

## The History, Beliefs, and Practices of Zen Buddhism at Chicago's Midwest Buddhist Temple



*Preparing people to lead extraordinary lives*

Written and Presented by: Tessa Cooke (tcooke@luc.edu)  
Supervisor: Yarina Liston (yliston@luc.edu)

As a part of my Engaged Learning Project for THEO 299, I chose to visit the Midwest Buddhist Temple. I chose this site because it incorporates the history and practices of traditional Buddhism originating in India as well as later-developed traditions from Japan, focusing on Jodo Shinshu (Shin Buddhism). I also chose this location because of its sense of community. Created as a bastion of community for Japanese Americans after release from the internment camps of World War II, community the Midwest Buddhist Temple has grown into a flourishing community that accepts people of all backgrounds, as Reverend Ron Miyamura says, "Come as you are".



During temple service, we started with sitting meditation, focusing on our breath, and attempting to clear the mind. Following that, we followed the reverend in a walking meditation, praying at the altar frequently.



The temple itself is constructed in a traditional Japanese style and has an attached Zen garden. The temple also contains facilities such as a social hall to connect with other members of the community as well as a library to obtain essential information on Buddhism ranging from books, records, articles, and more.

Recitation of prayer in the form of chanting was a large part of the service. Pictured above is the altar where we bowed in prayer, as well as offered incense.

Through my visit to the temple, I upheld Ignatian values by learning from people of other faiths to enhance my understanding of Loyola's Jesuit beliefs, as well as to seek out services that aid humanity, some of which are done by outreach programs at Midwest Buddhist Temple.