

BUDDHIST CHURCH OF FOWLER



THE WHITE PATH

MONTHLY BULLETIN VOL. 512

OCTOBER 2021

OCTOBER

Due to the concerns of Covid-19, all **in-person** Sunday services, classes and activities will continue to be on hold until further notice.

The following are this months **streaming** services:

10/3 - CC Combines Shotsuki service - Fowler **streaming**

10/10 - Eshin-ni/Kakushin-ni service, Shotsuki, Dharma service - Reedley
Streaming & in-person

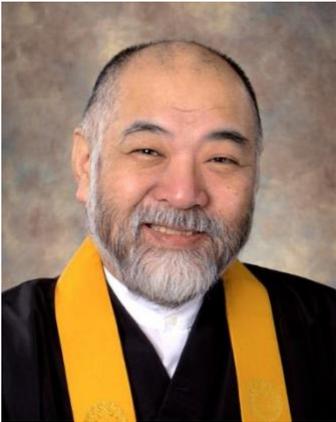
10/17 - Parlier Buddhist Church 90th Anniversary - **streaming**

10/24 - CC Combined Pet Memorial Service - Fresno **streaming**

We appreciate your patience and understanding.

We hope everyone remains safe and healthy.

Namo Amida Butsu



Why We Pursue the Seven Masters

“If the Awakening-words of Buddha’s Amitābha which an inconceivable Wisdom and Empathy on the Buddhahood is true, Sakyamuni's teachings cannot be false. If the Buddha's teaching is true, Shan-tao's commentaries cannot be false. If Shan-tao's commentaries are true, how can Ho-nen's words be empty? If Ho-nen's words are true, what I, Shinran, say about attaining Buddhahood by the Nenbutsu cannot be meaningless.” *Tannisho* [Book II, The Text, Chapter 2]

“Why do we pursue the Seven Masters?” is a frequent question from members.

One asked, "Rinban, I know there were such people as the Seven Masters, but I don't know the details of them, and to be honest, I'm not very interested in them because they lived 1,000 or 2,000 years ago. It doesn't matter to me what these people say. So rather, show the Buddha's teachings directly to support us living in the present time.”

At first glance, it sounds like a legitimate opinion, but it seems that there is a serious misunderstanding about Buddhism.

The first thing to remember when learning about the uniqueness of Buddhism is that Buddhism has no holy book. For the Buddha, he didn't think that there was a necessity for an authoritative sacred scripture like the religion before him. Some may say, "There are Sutras in Buddhism, aren't there?" But "Sutras" are self-reports of the people who received the guidance that the Buddha actually met and gave personally. These were not signed, written, or stated by the Buddha himself.

Tens of thousands of "reports" have remained till now as a result of the Buddha in taking each and every one of their realities seriously and instructing how to become a Buddha under their limited conditions.

However, the contents are very different, and when read by ordinary people, the more they read, the more confusing they become. This is because the Buddha shared his teachings according to the personal qualities of each individual. Each person's life is different. Surprisingly, Buddha shows a way of suitable expression to the targeted person that fits perfectly with each life.

Even so, in the first few hundred years after the death of Buddha, there were Buddhist teachings and methods that were almost perfectly inherited by oral tradition, but around 4th century B.C.E., those were written down on banana-leaf papers by orders of ancient monarchy. It is said that when it came to the public, arbitrary interpretations began and Buddhism quickly fell into a state of great confusion.

For the next 500 years, the Buddhist teachings continued to be in turmoil, and the uniqueness of Buddhism was about to be lost. At this time, the First Master of the Seven Masters, Nāgārjuna (Ryūju, AD.150-250), appeared. He re-created the Buddha's logic as if he were a direct disciple of the Buddha, understood the Buddha's ideals and intent with astonishing accuracy, and clearly proclaimed the

motive of the Buddha's sharing his dharma for all sentient beings to the people of 2nd century in India. Nāgārjuna shared the Buddha-dharma by the best suitable expression of the teaching for the targeted person exactly like the Buddha. The revival of Mahayana, the Buddha's Intent, has begun.

