changing, and I suppose that is what makes life eventful and exciting. Our Dharma School classes have been learning about causes & conditions, impermanence and dāna over the last couple of months. They have also been preparing their Hanamatsuri performances. We are thrilled to see our students getting more involved; many of our students have joined the DBT choir, DBT Dance, and Denver Jr. Taiko. YBA has been busy with a Valentine's Day breakfast and a successful Keirokai luncheon.

Dharma School would also like to extend a huge thank you to everyone who participated in our Clean Up Sunday efforts. We are grateful for the teachers, students, parents, sangha and even our visitors that helped with our annual deep clean.

We are excited to announce that our Dharma School family picnic will be held at Berkeley Park in Denver on June 1st. Save the date as we celebrate the end of the school year with hot dogs, hamburgers, good company and a friendly game of bingo. More details to follow. Until then please join us for some of our other events: Hatsumairi, YBA's Mother's Day breakfast, and the Colfax Marathon. As we enter the busy spring, I want to thank everyone for the time, dedication and support they give to Dharma School, the Temple and our community on a weekly basis.

PEACE COMES WITHIN
- UNKNOWN -

Hoonko service

2-23-2025

Due to the severe snow storm, this year's Hoonko service (Commemoration of the founder of our denomination, Shinran Shonin) was held on February 23.

Below is a quote from Shinran. His statement may seem selfish as he claims that the Nembutsu teaching is for himself alone. However, we should not take words literally as Shinran teaches us the importance of seeking the deeper meaning behind words in Buddhist sutras. What Shinran is trying to convey through his words is that if we don't apply the teaching to ourselves personally, then it will never work in us. In other words, he is emphasizing that the Nembutsu teaching is for you yourself to listen and practice and not something for someone else. This reminds me of the song "Man in the Mirror" by Michael Jackson where he says, "I'm starting with the man in the mirror. I'm asking him to change his ways".

**" I'M STARTING WITH THE MAN IN THE MIRROR.
I'M ASKING HIM TO CHANGE HIS WAYS. "**

In these lyrics, he emphasizes the importance of self-reflection and accountability. The lyrics suggest that before one tries to change the world, one must first look within themselves and make personal corrections. This attitude is crucial not only for those who follow the Nembutsu teaching but for everyone. If we refuse to take responsibility and continue to see problems in others then the peace and harmony that this country is seeking will be just a mere dream. This is what is meant when Shinran said, " The Nembutsu is for me alone".

Indeed, Shinran's words from 850 years ago are still relevant today and can be conveyed to anyone.

In Gassho, Rev. Hayashi



**WHEN I LOOK INTO AMIDA'S WISH, I HAVE COME TO REALIZE THAT THE
NEMBUTSU, WAS MEANT TO ME, SHINRAN ALONE - SHINRAN SHONIN -**

Keirokai

3-8-2025

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.



Hanamatsuri (Flower Festival) Service

4-6-2025



**CELEBRATING
THE
BIRTH
OF
BUDDHA**

**BECAUSE YOU ARE ALIVE, EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE
- THICH NHAT HANH -**

Performances after Hanamatsuri service



Buddhist Dana Association Connection

Thank you to all of our members who help and support BDA at our various TSDBT (Temple) and community events! We are accepting 2025 BDA membership which is open to all! The \$10 annual dues help support the Federal BWA and Regional BWA.

Our biggest fund-raiser is the annual Kohaku Utagassen. January 25th was the 48th anniversary of the singing contest. And, despite the weather, it was very successful. A big thank you to Mr. Torito (Kokoro Restaurants) for providing and donating the delicious obentos that were sold at the event. We greatly appreciate his many years of support and generosity.

This Spring will be filled with many Temple and BDA activities:

- April 6 Hanamatsuri service (10:15am) and pot luck lunch
- April 12 Springo - (11am) -chow mein lunch, bingo/raffle/pickles - new fund-raiser
- April 19 Yaki manju making for Cherry Blossom Festival (8am-3pm)
- April 27 Eshinni Kakushinni Adult Service (10:15am) followed by our BDA Member Appreciation Lunch and Meeting (details to follow w/ RSVP)
- May 4 BDA Bake Sale after Family & Adult Services
- June 20 Mochi manju making (8am)
- June 21&22 Cherry Blossom Festival

Besides supporting our Temple and activities, we strive to help our greater communities and BCA as well. Please join us at our events and share your thoughts on further serving our communities. Thank you, we hope to see you soon!

**THE LOTUS GROWS OUT OF MUDDY WATER, BUT WHEN THE FLOWER
BLOOMS, OH, HOW BEAUTIFUL IT IS!**

- DT. SUZUKI -

President's Connection

Greetings, everyone!

