

BUDDHIST CHURCH OF FOWLER



THE WHITE PATH

MONTHLY BULLETIN VOL. 525

December 2022

December Services:

12/04

- Fresno – Friends & Family, Dharma School, Bodhi Day & Shotsuki Service
- Parlier – Bodhi Day , Shotsuki, Installation/Bonenkai Service
- Fowler – Bodhi Day & Shotsuki Service

12/11

- Fresno Friends & Family, Dharma School Service
- Reedley – Bodhi Day, Shotsuki, Dharma Service

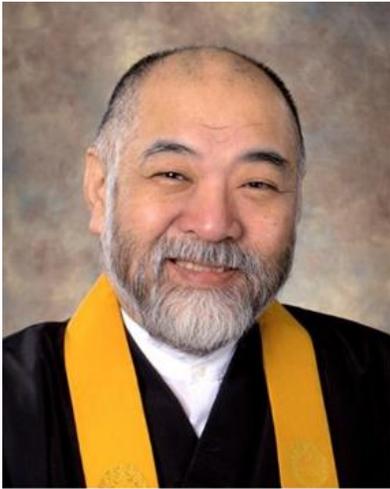
12/18

- Fresno Friends & Family, Dharma School Service
- Visalia – Bodhi Day, Shotsuki Service

12/31 – Joya-e Services

- Visalia – 12:00 pm
- Reedley – 2:00 pm
- Parlier – 4:00 pm
- Fresno – 5:00 pm
- Fowler – 7:00 pm

Seven weeks in Buddha-Gaya



On December 8th in 700 BCE+30, *Gotama Siddhārtha* attained Buddhahood under the *Pipal* tree in the bank of *Fulgu River* (aka *Nairañjanā*) Bihar, India. Since then, people started call him a Buddha, an awakened one.

Interestingly, all scriptures describe that he stayed in that forest of well-known nowadays as Buddha-gaya near the Gaya city, Bihar, India, during the next seven weeks.

The first week, he stayed under the same *Pipal* tree and examined the process of his enlightenment repeatedly. He was totally satisfied with his perfect achievement and his heart/mind was filled with the utmost joy.

The second week, he moved to the hill about three hundred yards south close by. He practiced a traditional standing Yoga consecutively for the next seven days, night and day without sleep and without eating. He kept his eyes opened without a single blink to observe the activities of the entire Universe and examined the availability of his discovery.

The third week, he returned to the *Pipal* tree and had walked around the tree's surroundings, slowly and quietly. He examined his Dharma's effectiveness in the past and in the future.

The fourth week, he entered a stone cellar near the Pipal tree and in the darkness of the cellar, he observed the various realms and dimensions, particularly the evil side. He was grateful to know that his Dharma could guide the vilest among evils. People witnessed that bright light that leaked from the cellar during the night.

The fifth week, he chose the *Nigrodha* tree and meditated under the tree to review all the occurrences during the last four weeks.

There is one famous comment delivered by the Buddha to one Brahmin monk of the highest caste who challenged the Buddha:

“Man is respected not because of the birth but the conducts.”

His first words to the people are already a revolution in the world 2700 years ago.

The sixth week, he visited the *Muchalinda* pond, a half mile south from the forest, and stayed there the entire week and enjoyed the Dharma with the animals!

The seventh week, he returned to the forest and chose the *Yatna* tree for closing his review of Dharma. On the fifth day of the week, two merchants offered food to him. He got some considerations from this event, and he changed his place to under the *Nigrodha* tree that he meditated under during the fifth week.

He started to consider the misunderstandings of Dharma by the people. Two merchants, a little while before, had worshipped him just like a living god and were so grateful for their luckiness. And they could not even understand what a simple word like ‘Buddha’ meant.

He felt misgivings about the misunderstandings of Dharma that would become the causes of sufferings to the people certainly in the future. He was seriously concerned about how to share the Dharma with the people. He tried to find out the way several times from various aspects. Unfortunately, he reached the same conclusion even at several challenges.

These are his conclusive words from the “*Pari-yesana Sūtra*”:

“Enough now with teaching what only with difficulty I reached.