Since then, at intervals of 100 to 200 years, in different civilizations of India, China, and Japan, Six Masters who shared the Buddha-dharma by the best suitable expression of the teaching for the targeted person exactly like Nāgārjuna, appeared. They were all really like direct disciples of the Buddha.

The six Masters of Vasubandhu, T'anluan, Taoch'o, Shandao, Genshin and Genku (a.k.a. Hōnen) followed, and finally, Shinran Shōnin would appear. There was no appearance of Shinran Shōnin without great achievements in each era and place by the Seven Masters. And, the strong influence of Shinran Shōnin's guidance has continued to be effective in Japan until the 21st century, and under that influence, Shin Buddhism in the United States began.

From last year to this year, I have had a chance to talk about some of the Seven Masters: 1st, Nāgārjuna; 2nd, Vasbandu; and 3rd, T'anluan. I will continue to talk about the other four masters as appropriate.

If you can't wait that long and want to know more now, join the "Shoshin-ge Study Class" on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays at 7:00 p.m. on Zoom. We are trying to translate the chapters of Buddha's Amitābha, Śākyamuni Buddha, Nāgārjuna, Vasubandhu, T'anluan, Taoch'o, Shandao, Genshin and Hōnen into 21st century English. Here we are discussing the current version of the Shōshin-ge as of 2021.

I strongly hope for the emergence of the American-born Master who can share the Buddha-dharma by the best suitable expression of the teaching for the targeted Americans. Such a person is truly awaited in the current American Buddhism.

By that time, Shinran Shōnin will have become the eighth master of Shin Buddhism, and a new term, "the Eight Masters of Shin Buddhism," may have been added to the history of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

Gassho

Rinban Kakei Nakagawa



**The Eight Essentials of our Jodo Shinshu No. 6.
We will reach enlightenment when we give up our
self-righteousness, by hearing the primal vow of
Amida Tathagata. (Ta Riki Hon Gwan)**

Hello, all Central California Sangha friends! Have you received the booster shot? The Spanish Flu (medically known as subtype H1N1 virus) lasted 3 years as a pandemic warning until it was renamed as a seasonal Flu. The H1N1 virus is still active in 2021, as you see the Flu season coming closer. I will not be surprised if the current pandemic continues for another year. Even after the “pandemic” is over, we may see a banner “The Corona season is nearing, get your vaccine” at a pharmacy, soon. I personally see the pandemic as a test of endurance. The virus is smart enough to change its shape, very quietly sneaking into our nose, and persistently trying to reproduce humongous numbers of themselves. If people are impatient, short-tempered, or lazy enough to neglect proper self-sanitization, we may not make a best decision and practice required to overcome the pandemic sooner. I continue to do my part with the sense of endurance, so please continue your part as well!

Recently, I attended the BCA ministers’ Association meeting on Zoom. During the meeting, we had District Reports. Out of the 8 districts in the mainland, some have 7 – 10 fulltime ministers. Although CC has only 2 fulltime ministers, the volume of various activities on the report shows that CC is the most active district, as if we have 7 – 10 fulltime ministers!! We can do so because of supporters like you. I sincerely appreciate your generosity and understanding to our ministerial work, especially under this pandemic.

In this article, I would like to share one of eight essential teachings of Jodo Shinshu. It is *Ta Riki Hon Gwan*, the sixth of eight important teachings. It is a Japanese idiom and Hon Gwan is a very important word. It is used for our mother temple’s name as you know, Hongwan-ji (temple). Now you know how important the word Hon Gwan is. *Ta* means ‘others. *Riki* literally means ‘power’, but in Buddhism, we should understand it as ‘help and support of others. The word, Ta-Riki is often described as Other Power, then it sounds like a god or deity provides us physical or spiritual benefit, and as the result it may confuse people living in the Christian society. *Hon* means ‘main’ or ‘core’. *Gwan* literally means ‘Vow’, but more precisely it can be understood as a statement which leads others to be enlightened.

