

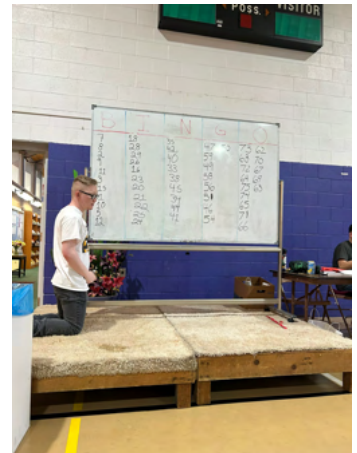
August 7, 2025

CONNECTION

QUARTERLY NEWS DIGEST

SPRINGO BINGO

This year we launched another bingo event, "Springo Bingo" on April 12th. Bingo is an incredibly fun activity because everyone can play the game together regardless of level and age. Come join our bingo games at the Turkey bingo in November or Springo bingo in April!



GOTAN-E SERVICE (CELEBRATING THE BIRTH OF SHINRAN SHONIN)

We invited Rev. Dr. Kenji Akahoshi as a guest speaker for this year's Gotan-E service. Rev. Akahoshi's has been a teacher and thought leader in the migration toward a more contemporary Shin Buddhist understanding. After the Gotan-E adult service, he held a workshop explaining how gratitude can be the opening gate to a deeper spiritual practice. He has also hosted an online study class series for three sessions on July 9th, 23rd and August 6th.



AMACHE PILGRIMAGE 2025

On Saturday, May 17th, the 2025 Amache Pilgrimage Memorial Ceremony was held at the site of the former Amache incarceration site in Granada, Colorado. This year the Ireicho, a historical book full of 125,000 Japanese names who during World War II were placed in internment camps, was brought to the cemetery. Family members had the opportunity to put a stamp on the Ireicho to acknowledge their descendants who were incarcerated. This historic book's tour around the country not only removes a painful time in U.S. history, but also teaches lessons that are relevant today.



REV. THOMPSON'S CONNECTION

'If one walks looking far ahead and pays no attention to the ground beneath their feet, they will stumble. If one gazes critically upon others and forgets to look into themselves, they will bring tragedy upon themselves.' – Renny Shonin

Hello everyone! I love to walk. I generally walk in the evenings, after dark, so it would seem that there would not be much to see (especially considering the severe lack of streetlights in my neighborhood). However, I find that I pay more attention in the dark. In the daytime, I tend to assume that because it is light out, I will see everything that I need to. This is when I get lost in my audio book and trip over the crack in the sidewalk. In the dark, I am more aware. Cars, bikes and the occasional fellow walkers all have lights of some sort, so I see them coming from far off. I am aware of the movements of foxes and raccoons in the tall grass, and I pay attention to the ground in front of me so that I don't step on snakes or the little frogs that hop around after it rains.

How like life is this? In the light, we see things far in front of us, and we superficially evaluate and judge the things outside of ourselves based on a quick glance. We take for granted that we can see and become less aware as a result. In the dark, we must work to see and we have to evaluate the sounds and shapes around us more critically. Of course, both are necessary. Looking ahead to see what is coming is a good thing, but when we look too far, we miss the truth of what is around us and end up injuring ourselves or others.

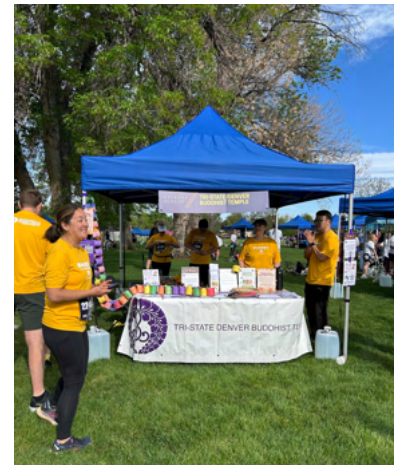
COLFAX MARATHON

Tri-State Denver Buddhist Temple participated in the Colfax Marathon this year. We had over 50 people participate in race events who have selected "Denver Buddhist Temple" as their Charity Partner. The Temple sponsored two marathon relay teams, each with five runners, who participated on Sunday, May 18th: Dharma Runners (representing the Dharma School) and Running the Middle Path (representing the Sangha).



