Hello everyone, welcome to February! This month we are observing Nirvana Day (Nehan-e in Japanese) which is the day on which Shakyamuni passed away and entered ‘parinirvana’ or ‘final, perfect enlightenment’. The word ‘nirvana’ means ‘blowing out’ as of a candle or other flame and refers, in Buddhist context, to the extinction of our worldly illusions and passions. In December, we observe Bodhi Day, which is the time when Prince Siddhartha realized ‘awakening’ or ‘enlightenment’. In this state, he was able to fully understand the Great Truths of impermanence and interdependence however, he also continued to live for another 45 years meaning that he had not yet ‘blown out’.

In our Jōdo Shinshū tradition, we are taught that even though we can attain a state of awakening, we are unable to attain nirvana because we are unable to free ourselves entirely from G.A.S. (greed, anger and stupidity) until our lives end. However, when we observe occasions such as memorial services, it is our chance to reflect on one of the greatest causes of our G.A.S. which is our inability to accept impermanence. Change is an inevitable part of life. All things, whether animate or inanimate, organic or inorganic, are subject to change and this is the basis for the first of the Four Noble Truths, the Truth of Suffering. Change causes our ‘suffering’ or ‘dis-ease’ not because of the very fact of it, but because of our attitudes towards it. When things are going well, we do not want them to change but when they are not going well, we hope that they will. Change is only acceptable if it somehow benefits us personally.

One of the most difficult changes that we encounter in this life is the separation from someone that we love. We have all encountered this separation in one form or another and therefore know how deeply troubling it can be. As the Buddha was passing out of this world, he looked to those gathered around him, saying: “Do not grieve. If I were to live in this world a whole kalpa, our association would still have to end. You cannot find any association which does not end…Therefore, you must know all the world is transient, and meeting certainly implies separation.” These words were meant as words of consolation for his grieving followers but also as encouragement for them to continue their practices and study of the Dharma so that they might live lives of serene contentment rather than dis-ease.

Through the Buddha’s words, we ourselves can be encouraged in the same way. Realization and understanding of the changing nature of our existences as well as the cultivation of an accepting nature towards change can help us to lead contented lives. Reflecting on the Buddha’s final, perfect ‘blowing out’ we can see how fleeting our lives are and therefore how precious they are. Though our abilities are limited, we are nonetheless capable of awakening to great truths and living lives of harmony and joy, understanding that all things are impermanent yet knowing that all is well.

Namo Amida Butsu
February has arrived. Please take care of yourself in the severe cold weather. On Sunday, February 16th, we are holding NEHAN-E service at Denver Buddhist Temple. What is NEHAN-E? It is the day when Buddha died. If you look at the picture, you can see how many disciples and animals gather around Buddha and are sad. This picture is called the nirvana picture (NEHAN-ZU), and it is a picture that is displayed when performing NEHAN-E service at a temple.

In this picture, Buddha is lying quietly, with his head facing north, his face facing west, and his right side down. Buddha is said to have died in this pose called "ZUHOKU MENSAI UKYOGA".

In Japan many people who die are kept or positioned in Kita-makura (North Pillow), which is the same as ZUHOKU MENSAI UKYOGA. They hope those who have died will be born in the Pure Land. Therefore, they also pose like Shaka.

In fact, Shinran Shonin and Honen Shonin also died in Kita-makura. This custom was already there from their time. Shinran Shonin has written in the Hymns of the Pure Land Masters about Honen Shonin's ending pose:

"Monks and laypeople, men and women, gathered beforehand; Ministers and nobles assembled in numbers. Lying on his right side with head to the north, facing the West, He observed the manner of the Tathagata's passing into nirvana."

As for the pose of Shinran Shonin when he died, it is written in "Godensho" by the great-grandson Kakunyo Shonin that Shinran Shonin died in the same pose.

Dying is not just unhappiness, because there are also words of calm and peace of mind. It is the moment when life in this world ends and you are born in a peaceful nirvana pure land.