I have always enjoyed Hanamatsuri services. Even as a youngster, it was joyous and well attended at my home temple in Fort Lupton. The hondo was full of people I barely knew, and some I didn't know at all. Reverends Tamai and Tsunoda had everyone's attention throughout the service and during their sermons (even though we youngsters couldn't understand Tamai Sensei). The temple resounded with energy from chanting and singing. My memory of Hanamatsuri at the Denver temple was that it was always filled to capacity, too; so much so that many of us rarely got to attend. But, I did get to see the elegant pageantry at the larger temple, even though I knew almost no one there. Even now, I see faces at the Denver temple at Hanamatsuri that I may not recognize, but they, too are there to participate in the tradition.

The first point of my message is to recall and cherish the energy, positivity, and happiness that embraces everyone at Hanamatsuri. Those same characteristics applied to the season on our family farm: Looking forward to a new growing season, with the summer labor and fall harvest to follow. It seems that the common theme was hopefulness.

" WE NEED TO HAVE BALANCE IN OUR LIVES. "

My second point: As I reflect on Hanamatsuri this year, I also feel some emptiness. Like many of you, I have experienced recent losses of people who were either very close to me, or people who were part of families that are close to me. Those who have recently passed seem large in their absence. I almost feel guilty if I think of things I might enjoy this year, because others with similar dreams will not see theirs fulfilled.

I am finally getting to the point of my message. I am not trying to put a "downer" on the season. I think that hopefulness and positivity are essential to the human experience.

And, as Reverend Hayashi has explained, we need to have balance in our lives. Part of that balance is treasuring memory and hope, while understanding that change, just like death, is inevitable. I just ask that we all appreciate each other and respect where each of us is in our respective journey. As Reverend Diana reminds us, , we are all travelers—we are simply at different points on our paths.

Namo Amida Butsu, Randy Matsushima



JOY AND SADNESS TOGETHER CREATE A NEW YOU

- MIYOKO NOZAWA -

Rev. Hayashi's Connection

お寺でお勤めするものに正信偈があります。「正信偈」は、親鸞聖人が書かれた「漢文のうた」で、正式には「正信念仏偈」といいます。この正信偈は「帰命無量寿如来、南無不可思議光」の二句で始まります。親鸞聖人は「正信偈」を作るに当たって、まずご自身の信仰と意思をこの二句に表明されています。この二句の現代訳は「限りない命の如来に帰命し、限りない光の如来に南無したてまつる」です。

ではこの二句はどういう意味を持つのでしょうか。

まず「帰命する」と「南無する」は、両方とも依り処として、敬い順うと言う意味です。次に如来という言葉は「如」と「来る」という字で成り立っています。「如」と言う字は真実そのものを意味しますので、如来とは真実から来る、真実側から私たちに向かってはたらきかけるという意味になります。

ではなぜ真実が私たちに向かってはたらきかけるのでしょうか。

それは私たちがその真実とは反対の生き方をしているからです。そのことを知らしめるためにはたらきかけているのです。では真実とはなにかと言いますと、私たちは無数の縁によって生かされ、存在しているというものです。これを縁起と仏教では言います。私たちは普段「縁起が良い、縁起が悪い」という形で縁起という言葉を使います。しかし、これは誤りで、縁起という言葉は元々 仏教用語です。縁起とは文字通り、「縁によって起こる」という意味であり、この世の全てのものは縁によって起こることを示します。例えば、お花が咲く現象を考えてみましょう。お花が咲くのは種があるからです。しかし、種だけではお花にはなりません。お花が咲くには様々は縁が必要です。縁とは何かと言いますと土、太陽の光、雨、風、昆虫などです。これらの縁なしでは種はお花にはなりません。

同じように私たちの普段の食事を考えてみますと、そこには動物や野菜などの植物、それらを収穫する人々、スーパーで陳列する人、売る人、調理をする人などたくさんの縁があって初めて私たちは食事

することができるのです。このように無数の縁によって私たちの命は支えられているのです。しかし、私たちはそのことをどれだけ自覚して生きているのでしょうか。自分自身もどうかと言われますと、しっかり自覚をしているとは言えないかもしれません。だからこそ真実が真実側から如来という形をとって私たちにたらきかけ、私たちを絶えず呼びかけ、知らしめようとしているのです。

その如来が阿弥陀如来です。

また阿弥陀如来は、阿弥陀側から私たちに向かってはたらいているのです。阿弥陀經というお経の一節に、「阿弥陀如来は今現に仏法を説いておいでになる」とあるのはそのことを表していると味わうことができます。鈴木あやこさんという方の詩にこういうのがあります。

「説法はお寺で、お坊さまから聞くものだと思っていましたが、肺癌になってみたら、あそこ、ここと如来様のご説法が自然にきこえてまいります。この病室のベッドの上は法座の一等席のようです。」