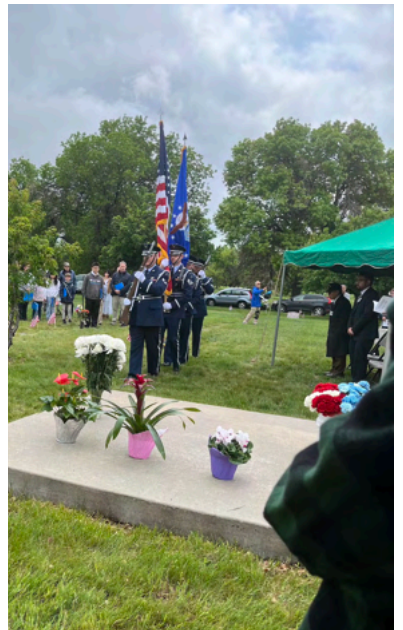
WHY IS RUNNING GOOD FOR YOU ?

Running offers a wide range of health benefits, including improved cardiovascular health, weight management, increased bone density, reduced risk of chronic diseases, and enhanced mental well-being. It's a simple yet effective way to boost overall health and fitness. Of course, depending on your physical condition, walking, fast walking or even leg exercise can improve your health as well.



MEMORIAL DAY SERVICE

Every year a community memorial day service is held at the Nisei War Memorial at Fairmount Cemetery. This community memorial day service is hosted by the Nisei Veterans Heritage Foundation, Simpson United Methodist Church, Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple, as well as community volunteers.



MAYORAL VISIT

We welcomed Mayor Mike Johnston for a visit on May 21st— and the special occasion was marked by the rare blooming of wisteria in the temple courtyard. The mayor toured the temple and other parts of Sakura Square to learn about plans for the redevelopment of the area, including a new temple that will continue to serve as a spiritual and cultural center for Denver and nearby communities.



DHARMA SCHOOL PICNIC

We had our Dharma school picnic on June 1st at Berkley Lake Park. Picnic means the end of 2024-2025 Dharma school year and the start of summer break for the kids. See you all soon on September 7th!



108 Meditation on "Experience"

Experience is valuable because it provides opportunities to learn new skills, adapt to different environments, and gain confidence. Because we pour our hearts, effort, and time into things to gain experience, we sometimes give our experience the highest value and rely heavily on it. We start to think, "I saw it with my own eyes, and I heard it with my ears, so I must be right." As a result, we become overly attached to ourselves. Attachment in and of itself is not a problem as it is human nature, but when we become excessively attached, we become self-centered; believe that everything is about us, refuse to listen to the opinion of others, and refuse influence from outside of ourselves. We become an "Earless person", a person who has lost their willingness to listen to others. When we become excessively attached to ourselves, we also ignore what others are doing, why they are doing it, and how they are doing it. This is an "Eyeless person", a person who has lost their willingness to open their eyes and see things with a new perspective. Experience is a valuable thing. But if we become too attached to ourselves, we risk becoming an "Earless person" or an "Eyeless person." There are pitfalls even in experience.

CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL

2025 marked the 51st year of Cherry Blossom Festival at Sakura Square. We would like to extend our deep appreciation to all volunteers who worked tirelessly to make the festival a success!

The Annual Cherry Blossom Festival celebrates the Japanese and Japanese American heritage and culture through live entertainment, food and drink, a marketplace and informative exhibits and demonstrations.



PRIDE PARADE

The 2025 Denver Pride Parade, now named the Vizzy Denver Pride Parade, was held on Sunday, June 29th. Tri-State Denver Buddhist Temple participates in this parade every year. The parade was previously held on Colfax Avenue but this year traveled down 17th Ave.



Sangha Connection

Changing Directions – Reflections while hiking the Colorado Trail by Dan Nolan

I. Introduction

I set out this summer with a clear goal: another 100-mile stretch of the Colorado Trail. Last year's hike—the first 100 miles of the ~486-mile-long trail winding from Denver to Durango, Colorado—was such a powerful, affirming experience that it only made sense to return and continue what I started. I was chasing the same sense of accomplishment, clarity, connection, adventure, and peace. I trained, planned, packed light, and hit the trail solo again.



Along the way, I realized something wasn't working. Either the trip wasn't what I expected, my body wasn't handling it, or something else was keeping me from enjoying the experience. What unfolded wasn't expected, and it led to a deeper introspection. There's a saying in backpacking: "Go out to go in," and maybe that's what this year's hike was truly about. I decided to quit—twice. How did I plan and work so hard for this achievable goal, yet so easily cast it aside?