The word "KUE ISSHO" is engraved on Japanese tombstones, which means "everyone born in the Pure Land can meet at one place." It means we will be born in the same place as our parents and friends, Shinran Shonin and Honen Shonin. The words make you feel warm to end your life, not scared. I am fortunate to be encountering Buddhism in this way today by remembering Shakyamuni, who died about 2500 years ago. Thanks to all who passed on the teachings of Buddhism.

Gassho
涅槃会
by Rev. Noritaka Imada

二月がやってまいりました、余寒厳しき折から、お身体を大切になさってください。さて、きたる2月16日（日）にはデンバー仏教会に於きまして涅槃会がございます。涅槃会とは何かと申しますと、それはお釈迦様の亡くなった日でございます。写真を見て頂きますと、お釈迦様の周りに沢山の弟子や動物が集まって悲しみている様子が描かれております。この絵は涅槃図といい、お寺で涅槃会をする際に掲げる絵でございます。お釈迦様は静かに横たわって、頭を北に向け、顔を西に向け、右脇を下にしておられます。お釈迦様はこの状態で亡くなったとされており、これを「頭北面西右脇臥（ずほくめんさいうきょうが）」と呼びます。寝るときに北枕にすると縁起が悪いという話を聞いたことはないでしょうか。これはただの迷信ですが、亡くなった方を北枕で安置するという話は有名かと思います。お釈迦様が亡くなられたときの姿を模して、亡くなった方の極楽往生を願って、遺体を北枕にする習慣が生まれたようです。

実は親鸞聖人や法然上人も北枕で亡くなられたとされています。親鸞聖人の時代からその習慣は既にあったのですね。

親鸞聖人は高僧和讃の中に法然上人の臨終の様子について書かれています。

道俗男女預参し 卿上雲客群集す 頭北面西右脇にて 如来涅槃の儀をまもる
法然上人は「頭北面西右脇の北枕の姿でお釈迦様と同じようにして亡くなられたと書かれています。

また親鸞聖人の臨終の様子については、曾孫の覚如上人が書かれた「御伝鈔にこう記されています。

「聖人弘長二歳壬戌仲冬下旬の候より、いささか不例の気まします。それよりこのかた、口に世事をまじへず、ただ仏恩のふかきことをのぶ。声に余言をあらはさず、もつぱら称名たゆることなし。しかうしておなじき第八日午時頃北面西右脇に臥したまひて、つひに念仏の息たえをはりぬ。」

やはり宗祖も頭北面西右脅の北枕の姿で亡くなってつくられたと書かれています。

臨終とは単なる不幸ではなく、完全なる安らぎという言葉もあります。この世の縁が尽きて命終わり、安らかな涅槃の浄土に生まれる瞬間です。

日本のお墓にはよく「倶会一処」という言葉が刻まれていますが、これは「浄土に生まれたものは、みんな一つの処（ところ）で会うことができる」という意味です。両親や親しい友人、親鸞聖人や法然上人と同じ場所に生まれるというこの言葉は、命を終えるのが怖いことではなく不思議と暖かい気持ちにさせてくれます。約2500年前に亡くなったとされる仏尊を機縁に、今日もこうして仏教に出逢っていることは幸せな事でございます。

February 16, 2020—TS/DBT Annual General Meeting

On February 16, 2020, the TS/DBT Board will host the Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple Annual General Meeting beginning at 11:30 a.m. in the Auditorium. The Annual General Meeting is open to all and is an important opportunity to meet with the Ministers and the Board and to discuss upcoming events. Please plan to attend, to ask questions, to gain a better understanding of the financial plans for TS/DBT, and to share your ideas and suggestions for cultural events, community gatherings, and religious educational opportunities!
My first Denver Temple visit was the first time I met Rev. Fujii and was also the first time I heard the Nembutsu. While I am sure that I may have read the Nembutsu in a book or heard it when I was in Japan, it was the first time that I opened my ears to the Nembutsu. Those first few visits are a blur to me, and while I can’t remember specific things from them, what I do remember is Rev. Fujii saying the Nembutsu works because it works, and not by our calculation but by Amida’s.