鈴木さんは浄土真宗のお寺の坊主（住職の奥さん）でした。ですから、よく仏法を聞く機会があったのでしょうか。しかし、本当の意味で仏の教えを聞くことができたのは肺癌と診断された後でした。それまでは、知識として仏の教えを聞いていたが、それが癌という現実と直面してみても、初めて心から聞くことができた。聞こう聞こうとしてたのが自然と聞こえてきた。今現に法を説いてらっしゃる阿弥陀如来の声が自然と聞こえたことで、残り短い命ではあるけどそれも様々なものの命のおかげだ、粗末にはできないと精一杯生きる力になったのです。

親鸞聖人が正信偈の最初の二句の中に表明された「帰命無量寿如来南無不可思議光」、限りない命の如来に帰命し、限りない光の如来に南無したてまつるとは、まさにこのことではないでしょうか。

Admin's Connection

Colorado Gives Page

The Temple now has an official page on the Colorado Gives website:

<https://www.coloradogives.org/organization/Tri-State-Denver-Buddhist-Temple>. We are now able to not only participate in Colorado Gives Day in December, but we are able to raise funds throughout the year, with additional payment options than PayPal or credit card. Our Colfax Marathon fundraiser is hosted through this site.

Events

This Spring is all about community events! Please email info@tsdbt.org or call 303-295-1844 if you have any questions and/or would like to volunteer time or donate goods or funds for any of the events. Keep your eye out to order Temple T-shirts, coming soon!

Event	Date and Time	Time	Location
Spring-o Bingo and Chow Mein Lunch	Saturday, April 12	Lunch: 11:00am Bingo: 12:00pm	Denver Buddhist Temple
Manju Making for Cherry Blossom Festival	Saturday, April 19	8:00 am	Denver Buddhist Temple
Colfax Marathon 5k	Saturday, May 17	9:00 am	City Park
Colfax Marathon Relay	Sunday, May 18	First leg at 6:00 am	Ends at City Park
Cherry Blossom Festival Set Up	Friday, June 20	8:00 am	Denver Buddhist Temple
Cherry Blossom Festival	Saturday, June 21 Sunday, June 22		Sakura Square
Denver Pride Parade	Sunday, June 29	Parade begins 9:30 am	Cheesman Park to Civic Center Park

Social Media

Check out our active social media pages and resources. Like, comment, follow, and share!

- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/tristatedenverbuddhisttemple>
- Instagram: @tristatedenverbuddhisttemple
- BlueSky: <https://bsky.app/profile/tsdbt.bsky.social>
- Linktree: <https://linktr.ee/tristatedenverbuddhisttemple>

Administrative Assistant Office Hours

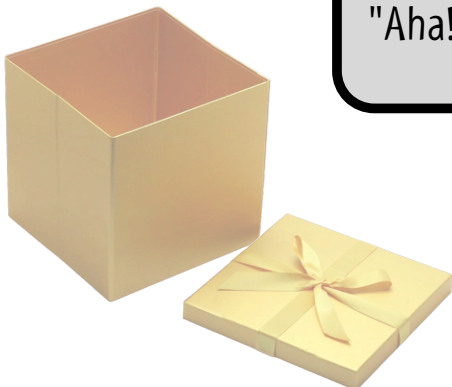
Monday 9:30am – 3:00pm
Wednesday 9:30am – 3:00pm
Thursday 9:30am – 3:00pm
Friday 9:30am – 3:00pm

Future Connections

- 4/19 8:00 am - Maju Making for Cherry Blossom Ceremony
- 4/20 9:30 am - Hatsumairi (Children's First Visit to Temple) Ceremony
- 4/27 10:15 am - Eshinnni & Kakushinni (Shinran's Wife & Daughter) Memorial Service
- 5/1 11:00 am - Shinran group (Japanese & English) Monthly Service
- 5/17 11:00 am - Amache Pilgrimage at Amache National Park
- 5/18 9:30 am - Family Gotan-E (Birth of Shinran) Service with Rev. Dr. Kenji Akahoshi
10:15 am - Adult Gotan-E (Birth of Shinran) service with Rev. Dr. Kenji Akahoshi
- 5/18 - Colfax Marathon
- 5/26 - Memorial Day Services (Please refer to our website for dates and locations)
(We will only have Adult services from 10:15 am during Summer time (June - August))
- 6/1 - Dharma School Family Picnic at Berkeley Park
- 6/20 8:00 am - Mochi Making for Cherry Blossom Festival
- 6/21, 22 - Cherry Blossom Festival
- 6/29 - Pride Parade
- 8/2 3:00 pm - Obon Service
6:00 pm - Obon Dancing

The dates and time are subject to change

Someone sent the Buddha a gift box tied with a ribbon.
Buddha opened it to find it empty.
"Aha!", he said, "Just what I wanted. Nothingness!"



TOOK A WRONG STEP BUT REALIZED, THIS TOO WAS
ON THE PATH OF BUDDHA

- KUNIO KAMEOKA -