

# BUDDHIST CHURCH OF FOWLER



## THE WHITE PATH

MONTHLY BULLETIN VOL. 521

JULY 2022

### JULY

We are happy to announce that the Buddhist Church of Fowler will have an in-person Obon service. Regular services and Dharma School will begin in September.

The following are July services:

**7/3** - Streaming recorded CC Shotsuki service

**7/10** - Streaming recorded Dharma service or live stream Visalia Obon service

**7/17** - Streaming recorded Dharma service

**7/24** - Fowler in-person Obon/Hatsubon service

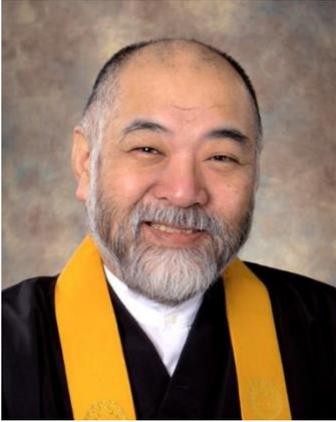
Streaming recorded Dharma service or live stream Fresno Obon service

**7/31** - Streaming recorded Dharma service

We appreciate your patience and understanding.

We hope everyone remains safe and healthy.

Namo Amida Butsu



“I, Shinran, have never even once uttered the Nembutsu for the sake of my father and mother. The reason is that all beings have been fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, in the timeless process of birth-and-death since the birth of this universe. When I attain Buddhahood, each and every one will be saved without exception. If it could be a good accomplished by my own powers, then I could transfer the accumulated merits of my Nembutsu to save my father and mother. But since this is not the case, when we become free from self-power and quickly attain the enlightenment, we will save those bound closest to us, no matter how deeply they are immersed in karmic suffering.” (TANNISHO, chapter 5)

Obon is the most familiar festival celebrated by Buddhists. It is a dharma-gathering where we renew our thoughts about our ancestors by remembering our close relatives who have passed away.

By the way, who exactly are our ancestors? Are they my parents who gave birth to me and my grandparents who delivered my parents? For example, if you count the 32 generations of my ancestors, you will have more than the current population of the earth! If one of these people was missing for some reason, I would not be alive today. I can't help but think of the complicated fate of my birth. I can't help but wonder where and how my countless ancestors are now. Are they really sleeping in their graves?

One Chinese master once wrote, "My body is the dead body of my parents." This means that the blood of countless ancestors flows from parent to child, child to grandchild, and is all condensed into my body. The bones buried beneath the grave are nothing, but the ancestors are still alive in this world. In other words, my body is a living ancestor. This is true not only for humans, but also for dogs, cats, and all living things. However, only human beings can be considered to have not only a body, but also a life that is lived with a wish. This wish may be represented by the words "happiness and well-being."

Obon is properly called "Urabanna". Some of you probably know that the word "Ura" means "to be hanged upside down." Let's take a look at some of the causes which we have fallen into difficulties.

1. We neglect what is important and value what is not important.
2. We put off things that need to be done and hurry to do things that don't need to be done.
3. Forgetting things that need to be remembered and remembering things that should be forgotten.
4. Asking questions that don't need to be asked, instead of asking questions that need to be asked.
5. I don't do what I have to do, but I try to do what I shouldn't do.

The list goes on and on. Even if you don't have a specific reason, I'm sure you can think of one.

Our suffering stems from this upside down way of being. We think we are standing on our feet, but we are really standing on our head, so we can never get rid of our suffering. If we just live a busy, busy life, we will never realize that we are standing on our head. Standing on one's head is unnatural, so it is several times more painful than standing correctly. As a result, we naturally complain more than those who are standing correctly. Running around on your head when it's hot will only make you more frustrated. Therefore, I suggest that you slow down for a couple of days and check your way of being, which is the meaning of "Ura", or "I'm standing on my head, ain't I?"

So, how can we check ourselves if we don't even realize that we are standing on our heads? The only way is to be exposed to the correct teachings is by Buddha's wisdom. It is only when we are exposed to the right teachings that we realize how upside down we are.

Bonn is a vessel. It means a vessel to scoop up the suffering, which means salvation. Therefore, the "Urabanna" is a gathering where those who are standing on their heads and suffering can be saved through the correct teachings. It is exactly not an event for the dead but for the living who are suffering from standing on their heads.