On December 11, 2019, Rev. Fujii died in Niigata, Japan at the age of 69. He was there visiting his mother. He had transferred from TS/DBT the spring of 2019 to serve as the minister at Southern Alameda Buddhist Church in Union City, California.

I would like to share a few stories from our interactions before he left which, looking back, help me appreciate him as a teacher.

One of the last things that Rev. Fujii and I discussed prior to his leaving was the Ryogemon. The Ryogemon is a confessional statement, which is attributed to Rennyo, the 8th head of the Hongwanji Jodo Shinshu sect. We talked mostly about the second section, which goes like this:

*We know that in the one thought moment of entrusting our birth in the Pure Land is settled and assured, and that Amida’s salvation is established. Upon realizing that, we joyfully acknowledge that saying the Nembutsu is our response in gratitude to the benevolence of the Buddha.*

At this time I was in my last few months of preparation to go to Japan for my Tokudo ordination and Rev. Fujii felt that it was vitally important that I understood this specific passage. This was one of his last lessons to me and it was just like the first one I heard: the Nembutsu is not our practice, but that of the Buddha, and it is Amida’s great wish for us to entrust our birth in the Pure Land through the Nembutsu practice. When we entrust, the Nembutsu becomes our statement of Gratitude to the Great benevolence of the Buddha.

(continued on page 7)

### Arigatou Gozaimasu

Thank you to the following people who volunteered to fold and address last month’s newsletter; they squeezed this effort into the end-of-year holiday season that is busy for everyone: Richard Yoshida, Marge Fukuhara, Shirley Tsuchimoto, Kay Takahashi, Dick Mayeda, Hailey Mayeda, Jeremiah Mayeda, Amaya Mayeda, Mary Jane Okamatsu, Lorraine Hisamoto, Noritaka Imada Sensei and Kaitlyn Mascher-Mace Sensei.

Thank you to all who aided the Ministers in preparation for a memorable and meaningful New Year’s Eve Service & Bonsho Ringing - it created a wonderful new year beginning for all.

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Thank you all who came out to help setting up the food tables for the Ho-Onko luncheon. There was great care and personal touches to everyone’s favorite dishes. This luncheon is such a wonderful tradition to bring in the New Year and to celebrate with new and old friends. The tables were filled with the most mouth watering and aromatic foods!

On January 25, 2020 the BWA cooked and served traditional Japanese bento lunches at the 45th Annual Kohaku Uta Gassen to a packed house of beautifully costumed singers, distinguished judges, and an eager audience.

We want to thank all who helped out over the three days of hard work prior to the Uta Gassen event especially the men who helped with the heavy lifting of boxes of chicken, and teriyaki sauces and moving the awkward carts from the basement to the kitchen area. A big shout out goes to the ladies, who tirelessly helped out in the kitchen prepping the vegetables, and preparing the sauces, washing dishes, and so much more. Arigato!!!

We sold over 200 bento boxes that consisted of chicken teriyaki, nishime (Japanese simmered vegetables), sunomono (thinly sliced cucumbers with seasoned vinegar) atsuyaki tamago (rolled egg omelet), kamaboko, onigiri (rice) orange slices and a 2 layered jello. It’s been said that these bento boxes are the tastiest and offer the best value for the money. This event is the biggest fundraiser for the BWA.

On Saturday, February 29 (Leap Year Day) 2020 and Sunday, March 1st TS/DBT and BWA will be hosting a community wide “Tsuru for Solidarity” folding event. Please see the *Tsuru for Solidarity* article in this same issue of the Temple Reflection. This event is for an extremely worthy cause so we are encouraging all to participate. This is a project for everyone!

