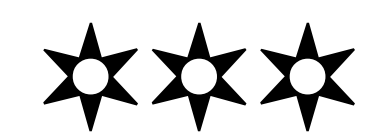


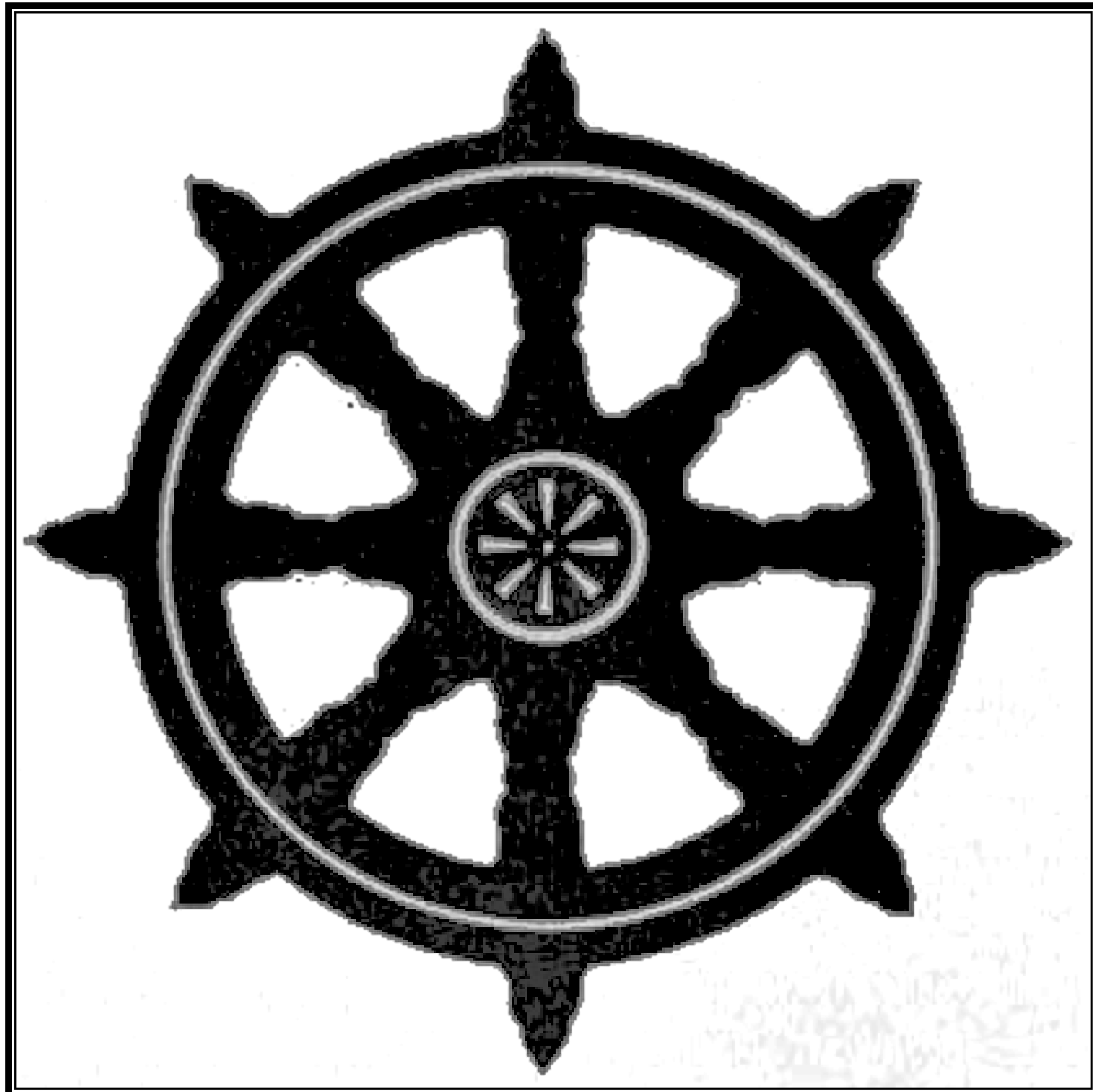
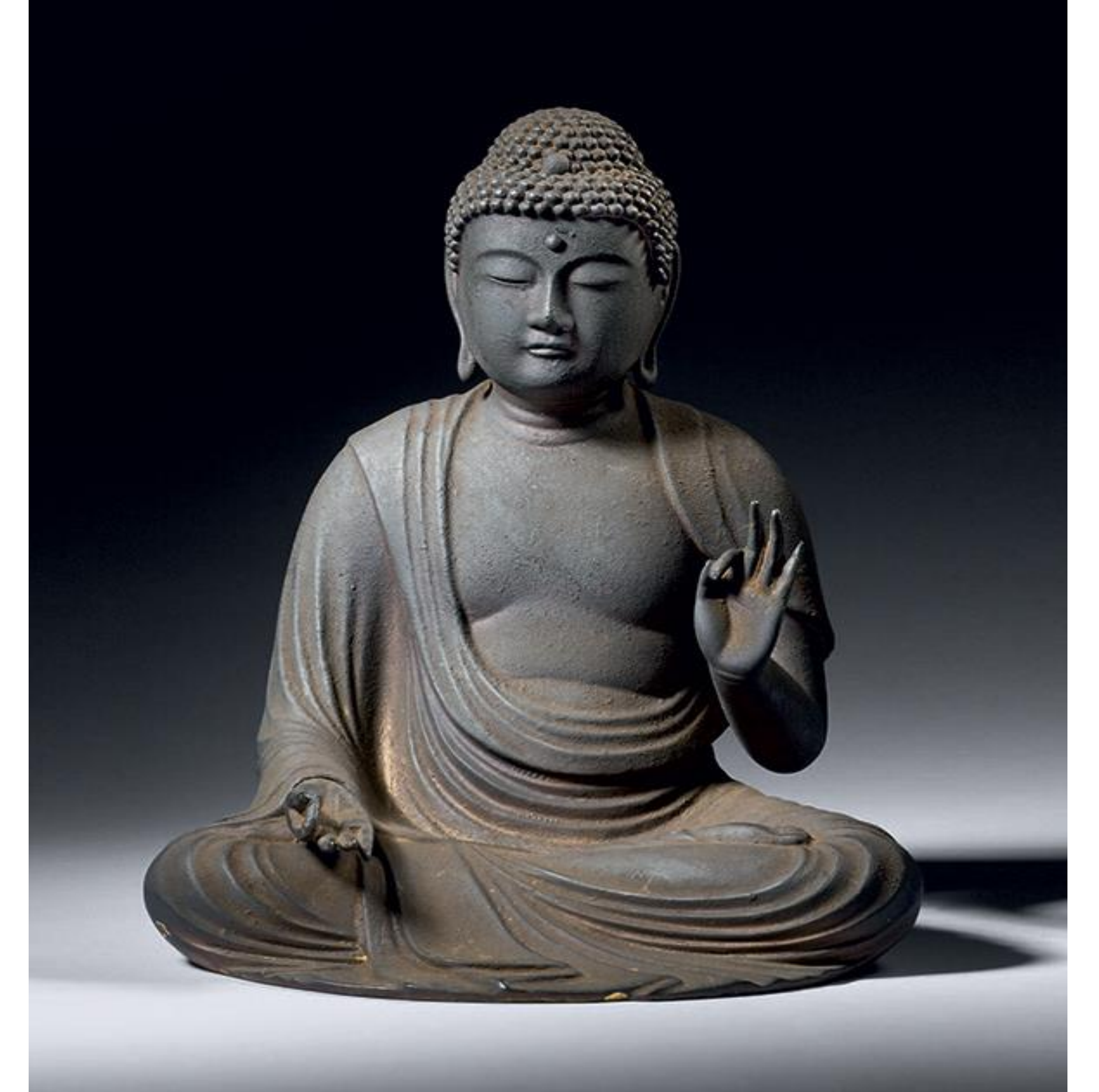
# BUDDHISM IN CHICAGO