During the Obon season, we visit graves and read sutras in front of the family tomb stone, so it is often perceived as a Buddhist event for the dead. However, both visiting

graves and reading sutras are opportunities for us who are still alive to think about the way we are today, while paying respect to our ancestors.

Those who think that visiting graves and reciting sutras are only for the dead will be surprised when they encounter the words of Tannisho, "I, Shinran, have never even once uttered the Nenbutsu for the sake of my father and mother." However, this is the original way of Buddhism. There is no such thing in Buddhism as a way of thinking for the dead without considering one's own state as a living person. When we say that we do not recite the Nenbutsu or read the sutras for the dead, it may sound like we are mistreating our ancestors, but in reality, the act of reciting the Nenbutsu or reading the sutras for the dead is mistreating our ancestors.

One should know the reason for this is that in the act of reciting sutras for the dead, there is an unconscious prayer that the dead will go to a better place. The reason we pray for them to go to a better place is because we believe that our ancestors did not go to a better place. The belief that our ancestors did not go to better places is the reason why we pray for them in the form of Nenbutsu and Sutra reading.

We should remember our ancestors who headed towards the Pure moment under the light of Buddha's wisdom who kept sending "Namōmitābha (Namu Amitābha)." We will celebrate the 'Urabanna.' I would like to welcome the Obon Festival with great care this year as well.

### 私、親鸞は、一度も父や母のために念仏を唱えたことはありません。それは、この宇宙が誕生し

て以来、すべての存在が、時を超えた生死の過程において、父であり母であり、兄弟であり、姉妹で

あったからです。私が成仏すれば、誰もが例外なく救われます。私の力で善いことができるのであれ

ば、お念仏の功德を移して父や母を救うことができるでしょう。しかし、そうではないので、自分の

力から解放され、早く悟りを開いたときには、どんなに深い業苦に陥っていても、身近な絆のある人

を救うことができるのです。(田園調布 第五章) ###.

お盆は、仏教徒にとって最も身近なお祭りです。亡くなった近親者を偲び、先祖への思いを新たにす

る法要です。

ところで、ご先祖様とは一体何でしょうか?自分を産んでくれた両親、自分の両親を産んでくれた祖

父母でしょうか。例えば、私のご先祖様を 32 代数えると、現在の地球の人口よりも多いことになり

ます。もし、この中の一人でも何らかの理由で欠けていたら、今の私は生きていないでしょう。複雑

な運命を背負って生まれてきたことを思わずにはられません。数え切れな  
いほどのご先祖様が今ど

こでどうしているのか、気になって仕方がありません。本当に墓の中で眠っ  
ているのだろうか。

中国のある聖人は「私の体は両親の死体である」と書いています。つまり、  
親から子へ、子から孫へ

と無数の祖先の血が流れ、それがすべて私の体に凝縮されているのです。墓  
の下に埋められた骨は無

に等しいが、ご先祖様はこの世に生きている。つまり、私の体は生きたご先  
祖様なのです。これは人

間だけでなく、犬も猫も、すべての生き物に言えることです。しかし、人間  
だけは、体だけでなく、

願いを持って生きていると考えることができるのである。その願いは、幸せ  
や幸福という言葉で表さ

れるかもしれません。

お盆は正しくは「盂蘭盆会(うらぼんえ)」と言います。ご存知の方もいらっし  
ゃると思いますが、

「うら」とは「逆さに吊るされる」という意味です。では、私たちが困難に陥っている原因をいく

つか挙げてみましょう。

1. 重要なものを軽視し、重要でないものを大切にする。
2. やらなければならないことを後回しにして、やらなくてもいいことを急いでやる。
3. 覚えるべきことを忘れ、忘れるべきことを覚えている。
4. 聞かなければならないことを聞かずに、聞かなくてもいいことを聞いてしまう。
5. しなければならないことをしないで、してはいけないことをしようとする。