### BWA Membership; joining or renewal

In order to renew your membership or if you wish to become a member of the Tri-State/Denver/Buddhist Women’s Association for 2020, it is requested that you fill out the membership form printed on page 5. Along with this form, it is requested that you enclose your $10.00 dues by February 29, 2020 and mail it to Kay Takahashi, 6742 West 5th Place, Lakewood, Colorado 80226. Please make your check payable to TS/DBT/BWA.

Membership in this organization is open to all genders and Sanghas of TS/DBT. Also, if you are 80+ years of age, your $10.00 dues is waived as your submitted membership form qualifies you as an Honorary member.

We look forward to enjoying another year of friendship and camaraderie as we work together in reaching our goals and objectives in promoting the Jodo Shinshu teachings.

SEE: page 5
Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temples gratefully acknowledges donations and offerings received from December 1, 2019 —December 31, 2019

**Bodhi Day Service**
Clarynne & Nicholas Blanchard
Mabel Googins
Gail & Robert Ida
Kent & Jane Kano
Jack & Alice Kimura
Randy Matsushima
Karen & Drew Matsushima
Frank Miyazawa
Stacey Umemoto Ospina
Kay Takahashi
Doris Taniguchi
Shirley Tsuchimoto
Richard & Michiko Yoshida

**In memory of May Takemura – 13th yr**
Richard Takemura
Donald Takemura

**In memory of Tom Koshio**
Tetsuo & Sadako Iwahiro
Richard & Michiko Yoshida

**Offering Box**
Preschool Dharma Class
Mile High Ministries
anonymous

**December Shotsuki donations** in memory of
Mabel Googins .................................................. Arthur Oka
Hisae Taniwaki .................................................. Gladys Taniwaki
Sayoko Takata .................................................... Isao Jon Takata & Hatsumi Takata
Miko Yamashita .................................................. Kaori Kajiwara
Family of Tosh & Mary Tawara ......................... Kiwa Tawara & Sallie Tawara
Fumiko Yamashita .............................................. Kohana Yamashita
Alice Mizuno ...................................................... Leonard Mizuno
Sumi & Yosh Akiyama ........................................... Mitsutaro, Kiwa & Sallie Tawara

**Donations by**
Longmont Buddhist Temple .................................... Nov & Dec MOU
Kazuko Ortiz ......................................................... facilities usage; Okinawan Dance
Nikkei Treasures sales .......................................... kitchen fundraiser
David & Gayle Goto ............................................. in memory of Himi Morishige
Shizue Asano & family .......................................... in memory of Sadao Asano – 7th yr

**February Shotsuki donations** in memory of
Emiko Koga, Kari Koga ........................................ Tepper Mark Koga
Kiyoshi Koga, Thao Ma ....................................... Tepper Mark Koga
Mitsuko Hayashida .............................................. Tepper Mark Koga

**FOY Donations**
Charles Kagiyama
Kenzo & Irene Kawanabe
Alice Mizuno
Yuriko Shimoda
Peter Thiemann

**Legacy Donations**
David & Mary Hammond
Donna Inouye
Charles & Teri Ozaki
Kay Takahashi

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**BWA MEMBERSHIP FORM**

DATE:__________________________________ NEW______ or RENEWAL____

NAME________________________________________________________________________

ADDRESS_____________________________________________________________________

CITY____________________________________  STATE____________  ZIP______________ HOME

PHONE__________________________  CELL PHONE_________________________

EMAIL________________________________________________________________________

Preferred method of communication (please circle one):  Home Phone  Cell Phone  Email

ACTIVITIES YOU WOULD LIKE TO PARTICIPATE IN:

_______ KITCHEN HELP/PREPARING FOOD (RECEPTIONS, TEMPLE & COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES)

_______ EDUCATION, SEMINARS, WORKSHOPS

_______ UTA GASSEN, Coordinator OR Co-chair

_______ NIKKEI JINKAI COMMUNITY PICNIC, Coordinator OR Co-chair

_______ HISTORIAN, Coordinator OR Co-chair
February Shotsuki Names
(Sangha members who have passed away in the month of February)