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## Pure Land Buddhism

Pure Land Buddhism is an explicit sect of Mahayana Buddhism, mainly practiced in East Asia. Buddha refers to the enlightened one who became enlightened about the truth of life and the way to live without suffering. In Pure Land Buddhism, the central Buddha is Amida Buddha who is a symbol of eternal life, light, and the symbol of compassion and wisdom. Amida also vows to save all beings that renounce his name and is therefore a salvation-based religion. Faith is then the main route to reach enlightenment in Pure Land Buddhism rather than practices, meditation, and study of scriptures in other sects of Buddhism.



## The Buddhist Temple of Chicago

Founded by Reverend Gyomay M. Kubose and dedicated members, on the South Side of Chicago in October of 1944. During the postwar years in the Hyde Park neighborhood, it was a religious and social center for many Japanese Americans who relocated to Chicago from internment camps. In 1956 it was moved north to its present location in the Uptown neighborhood. The Buddhist Temple of Chicago is an independent religious organization with no administrative ties to a higher headquarters of any other Buddhist sect, with the purpose to make Buddhism available to all by presenting the teachings in Western terminology.



## Interviews

While visiting the Temple, we interviewed various members about their experiences and journey with Buddhism.

Hilal Tamrat, a member who is been coming to the Temple for a year and a half, was raised Orthodox Christian. She initially went to a Buddhism class for the experience and began to go regularly. She believes the community at the Buddhist Temple of Chicago is very welcoming, diverse, and filled with people from all walks of life. She lives by the teaching to stay present and remember and believes the Temple represents inclusion and freedom.

Glenn Fujiura, a member who was born into this Temple, and who has parents that are of Japanese descent and who experienced the interment camps during World War II, has always consider himself a Buddhist although his attendance has fluctuated within recent years. He practices Buddhism by “living in the discipline and the very honest study of the self, so that one does not take themselves too seriously”.

Both perspectives were interesting to hear and demonstrates how Buddhism is truly open to all who are willing to start that path. We were fortunate enough to get two very different perspectives from members with different life experiences. It was a truly eye-opening experience and a great first-hand experiences about how the religions are practiced.

## Reflection

As someone who was raised as a Theravada Buddhist, this was an insightful experience to explore a different sect of my religion that I was not familiar with previously. Visiting the Buddhist Temple of Chicago felt familiar but so foreign at the same time. Some aspects of the environment and service reminded me of my experience going to Buddhist temples in the past, but there were also various aspects such as the prayers, Buddhist symbols, and community dynamics. However, I think the most valuable experience I got out of visiting was speaking to different members of the Buddhist temple. Overall, this experience showed me the beauty of this religion as well as the meaningful interaction of hearing people light up as they speak about a community that means so much to them.

-Sophana Srisak