II. The First Push

I started this year near Frisco, heading to Buena Vista. On day one, I was too ambitious: 20 miles at high altitude with a full pack. I'd done days like that before, but this one hit harder. The elevation (topping out above 12,500 feet), steep climbs, challenging descents, and thinner air made everything more challenging. My legs were strong, but my recovery felt slow. I questioned if my training had been enough. Mentally, I was slogging through it. I was counting tenths of a mile, focused only on reaching my camping spot. I kept thinking, "It's just the first day. You'll warm up. Settle in."

The next morning was better—slower, easier, more thoughtful—but the underlying feeling didn't lift. Something wasn't clicking. I wasn't recovering. I wasn't present. The joy I expected to feel didn't show up. I camped the second night alone with no other hikers near. I was in a large meadow near the old Camp Hale Army base of the 10th Mountain Division, and a feeling of isolation crept in. I fell asleep uncomfortable. I wasn't sure what I was missing, and I knew it wasn't out there with me.

III. The Hard Decision

Around mile 40, I knew it was time to leave the trail. My wife and son were nearby on a mini-vacation of their own, and I messaged her via my satellite device. She picked me up, we had a fun lunch in Leadville, and a few hours later I was back in Denver. I wrestled with the idea of "quitting." It didn't feel like failure, but it definitely wasn't the plan or the goal. Over the next few days, I rested, played with my son, and reflected on my shortened hike. I didn't know what would've happened had I pushed on—physically or mentally. As my body rested it was hard to put

myself back in the state where I made the decision to leave. Oddly, even while at home, the same feelings of isolation crept back in as my wife returned to work on Monday and my son to his summer camp activities. I began to feel I was wasting the rare time I had away from work. I wondered if I should go back to the trail. It was a strange moment: still questioning why I left while questioning why not return? My son was happily occupied, and there were no pressing responsibilities at home (okay, maybe a leaky toilet or two). I no longer measured success by mileage alone and was thinking how the multiple aspects of my life overlapped.

IV. Going Back to the Trail

I grabbed my pack, took a bus to Vail, and caught an Uber back to Tennessee Pass—right where I had left off three days before. The first day, everything was perfect. I met other hikers, camped with a fun group of strangers, enjoyed amazing views and perfect weather, and felt physically strong. My training, preparation, and experience worked in unison in a deeply enjoyable and mentally present hike.



The next day, I covered another 20 miles and ended up at an incredible campsite overlooking the entire Twin Lakes Valley. After a peaceful night I woke and enjoyed breakfast while watching a breathtaking sunrise.

And then.... I decided I was done with the trail—again. I weighed the pros and cons of continuing the remaining 25 miles. I felt great and was enjoying myself. I reflected on what I had already experienced: the miles, the people, the clarity, and the journey (on and off the trail). I thought about upcoming responsibilities and other aspects of my life, and what it meant to walk away now, on a high note. I decided this was a good ending.

I left the trail that morning, caught a ride and then another regional bus and was back in Denver by sunset.

V. Reflections on Solitude & Connection

I hiked 80 miles. And I don't know if I'll ever go back to the Colorado Trail. I don't feel the same need to "finish what I started." When I reflect on what I enjoyed most, it's not the views or the wildlife or the dehydrated food (ha)—it's the people I met and the small moments of learning in unexpected moments along the way.

On the trail, I thought a lot about what I was missing: certain people, special opportunities, and the desire to make the most of the time I have. I started to sense that solitude and connection might not be in conflict—they might be two sides of the same coin. You need one to feel the edges of the other.

I continue to reflect on the differences between the goal, the plan, and the purpose of my hike. I built a meticulous plan and set a clear, achievable goal. And yet, my decisions—quitting, returning, quitting again—didn't seem anchored to either. So was it purpose that pulled me forward and in different directions? I'm not sure I understand what that purpose really is, on or off the trail. Maybe it's still unfolding. Maybe the best I can do right now is accept I don't know, yet.

CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL COMMITTEE CONNECTION

Thank you everyone for making Sakura Matsuri (Cherry Blossom Festival) a success! The Temple could not have a successful event without everyone's help, including the months prior to the event and on the weekend itself. We had great attendance, even though the temperature outside was scorching. Sakura Square Foundation organized wonderful street vendors and entertainment. Inside the temple we served a variety of food, (Takoyaki was new this year), Sensei Thompson conducted Buddhist talks, Sensei Hayashi created Japanese Calligraphy artwork; Sogetsu Ikebana had a beautiful display, and there was a woodworking display under the gym.

We started the process in January when we determine our menu and obtain all the required permits. Food preparation began in earnest with yaki manju making in April and meat slicing in May, June tofu preparation and then the big push the week before the festival. Volunteers also spend a day driving to Fort Morgan to pick up 500lbs of sugar. In addition to the food prep, we had so many volunteers who help with much needed Temple repairs, such as the swamp cooler, refrigerators, restrooms, etc. With so many people in the facility, we cannot have these systems fail.

It's always wonderful to see all the volunteers who come out and help whenever requested. The festival is our primary fundraiser and we couldn't keep our doors open without our Sangha and friends to the Temple.



PRESIDENT'S CONNECTION

Greetings, fellow members—

Congratulations to all of you on another successful Cherry Blossom Festival last month. Once again, I was fascinated by all the moving parts necessary for the event to progress as smoothly as it did. Some of you were slaving over grills or dancing on stage during Saturday's heat. Others were scurrying about doing this or that, depending on the needs of the moment. Others supported us by purchasing merchandise or food items. All of you greeted our guests with your warm smiles; thank you.

The Cherry Blossom Festival followed our new undertaking, "Spring-O Bingo." This was an experiment that may replace the annual raffle. We see this an opportunity for similar future events.

These two events exemplify what we are as an organization. As I watched people repeating tasks that I had seen performed numerous times over previous decades, I recalled the people who had developed the festival tradition and handed it to us for safekeeping. At the same time, there have been changes that we have embraced with the same dedication and energy. Both tradition and change need our support.

I hope you have a wonderful summer, Gassho, Randy Matsushima

ADMIN'S CONNECTION

Spring 2025 was packed with events and fundraisers, during which we came together as a community and raised funds and awareness for the Temple. We started with our first Springo Bingo event, with wonderful participation raising funds through bingo, a prize raffle, and a delicious chow mein lunch. This was followed by the Colfax Marathon weekend, which saw us with over 50 registrations in the 5k (Saturday) and the Marathon relay (Sunday). At our tent in the Charity Partners Village, we created a Golden Chain with over 250 links and met many wonderful people. Finally, we ran a Temple T-Shirt Fundraiser this spring, with a variety of styles and colors available for preorder. Shirts were worn during the Colfax Marathon, Cherry Blossom Festival, and the Denver Pride Parade in May and June. We have sold over 178 shirts (so far!), including shirts shipped to California, Hawaii, New Mexico, and Texas.

There are still some purple (cotton) and yellow (performance) T-shirts available in various youth and adult sizes through the Temple Bookstore for \$15 + tax. Stop by the bookstore after service or contact info@tsdbt.org for more information about size availability.

Fundraiser	Appropriate Amount Raised (net)
01 Springo Bingo (April)	\$ 6,000+
02 Colfax Marathon (May)	\$ 2,200+
03 T-Shirts (May - June)	\$ 650+
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Total	~\$ 8,850+

As we look forward to autumn, please add these dates to your calendar:

- **Sunday, August 31:** Labor Day Weekend, No Services at Denver Buddhist Temple
- **Saturday, September 6:** Fort Lupton Temple participating in Tomato Festival
@ Trapper Days in Fort Lupton
- **Sunday, September 7:** Family Services (9:30 am) and Dharma School resume
- **Saturday & Sunday, September 12-14:** 2nd Annual Spirit of Japan at Sakura Square
(<http://www.spirit-jpn.com/denver>)
- **Friday – Sunday, November 7-9:** Mountain States District Conference in Moab, UT
- **Sunday, November 9:** No Services at Denver Buddhist Temple
- **Sunday, November 23:** Save the Date for Turkey Bingo!
- **Thursday, November 27:** Denver's 149th Interfaith Thanksgiving Service at Denver Buddhist Temple (10:00 am)

JAPANESE AMERICAN COMMUNITY GRADUATION PROGRAM

On June 14th, the 70th Annual Japanese American Community Graduation Program took place at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science. Twenty graduates received their scholar ships by organization's who support this program. Maxwell Watada from YBA received the Tri-State Denver Buddhist Temple scholar ship.