Our founder, Shinran Shonin describes what Ta-Riki, in his book, *Kyogyoshinsho, Kyo-Kan*. He states “Ta-Riki is also called the efficacy of Hon-Gwan by the Tathagata. 他力といふは如来の本願力なり” In this sentence, he treats Ta-Riki and Hon-Gwan almost equivalently. The efficacy of Hon-Gwan will appear as your deepest appreciative reaction with Nenbutsu (recitation of Namo Amida Butsu), to the 18th vow of the Amida Tathagata. It also means when we are touched by Ta-Riki, our heart will be filled with the sense of deepest appreciation to the 18th vow. The 18th vow embraces all sentient beings

without any discrimination, distinction nor requirement. It means there is no discrimination, distinction nor requirement in the life of interdependence. You might have heard “live as you are” or “come as you are” before. Providing the atmosphere of “as you are” is the essence of the 18th vow. “As you are” contains a unique Buddhist understanding.

You may question what is “YOU” in the Buddhist context of “as you are”? The historical Buddha explains there is no “YOU”. YOU are formed and maintained by numerous others. YOU do not exist by yourself. Just like... since YOU are born, how many grains of rice (gallons of water) have you consumed to maintain yourself? YOU (your existence) are the result of interdependence of life (help and support of others). The Buddhist teaching does not test you whether you KNOW it, instead, you LIVE with it. In the last 20 years, I have heard from people like, that it is hard to understand Buddhism. Yes, it is hard to intellectually understand Buddhism, but it is easy to live with it. When I was in Japan, Buddhism existed as a Living Dharma. I could feel or experience Buddha Dharma in my everyday life, because I was told that Buddhism is a teaching to live with. When I came to the U.S., I was surprised that many people were eager to study Buddhism, but not live with it. It was one of my culture shocks. Now I know such attitude (custom) is brought on by the idea of Bible study and Theology.

Once you start living in the life of interdependence or keep awaking that the result of interdependence is your existence, you will truly enjoy and appreciate your existence without thinking of your financial status, your position in your society or work, or other judgmental and discriminatory minds (in other words, self-righteous). In Buddhism, Self-righteous is a NO NO characteristics. Under the life of interdependence, when I point out someone and say he is wrong, my forefinger is also pointing to myself and tells me that I am wrong for him because I am a part of others and others are a part of me. Everything is connected to each other. “YOU” is a person who truly enjoys his/her life with gratitude and appreciation in the life of interdependence. The Buddhism understanding of YOU shows the uniqueness.

Shinran Shonin often conducted self-contemplation (Nai Sei or Nai Kan) to feel and recall the life of interdependence and impressed his gratitude and appreciation on his mind. To me, it can be understood as Jodo Shinshu meditation. I know we are living a busy life, but I would like you to pause and stop for conducting self-contemplation. You will be happy to live with it. Gassho.

Gassho.
Rev. Kaz Nakata

Karma

Kanon Nakata

Karman or karma means consequence or result. It is like a cause and a result situation. In Japan, we use the character 業 means action. Buddhism and Hinduism use the word karma in different meanings.