挙げればきりがありません。具体的な理由がなくても、きっと思い当たる節があるのではないでしょ

うか。

私たちの苦しみは、この逆さまのあり方から生じています。自分では足で立っているつもりでも、実

際には逆立ちしているわけですから、決して苦しみからは解放されません。

忙しさに追われているだけでは、逆立ちしていることに気づくことはできません。逆立ちは不自然な

ので、正しく立つよりも数倍苦しいのです。その結果、正しい立ち方をしている人よりも自然と不満

が出てきます。

暑いときに逆立ちして走り回っても、不満が募るばかりです。ですから、2、3日ゆっくりして、自

分の在り方をチェックしてみてもいいでしょうか。それが「うら」の意味、つまり「逆立ちしてい

るか、していないか」ということです。

では、自分が逆立ちしていることにすら気づかないのに、どうやって自分をチェックすればいいので

しょうか?唯一の方法は、仏陀の知恵による正しい教えに触れることです。正しい教えに触れて初め

て、自分がいかに逆さまになっているかに気づくのです。

「盆」とは「器」です。苦しみをすくい上げる器という意味で、救いを意味しています。

ですから、「ウラバナナ」は、逆立ちして苦しんでいる人たちが、正しい教えによって救われるため

の集まりなのです。まさに、死者のための行事ではなく、逆立ちして苦しんでいる生者のための行事  
なのです。

お盆の時期には、お墓参りをして家族の墓石の前でお経を読むので、死者のための仏教行事と思われ

がちです。しかし、お墓参りも読経も、生きている私たちにとっては、ご先祖様に敬意を払いつつ、

今の私たちのあり方を考える機会なのです。

墓参りや読経は死者のためだけのものだと思っている人は、"私、親鸞は父や母のために一度も念仏

を唱えたことがありません"という歎異抄の言葉に出会うと驚くことでしょう。しかし、これこそが

本来の仏教のあり方なのです。

生きている自分の状態を考えずに、死んだ人のことを考えるようなやり方は、仏教にはありません。

念仏をしない、死者のためのお経を読まない、というと、先祖を粗末にしているように聞こえるかも

しれませんが、実は、念仏をする、死者のためのお経を読むという行為は、先祖を粗末にしているこ

とになるのです。

その理由は、死者のためにお経を読むという行為には、死者がより良い場所に行くようにという無意

識の祈りが込められているからです。なぜ、より良い場所に行くように祈るかということ、私たちは先

祖がより良い場所に行かなかったと信じているからです。先祖がより良い場所に行かなかったと思う

からこそ、念仏や読経という形で先祖のために祈るのです。

南無阿弥陀仏」と送り続ける仏の智慧の光のもと、浄土へ向かったご先祖様を思い、私たちは「裏

盆」を迎えるのです。今年もお盆を大切に迎えたいと思います。



## **Today is your youngest day ever in your future days**

Rev. Kaz Nakata

Hello all Central California Nishi Hongwanji Sangha friends! The Obon season is just about a corner. This year, Fowler Buddhist Church, Fresno Betsuin Buddhist Temple, and Reedley Buddhist Church are hosting in-person Obon. Please support their Obon events and fundraisers.

Some CC temple and Churches observed Rennyō Shōnin's Annual Memorial Service in June. Most readers may know Rennyō Shōnin was the 8<sup>th</sup> master of Nishi Hongwanji / Jōdo Shinshū. One day he shared one of his childhood memories with his followers. He said, when he was small, his whole family shared one bowl of porridge. What does this mean? Literally, one bowl of porridge was the only meal for the entire family. About 50 years after Shinran Shōnin's death, the Hongwanji Temple was established in Kyoto and it had popularity for a while. By the time of Rennyō Shōnin's father, Zōnyō, the Hongwanji Temple had significantly shrank and became a tiny temple. They had few daily visitors. This happened only 100 years after the establishment of the Hongwanji Temple. As a result, Zōnyō had to have multiple part-time jobs to provide for his family.

Rennyō Shōnin took over the Hongwanji when he was 42 years old and became the 8<sup>th</sup> master. He challenged new things and conducted unique experiments to revive the temple. One of the experiments was Gobunshō, the series of his letter. He wrote more than 200 short letters on Buddhist teachings with simple English (Japanese), because many of his followers were farmers with basic reading skills. One of the well-known Gobunshō is "on the White Ashes", which I'm sure you have heard at services. By his Gobunshō, many people were able to access Buddhist teachings. I am sure our CC Sangha members learned a lot from "on the White Ashes", too.

Beside the Gobunshō, his followers wrote down Rennyō Shōnin's daily sayings and left them in a book. I would like to share one of his sayings. One day, Rennyō Shōnin said "A devout Buddhist told me that you should listen to the Buddha Dharma while you are

young. When you are aged, you will have difficulties to walk to the temple, and you may become quickly sleepy when the Buddhist service

starts. That is why you should listen to the Buddha Dharma while you are young.”

