

Published by the Buddhist Churches of America,
Southern District Ministers' Association with
funding from the Southern District Council.

Southern District Temples

- Arizona Buddhist Temple
- Buddhist Church of Santa Barbara
- Buddhist Temple of San Diego
- Gardena Buddhist Church
- Guadalupe Buddhist Church
- Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple
- Orange County Buddhist Church
- Oxnard Buddhist Temple
- Pasadena Buddhist Temple
- San Fernando Valley Hongwanji Buddhist Temple
- San Luis Obispo Buddhist Church
- Senshin Buddhist Temple
- Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple
- Vista Buddhist Temple
- West Los Angeles Buddhist Temple



Buddhist Churches of America

<http://buddhistchurchesofamerica.org>



Relationships and Sexuality



Rev. Henry Adams, Oxnard Buddhist Temple

We come together when conditions bring us to meet and part when conditions separate us.

SHINRAN SHONIN – Tannisho, Chapter 6

When conditions bring us to meet

A loving relationship consists of two individuals who have been brought together by special circumstances, and who recognize in each other a partner for living a life of mutual respect and gratitude.

We live in a diverse society where we see loving and healthy partnerships in same-sex and opposite-sex couples that transcend ethnic, religious, and cultural boundaries. Two people may have very different backgrounds, but it is possible for them to enjoy a harmonious and mutually supportive life together if they share a common vision of the path they will walk together through life as a couple. As we support each other on the journey toward realizing the full potential of our lives, we must endeavor to practice patient listening and learn to set aside our self-centered attitudes.

A healthy and happy relationship thrives in a supportive environment. Friends and family have a responsibility to support the couple with a generosity of heart and sincere wishes for their happiness together.

When conditions separate us

A close friend and reliable companion in life is a wonderful gift to be cherished. With an open heart and a commitment to growing together on a spiritual path, even times of difficulty in a relationship can be a precious opportunity for deepening trust and understanding. As we care for each other in a spirit of mutual respect, our closeness becomes a mirror that shows us the

The circumstances of life bring constant change to our hearts and minds.

true nature of our being.

The circumstances of life bring constant change to our hearts and minds. There may come a time when two people recognize that the most compassionate decision for both people is to go their separate ways. In this regard, it is important also to have compassion for oneself and recognize when remaining in an unhealthy relationship is causing too much pain and sadness in one's own life. Parting with a longtime companion naturally brings feelings of disappointment and mourning. However, to realize true peace of mind it is necessary to let feelings of blame and bitterness melt away in the light of wisdom and compassion.

What we are today comes from our thoughts of yesterday, and our present thoughts build our life of tomorrow: our life is the creation of our mind.

If you speak or act with an impure mind, suffering follows you as the wheel of the cart follows the beast that draws that cart. What we are today comes from our thoughts of yesterday, and our present thoughts build our life of tomorrow: our life is the creation of our mind.

If you speak or act with a pure mind, joy follows you as your own shadow.

SAKYAMUNI BUDDHA – Dhammapada, Contrary Ways 1-2, adapted from the translation by Juan Mascaro)

Karma and sexuality

As a romantic relationship grows in trust and commitment, deepening emotional and spiritual intimacy may be accompanied by physical intimacy. In explaining the working of *karma* in our lives, the Buddha teaches that our words, actions, and attitudes in the present moment will determine the future circumstances of our lives. This law of cause and effect has particularly profound implications with regard to sexual activity, which holds powerful creative potential for generating new life through pregnancy.

At the same time, one must be mindful of the potential for sexual activity to cause physical and emotional harm through violation of trust and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. All who engage in sexual activity should take care not to lose sight of the truth of cause and effect because they will ultimately have to live with the effects that their actions cause.

It is a basic truth of life that the kindness we show to others improves our well-being. Likewise, our harmful actions toward others decrease our own quality of life. As our connection in a loving relationship deepens in closeness and intimacy we see more and more clearly, the truth that on what I do now, depends not only my happiness or unhappiness but also that of others.