The historical Buddha teaches about interdependence of life as one of his main teachings. It means if there was no one around us, we would not be able to live and have life right now. Like for me, if I do not have my parents or grandparents and they didn't do the things they did I wouldn't be myself right now. I am the result of what my past generation, parents, grandparents, and family did. As my personal experience, for me I was born about 1 month earlier than I was supposed to. My grandma was supposed to come in April because I was supposed to be born that month. But she couldn't come. So, until my grandma came my mom and dad had to do everything to take care of me. Before I was born, the doctor's thought I had an irregular heartbeat and my parents were worried about it. But it was just a hiccup. When I heard about my birth from my parents, I thought of the words from the three treasures: it states "Hard is it to be born in human life. But fortunately, we are now living in it." So, there were hard times and like an emergency before I was born and it is why I feel fortunate right now because I am able to live this way and stay the way I am. When I heard my dad tell me about how I was born I learned that this was a perfect example of karma. I am able to be myself right now because I had my parents and all the other people around me. If I did even just one little thing in the past, I might have had an absolutely different life. My presence is the result of numerous karmas. I can show another example, when you do not do any homework you may not want to or you may just lay down on your bed watching YouTube, then you may see an F on your next report card because you made no effort to see an "A". In this case, because you didn't do any homework or assignments, which is the cause, you may get a lot of F's on your next report card. Every choice I make right now changes the future little by little or changes my future absolutely. Before I learned what this word means in Padma class, I thought karma meant like a bad word to say to people because sometimes people would say "You have karma" or something so I thought it was about something bad. But I learned in Padma that karma means consequence or result so nothing bad. If I think back right now maybe it meant that you did something bad, then I wondered where my negative image of karma came from and I figured out during the session that it came from Hinduism.

In Hinduism, people generally believe they did something wrong in their previous life if their present life has difficulties. On the other hand, people who are Hinduism generally believe they did everything correctly in their previous life if their life is great right now.

In conclusion, so far, I have taken one semester of Padma and the negative image I held on Buddhism disappeared. Like about karma and all the other lessons. This is one of the reasons why I wanted to talk about this today.

Streaming Services

Please view, join and participate in the October virtual services on Twitter as listed on our cover page.

If you have any questions or need assistance, please feel free to call the Betsuin Office Monday-Friday (559) 442-4054 or Reverend Kaz (424) 666-7101.

The Shotsuki names for the month of October are:

Chiyoto Matsumoto
Shinayo Miyasaki
Ben Shimizu
Teruo Arasuna
Hachiroemon Nishina
Kaoru Kamikawa
Hiroso Yamamoto
Seki Masuoka
Ume Takimoto
Shinayo Tokubo
Kinjiro Kato
Sasayo Nakagawa
Shigeru Morita
Kumi Fujikawa
Geraldine Kawano
Peaches Sugimoto
Ayako Honda
Fred Kato

Nobuo Roy Yosako
Yoshiye Nakata
Deborah Asakawa Lee
Yoshio Floyd Honda
Johnson Shimizu
Deviroi Namito Gibson
Shizue Hirasuna
George Taniguchi
Shizuko Emma Kawano
Toshio Kawamoto
George Shoichi Miyasaki
Ayako Kondo
Toshiye Miyasaki
Nofuku Yokomi
Ross Seiji Sakaguchi
Russell Matsumoto
Henry Fujikawa

CHURCH TOBAN FOR OCTOBER

District IV

Riji: Sharon Asakawa
Craig Honda

Toban: Sharon Asakawa
Tayoko Honda

SEPTEMBER 2021 DONATIONS

Shotsuki

\$ 60.00	Shizue May Mukai
\$ 60.00	Greg & Gay Mukai
\$ 40.00	Eiko Ii & Yoshie Ii
\$ 25.00	Carol Takahashi
\$ 25.00	Arthur Yosako
\$ 25.00	Cindy Inouye
\$ 20.00	Eiko Ii
\$ 20.00	Yoshiye Ii

In Memory of Flora Murashige

\$ 50.00	Gregg, Janis & Michael Sera
\$ 40.00	Yoshiye Ii

In Memory of Russell Matsumoto

\$ 100.00	Linda & Robert Glassman
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In Memory of Mrs. Sachi Tanimura, One Year Memorial

\$ 100.00	Rick & Marlene Miyasaki
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2021 CBE Seminars Online For All FALL: SEPTEMBER ~ NOVEMBER SATURDAYS, 11 AM - 1 PM (PACIFIC TIME)