Rennyō Shōnin lived in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century. People in that era lived an average of 50 years, much shorter than lives in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Do you know why we need to listen to the Buddha Dharma? Surely, it is not duty nor obligation, but it will be an excellent tool to help reduce your hardship, stress and anxiety when you encounter various challenges and problems in your daily life. Rennyō Shōnin wanted people utilizing the Buddha Dharma in their everyday life and hoped they enjoy its usefulness before they lose their capability to listen to and utilize it.

Recently, one lady told me “I am too old to learn Buddhism, although I would like to learn”. My response to her was “did you know today is your youngest day ever in your future days? You should realize this. While you think you would like to learn, you are capable to do so”. She smiled and said, “that is true”. She began attending my classes.

Luckily, I encountered the Buddha Dharma when I was 18 years old. Since then, it has become a powerful tool, just like a surfboard, to ride on big and small tides of life’s challenges and to get through those challenges smoothly. After learning Buddhism, I have not felt one single negativity about life, even in the pandemic. Buddhism developed in me, a positive mind and confidence. I really appreciate my teachers who taught me the proper understanding of the Buddha Dharma. So, I understand why Rennyō Shōnin said “while you are young.” As long as you are young (or you think you are young), you can raise your motivation or eagerness to learn. Just like people who are 80 years old enter college to earn their degree.

I have seen many learners in Buddhism, and they are young, really. What makes them young? They always contemplate on how they can live their life more appreciative and enjoyable. No matter their age, they have enthusiasm in their everyday life. They maintain a young (younger) mindset. I am in my mid-40’s, but my mindset has not changed much since my 20’s. In fact, when I go to Target, I always stop by the toy and video game shelves. Sometimes I buy a block toy (like Lego), and play with it, with my children. Buddhism tells us, “live as you are”. I can live with the mind of what I like is what I like.

Many people may consider it is hard to learn Buddhism or listen to the Buddha Dharma, but I can say that it is super easy. The Buddha Dharma simply asks us that since no one can take over or replace your life with others, and it will not repeat, how would you like to live it? Therefore, Rennyō Shōnin tells us that you should listen to the Buddha Dharma while you are young. Again, I would say you are young today when you compare with any of your future days.

Gassho  
Rev. Kaz Nakata

## **Streaming Services**

Please view, join and/or participate in the July virtual services on Twitter or YOUTUBE or in-person services as listed on our cover page.

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

## **OBON DANCE PRACTICE SCHEDULE**

This year, Lesley and Lindsay Guerra will be conducting the Obon dance practices at the Fresno Family Dharma Center.

The last practice is Tues., July 5 at 7:00 p.m.

Please take your Kachi-Kachi, round fan, folding fan, and ribbon sticks. A few Fowler ribbon sticks are still available for purchase (\$10/2 sticks) from Karen Mukai (834-1178).

## **OBON FESTIVAL SCHEDULE**

July 2 - Reedley

July 9 - Fresno

July 23 - Fowler

## **The Shotsuki names for the month of July are:**

Hiroshi T. Mayebo  
Torao Sera  
Noriyuki Arasuna  
Sumiko Doi  
Kama Toyama  
Futayo Okamura  
Kazuo Otani  
Kuma Kato  
Kichiro Takemoto  
Yakichi Honda  
Sadao Onaka  
Sato Kurata  
Shizuko Tokubo  
Masami Matsuoka  
Dorothy Kanenaga T  
om Mukai  
Setsuko Asakawa  
Masao Sakoda  
Kazu Wada  
Yumi Onaka  
Shizue Fujikawa J  
Joe Yoshimura  
Mikiko Nakahira



**Donations for the month of June**

**2021-2022 Hatsubon names for Fowler**

Vickie Hashimoto  
Eiko Matsumura  
Flora Murashige  
Tooru Nakahira  
Richard Shimoda  
Katsuko Kaye Takeda  
Shizuko Takeuchi

We will have a lantern for each of the Hatsubon names listed above, at our Obon service on 7/24, 10AM.