DHARMA SCHOOL CONNECTION

Wow! The summer has flown by and we are already planning for the 25-26 school year. But first, let's highlight some of the amazing things that happened over the last several months.

Congrats to our 55 member Colfax 5K and marathon relay teams. We also had tons of people stop by and visit the TS/DBT booth in the charity village. Thank you to Alison, Shannon, Clarynne, and Sarah for quickly putting together our new TS/DBT t-shirts! They have looked amazing at the Colfax Marathon, CBF and Pride Parade.

Our family picnic at Berkeley Lake Park was a huge success with perfect weather, delicious food, fun bingo, and always great company. We ended our school year with 53 registered Dharma School students! I want to say a huge thank you to our students, teachers, ministers, Alison in the office, TS/DBT board, parents and all our DS helpers. It truly is a privilege and we couldn't do it without all of you. We are so grateful for your continued support and generosity throughout the year.

Congratulations to our graduated high school senior, Max Watada! We wish you the best of luck on all your future endeavors.

Our preschool class and DBT dancers all did a wonderful job during performances at the Cherry Blossom Festival. And thank you to all the coordinators and volunteers throughout the weekend who stuck out the extremely HOT days to make the weekend a success.

We are looking forward to seeing everyone on September 7 for the first day of family service and Dharma School classes. Thank you to all the teachers who have already committed to the school year. It is not too late if you would like teach, sub or help out with any of the Dharma School activities. Please reach out to dbtdharmaschool@gmail.com.

REV. HAYASHI'S CONNECTION

仏教にはお経というものがあります。お経というのは、約二千五百年前にお釈迦さまが説かれた教えが書かれたものです。お釈迦さまは悟りを開いた方、つまりみんなが今まで見えなかった、この世界の真理に気づいた方であり、その真理を広めたところから仏教が始まりました。

お経と一言言ってもたくさんあります。そのなかで大乘仏教のお経、例えば私たち浄土真宗の教えの根本となるお経である浄土三部経などは実はお釈迦さまが亡くなってから約400年後に現れました。ですから、お釈迦さまが生きていたときは、浄土三部経というのものはありませんでした。つまり、大乘仏教のお経というのはお釈迦さま自身で書いたものではなくて、お釈迦さまの教えを聞いたのちの人たちが書いたのです。

さて、大乘仏教のお経はお釈迦さまが亡くなってから約400年も後にできたわけですが、それゆえの問題があります。それはお釈迦さまが生きている間に直接自分でお経を書いていないから、大乘仏教のお経はお釈迦さまの教えではない、本物ではないと言うものです。いわゆる大乘 非仏説です。

確かにお経はお釈迦さまが直接書いていないのは事実です。しかし直接書かれていないからお釈迦さんの教えではない、偽物だとも言えません。なぜかという大乗仏教の經典が2,000年以上たった今も読まれ続けているからです。2,000年以上も続くということは、それだけの人が大乗仏教のお経は素晴らしいと伝えてきたということです。それこそが大乗仏教のお経が本物であることの証拠です。そして、その2,500年の歴史の中でお経は色々な人に安心感や生きる力を与えてきました。ですからお経を通して安心感や生きる力を得た人にとってはお経は本物なんです。つまりお経が本物かどうかはそれを読む本人が決めることで、他の人が決めることではありません。それは他 宗教 に対しても同じです。他の教え、他の宗教を本物じゃないと批判するのは非常に危険なことです。なぜかと言いますと他の教えを批判してしまうとそこから争いが生まれてしまいます。そして争いがすすむとお互いを攻撃するようになったり、支配をしようとするようになり、結果的に戦争に発展してしまいます。もしそれぞれの宗教が他の宗教のことを認めることができれば、もし、他の宗教の教えも自分が信じている教えと同じようにいろいろな人に生きる力を与えているというふうに考える事ができれば、争いは避けられます。というよりも争う必要がなくなります。

ですから、お経を学ぶ上で大切なことは、お経の中に書かれている教えの内容だけを学ぶということだけではなく、長い歴史の中でどれだけの人がそのお経をとおしてどれだけの人の支えになってきたかという事を学ぶということです。どれだけの人の心の支えになってきたかを学ぶことで、どのお経もその人にとっては本物であるということを知ることが出来ます。