Explore topics in Jodo Shinshu Buddhist doctrine, practice & culture

<p>SEPTEMBER 18 & SEPTEMBER 25 REGISTER ONLINE https://forms.gle/ zQVGSZEumtMYCvw7</p>	<p>SHINJIN - Part 1 & Part 2 Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto President, Institute of Buddhist Studies</p>	
<p>OCTOBER 16 REGISTER ONLINE https://forms.gle/ RiXbVsVgawJcnpnH8</p>	<p>JODO SHINSHU MODERNITY Dr. Galen Amstutz Adjunct Faculty, Institute of Buddhist Studies</p>	
<p>OCTOBER 23 REGISTER ONLINE https://forms.gle/ V7MunamGzRtmscl7</p>	<p>日本語セミナー 本願のこころ ワンドラ 睦 オレンジ郡仏教会 開教使</p>	<p>Japanese Seminar: Hongan no Kokoro Rev. Dr. Mutsumi Wondra</p> 
<p>OCTOBER 30 REGISTER ONLINE https:// forms.gle/6PxLrRudlnuQQghz6</p>	<p>CBE Every Day Buddhism Committee presents THE THREE POISONS Rev. Marvin Harada Bishop, Buddhist Churches of America (BCA)</p>	
<p>NOVEMBER 13 REGISTER ONLINE https:// forms.gle/BXXeakRcTaVNQh5BA</p>	<p>日本語セミナー 浄土真宗をととえると? 桑原 浄信 パークレー仏教会 開教使 * マリン仏教会 開教使</p>	<p>Japanese Seminar: Jodo Shinshu wo tatoeru to? Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara</p> 
<p>NOVEMBER 20 REGISTER ONLINE https://forms.gle/ RFAsxvfArT4YZrAng</p>	<p>KOICHI'S KITCHEN Koichi Mizushima Guest Chef/ CBE Youth Program Coordinator</p>	

QUESTIONS? EMAIL: CBE@BCAHQ.ORG PHONE: (510) 809-1460

DONATIONS ARE WELCOME! PLEASE NOTE "CBE/SEMINAR DATE" IN DEDICATION BOX

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OCTOBER 31, 2021



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AKI MATSURI BENTO

OCTOBER 31, 2021

DRIVE THRU PICK UP 2:00PM—5:00PM

Hello Betsuin Members and Friends.

This will be the second year that our Ginza Food Bazaar will not occur due to continued CoVid issues. But we still want to have a fund raising function.

My theme for the current times is "*Life Goes On...But Responsibly*".

To this end, our Ginza food bazaar team will be putting on a special take out box which we wish to call "AKI MATSURI BENTO". It will be almost completely different than previous years and I know you will enjoy it. Please share it with your friends and also save the date, October 31st, and as Temple members, please prepare to help us put this wonderful Bento Box together. Oh, and don't forget to take your chances in our raffle.

- Gordon Misaki, Co-ordinator

----- PLEASE RETURN ORDER FORM BY OCTOBER 20 -----

NAME _____

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TAKE OUT BOX _____ @ \$18.00 = \$ _____

RAFFLE TICKET(S) _____ @ \$ 2.00 = \$ _____

ADDITIONAL DONATION _____ = \$ _____ THANK YOU!

TOTAL PAYMENT ENCLOSED _____ = \$ _____

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: "FRESNO BUDDHIST CHURCH"

PLEASE RETURN ORDER FORM, CHECK AND ANY UNSOLD FOOD & RAFFLE TICKETS IN THE ENCLOSED SELF-ADDRESSED ENVELOPE. THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT!



Honolulu & Oahu Districts Buddhist Education Committee

2021 FALL VIRTUAL NEMBUTSU SEMINAR

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Register Today!*

MINDFULNESS

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Focusing on LGBTQIA+, Stop AAPI Hate & Black Lives Matter



Saturday, November 6, 2021

9:00-11:00 AM

(Hawaii Standard Time)

**Presented by Rev. Matt Hamasaki
Buddhist Church of Sacramento**

FREE Registration

Deadline: October 30, 2021

[Registration Online Info Here](#)

[Print Manual Registration Form Here](#)

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Legacy Foundation, Stop AAPI Hate & The Popolo Project!**

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*Questions? Please contact Hawaii Betsuin (808) 536-7044
or email: susanoshiro@hawaii.rr.com*