Mitsuzo Aigaki
Frank Y. Akahoshi
Kunisasuro Akahoshi
Katsue Aoki
Yosho Norman Arakawa
Isamu Jim Anita
Melvin Ashida
Hatsuchi Chado
Janet Sachiko Chikuma
Torataro Doi
Tommy T Doizaki, Jr
Henry Seichi Doizaki
Denji Eto
Chiyu Eya
Katsusaburo Fujii
Shizuyu Marion Fujimoto
Yuji Fujimoto
Gregory James Fujita
Harry Kiyoshi Fukaye
Guntaro Fukino
Shigeru Funakoshi
Joe Funayama
Janette Haruko Furukawa
Joe Funakoshi
Guntaro Fukino
Harry Kiyoshi Fukaye
Gregory James Fujita
Yuji Fujimoto

Hagino Helen Okada
Tome Ogawa
Zenita Oda
Kane Nukaya
George Saburo Nukaya
Bill Masuo Nukaya
Shigeru Nishimoto
Yonezo Nishida
Kane Nukaya
Zenita Oda
Tome Ogawa
Hagino Helen Okada
Noriaki Okada
Suzu Okagawa
Tokusaburo Okamoto
Jukiichi Okugawa
Taichiro Omaye
Henry Omoto
Jirohachi Onodera
Tsuka Onodera
Kunio Osaki
Ito Sakurai
Kiyozo Sameshima
Gene Yoshitsugu Sasa
Haruko Sasa
Tetsujirou Sasamoto
Kimiey Sato
Lillian Sat
Motoye Sawada
Taichi Sera
Toshiye Shibata
Jack Shigeru Shigetomi
Yukano Shino
Katsumi Harry Shiramizu
Josaku Shiroyama
Chiyo Ko N Stanhope
Hitose Suekama
Alice Sugihara
Sumiko Sumida
Tamiko Suzuki
Tazu Suzuki
Takeo Tadehara
Frank Tadayuki Tagawa
Thomas Taggart
Mansuke Taiga
Aiko Takeda
Inohie Tamura
Haruyo Tani
Kane Tani
Rose Jitsuyu Tanouye
Noboru Tashiro
Sunao Tashiro
Sumae Tazawa
Haruye Alice Terada
Tom Todomo Terada
Kiu Tersa
Uhachiro Teshima
Masashi James Tochihara
Yoshiko Toda
Margaret Taeko Torem
Misuo Tsuruda
Yagoto Uchida
Matazo Ueba
Tetsu Ueba
Yoshie Ujifusa
Chie Wakiura
Mimosuke Washizu
Esther Kinue Watada
Lowell Wikoff
George Kiyoshi Yago
Sueki Yamada
James Yamane
Santo Yamasaki
Shizuyu Yamashita
Tadao Tom Yamashita
Muneomi Harry Yanari
Sami Yasuda
Tetsuichi Yasuda

Shotsuki Monthly Memorial Service
February 23, 2020

The Shotsuki Service is a general memorial service held on a monthly basis for members and friends of the temple who have passed away during the month of service. Although there are major memorial (hoji) services set at specific time intervals such as 49th Day, 1st Year, 3rd Year, 7th, 13th, 17th, 25th, 33rd and 50th years, the temple provides families with monthly memorial Shotsuki services held in conjunction with regularly scheduled Sunday services, so family members will have the opportunity to pay respect and gratitude to loves ones who have passed away in that particular month. Donation by affected family members is appreciated: $50/observance. In Gassho

Save the Date
Saturday, March 7, 2020
10:00 a.m. to noon

Do you know what the Jodo Shinshu rituals and traditions are when a person dies?

Rev. Diana Thompson and Rev. Noritaka Imada will talk about the funeral rituals and temple procedures for funeral planning.

There will also be a presentation on the Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple Nokotsudo and general funeral options.
I think Rev. Fujii truly felt thankful and expressed his Gratitude to Amida every time he said the Nembutsu.