**Church Toban for July  
District 1 & 2**

**Rijis:**

Ken Hashimoto  
Rick Miyasaki

**Toban:**

Marlene Miyasaki  
Ken Hashimoto

**Obon**

\$ 25.00 Rodney Kikuta

**Shotsuki**

\$ 75.00 Greg & Patti Miyake

\$ 75.00 Ken & Kim Miyake

**In Memory of Chuck Ideta, 3rd  
Year Memorial**

\$ 200.00 Chuck Ideta Family

**In Memory of Ross Kondo**

\$ 200.00 Susan & Gordon  
Hayashi

\$ 200.00 Gerald & Cherie  
Nakayama

\$ 20.00 Barton, Sharon & Lani  
Ashida



# Reedley Obon Festival



**Saturday, July 2, 2022**

**Food sales - 5:00 PM • Dancing - 8:00 PM**

**Reedley Buddhist Church - 2035 15th Street - Reedley, CA**

**Food Vendors: RBC Shaved Ice, BWA Somen Noodles, Yoshi's Sampler & Deluxe Plates, Papa Murphy's Pizza, Jr. YBA Drinks & Popcorn, Dharma School Mochi Ice Cream, & Sergio's Tacos & Churros**

**Entertainment: Fresno Gummy Taiko**

**Come out and dance! No experience needed!**



**Hatsubon/Obon Service - Sunday, July 3, 2022 at 10 AM**

**Questions? - Email: [reedleybc@gmail.com](mailto:reedleybc@gmail.com)**

BCA Center for Buddhist Education  
Living The Dharma (formerly Every Day Buddhism) Committee Presents:



## **FINDING THE ANTIDOTE TO ANGER, THE SECOND OF THE THREE POISONS PART 2**

**Saturday, July 16, 2022**

**11:00 am – 1:00 pm (PT)**

**Guest Speaker: Rev. Dr. Takashi Miyaji**

Rev. Miyaji presentation will focus on  
the Jodo Shinshu Perspective on Anger



Rev. Dr. Takashi Miyaji is currently a minister of Southern Alameda County Buddhist Church since August 1, 2020. In addition, he teaches at the Institute of Buddhist Studies located in Berkeley, California. His previous assignment as a minister was at Tacoma Buddhist Temple from December 2017 to July 31, 2020.

He graduated from the University of California at Berkeley with a Bachelor's Degree in Philosophy and Japanese language and literature, Institute of Buddhist Studies at Berkeley, California with a Master's in Buddhist Studies, Ryukoku University in Kyoto, Japan with a Master's Degree in Shin Buddhist Studies and most recently completed his doctoral dissertation entitled, "Shin Buddhist Ethics," through Ryukoku University. He specializes in the areas of Japanese Buddhism and religion, translation of Buddhist scripture, and Jodo Shinshu doctrine and ethics.

Moderator: Rev. Marvin Harada

Registration

<https://forms.gle/rmst7dt5CM8VXsgG9>

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Center for Buddhist Education

# FROM SHAKYAMUNI TO SHINRAN

Focusing on the 7 Patriarchs



Reverend  
Kiyonobu Kuwahara  
**JULY 23, 2022 @ 11a (PT)**



ONLINE LECTURE SERIES

Registration & Information:

<https://tinyurl.com/CBEShinran>

  
CBE/IBS/JSIO

SUMMER PACIFIC SEMINAR  
**REFLECTIONS ON  
THE PURELAND**

**AUGUST 5-6, 2022**

**IN PERSON & VIRTUAL**

Jodo Shinshu Center, 2140 Durant Ave, Berkeley 94704



**DR. AARON PROFFITT**

Dr. Proffitt received his PhD in Buddhist Studies from the University of Michigan, and works as an Assistant Professor of Japanese Studies at the University at Albany-SUNY. Dr. Proffitt has published in English and Japanese on East Asian Buddhism, Pure Land Buddhism, Esoteric Buddhism, and the Lotus Sutra.



**DR. MELISSA CURLEY**

Dr. Curley is associate professor in the Department of the Comparative Studies at Ohio State University and the author of *Pure Land, Real World: Modern Buddhism, Japanese Leftists, and the Utopian Imagination*. Her current research focuses on the body in twentieth-century Japanese Buddhism.

**Moderated by Reverend Dr. Takashi Miyaji**

Institute of Buddhist Studies/Southern Alameda County Buddhist Temple

REGISTRATION & INFO: <https://tinyurl.com/PacificSeminar>

# BCA

Buddhist Churches of America

## VIRTUAL

— OBON DANCE —

AUGUST 14, 2022 @ 2PM (PT)



**SUBMIT YOUR OBON VIDEO HERE**

<https://tinyurl.com/ObonBCA>

BCA: Center For Buddhist Education Presents

# WOMEN

in Jodo Shinshu



REVEREND DR. MUTSUMI WONDRA

AUG 20, 2022 @ 11am (PT)



MORE INFO & REGISTRATION:

<https://tinyurl.com/CBEWomen>