At the end of service, Rev. Fujii liked to sing the song Ondokusan II. For most of us the song is beautiful, but is just words. We know the words are Buddhist, that they are Shin, but are we able to take them truly to heart? Their meaning, I believe, is key to the lesson that Rev. Fujii was trying to teach us all.

The benevolence of the Tathagata’s great compassion
   Even if we must crush our bodies, should be returned in gratitude.

The benevolence of the masters and teachers,
   Even if we must break our bones, should be returned in gratitude.

Rev. Fujii left his home country to serve in a foreign land and, with no hesitation, spent the rest of his life working to spread the Buddha-Dharma, the teachings of Amida Buddha as understood through Shinran Shonin. Now that he is gone and his bones are indeed dust, I want to say something that I didn’t say enough during his life and only through the retrospective nature of death am I able to say now - Thank you Sensei.

In Gassho,
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<td>9:30 Nihongo service</td>
<td>10:15 Adult Service</td>
<td>11 am Dharma service &amp; discussion</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>9 am Senate opening</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>6 pm Lajara/Alamosa MM</td>
<td>11 am Dharma service &amp; discussion</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>6 pm Lajara/Alamosa MM</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>6 pm Lajara/Alamosa MM</td>
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<td>31</td>
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March 2020
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<tr>
<th>SUNDAY</th>
<th>MONDAY</th>
<th>TUESDAY</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>THURSDAY</th>
<th>FRIDAY</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
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<td>Chibi No Gakko</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Dharma School</td>
<td>Clean Up Sunday</td>
<td>9:30 Nihongo service</td>
<td>Combined Family/Adult</td>
<td>9:30 Nihongo service</td>
<td>11:30 Dharma Service &amp; Discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:30 Family Service</td>
<td>10:15 Adult Service</td>
<td>9 am Brighton service</td>
<td>11:30 Dharma Service &amp; Discussion</td>
<td>T/M</td>
<td>11 am Shinran’s Day Service</td>
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<td>Nehan E &amp; Pet Hoji</td>
<td>Shoshinge serv M</td>
<td>KyoKuCho mtg in Seattle, WA</td>
<td>9:30 Family service</td>
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<td>11:30 Dharma Service &amp; Discussion</td>
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<td>9:30 Nihongo Service</td>
<td>11:30 Dharma Service &amp; Discussion</td>
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<td>11:30 Dharma Service</td>
<td>T/M</td>
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<td>9:30 am Family service</td>
<td>10:15 Adult Service</td>
<td>11:30 TSDBT Annual General Mtg</td>
<td>11:30 Dharma Service &amp; Discussion</td>
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<td>11:30 Dharma Service &amp; Discussion</td>
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<td>8 am final Chibi No Gakko</td>
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<td>11:30 Tsuru Folding</td>
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<td>9:30 Family service</td>
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<td>9 am—1 pm Tsuru Project</td>
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All Sangha members are invited to join in Colorado efforts to fold at least 5,000 paper cranes (tsuru) as part of a national pilgrimage gathering in Washington, D.C. The Temple is providing a gathering space for a folding event hosted by BWA and Courtney Ozaki. Please come to the Temple on Saturday, February 29th from 9 am to 1 pm and/or Sunday, March 1st from 11:30 am to 3 pm. No folding experience is necessary; light snacks and beverages will be available; paper and parking will be provided.

“National Pilgrimage to Close the Camps” is a scheduled gathering of Japanese Americans from across the country in Washington, D.C. on June 5-7, 2020 advocating for the just and dignified treatment/policies of all immigrant and refugee communities.

One of the planned elements is the folding and presentation of 125,000 paper cranes (tsuru); each crane represents each incarcerated Japanese American and Japanese Latin American in U.S. concentration camps during World War II. Tsuru for Solidarity is the organizing and planning group for this event; they are soliciting help and participation throughout the U.S.

Please join us in attaining (and surpassing?) the Colorado 5,000 goal. Also, RSVP at bit.ly/tsurucranefold by Saturday, February 22nd so that your hosts can plan space, snacks, parking, etc.