This Dharma is not easily realized by those overcome with aversion and passion.

What is abstruse, subtle, deep, hard to see, going against the flow — those delighting in passion, cloaked in the mass of darkness, won't see.”

Then he concluded,

"As I reflected thus, my mind inclined to dwelling at ease, not to teaching the Dharma.”

But the moment after he finished those words, the Buddha recognized his change, and it amazed him. He found himself already standing from his seat and about to take one step forward, totally in the unconscious level. And he muttered to himself without realizing it, “all sentient beings have been in suffering.”

At that time, he exclaimed, "Namo'āmitābhaḥ [Na-məə-mītə-baḥ]," which in this ancient Indian language means, "How merciful is the Overwhelming Wisdom that flows from the Buddha Nature!" (That is why he could not abandon any sentient being, no matter where he is).

At that moment when he shouted these six syllables and expressed his intent, his buddhahood drastically changed its direction from the statically meditative to the dynamically realistic. Since that moment, we Mahāyāna Buddhists call him, ‘A Returned Buddha from the World of Static Enlightenment = Tathāgata (the dynamic Buddha).’

He immediately made an action. He chose his five six-years-fellow practitioners, who were separated a few months earlier, as the first recipients of Dharma. He travelled almost two hundred miles to them and delivered his first guidance a week after. He guided those practitioners one-on-one so carefully by the suitable way for each one's conditions. One of those first five guidance was the well-known "Four Noble Truths and Eight-fold Path" that was delivered for Assaji, the genius meditator.

The Buddha shared the Dharma actively during the next forty-five years and delivered a correspondent guidance at least 84,000 times, one-on-one. While that number is huge, anytime we listen to his teachings we can hear and be reminded of his words, "I never abandon each and every one, anytime and everywhere," as his intent.

This approach of sharing the dharma by Śākyamuni Buddha is called 'Taiki Seppo' (the best suitable expression of the teaching for the target person), and his method is likened to the 'Ōbyō Yoyaku' (just like doctors give medicine according to disease). This is where the uniqueness of Buddhism is expressed, and it is the reason why Buddhism exists in a different dimension from other religions and never falls into dogmatism.

Śākyamuni Buddha mainly taught his direct disciples the 'Āgama Sūtra,' the 'Lotus Sūtra' to the lay followers, and the 'Garland Sūtra' or the 'Vajura-yāna Sutras' to farmers, fishermen, etc., who worked with Mother Nature. Śākyamuni Buddha carefully assessed each individual's abilities and conditions and guided each person to the path of enlightenment in a 'Rinki Ōhen' (the best suitable action according to circumstances). Needless-to-say, Śākyamuni Buddha widely recommended the 'Living' with the 'Nenbutsu', which is to activate each 'Practice' required by all sutras.

Our Jōdo Shinshū is the sole teaching that has been unreservedly recommended by Śākyamuni Buddha to all sentient beings in the beginning. Because the Buddha's first intent is always for the sake of all sentient beings' accomplishment, without exception.

Gassho,
Rinban Kakei Nakagawa



New Simple Reading “Our Understanding of Jodo Shinshu”

Hello all Central California Nishi Hongwanji Sangha friends! We have reached the final month of 2022. Time flies so quickly! I express my deepest appreciation to all of you for your support and guidance during 2022.

Jodo Shinshu Tradition began with Shinran Shonin about eight hundred years ago, although he did not have any intention to form or create his tradition. His descendants gathered by Kakushin-ni formed the tradition under his name and teaching. In 2023, Kyoto Nishi Hongwanji will celebrate the 850th year Birthday of Shinran Shonin, and the 800th year Celebration of the Hongwanji foundation. Some of you may visit Kyoto and observe the celebration next year.

After eight hundred years of its founding, ministers continuously strive to share the teachings with daily languages. Many Buddhist terms have difficult meanings, and some are unexplainable by one single English term. I have served the BCA for 20 years, but I am continuously planning to innovate how easily people can understand Jodo Shinshu. For the last 10 years or so, I have been working on writing new reading material, called “Our Understanding of Jodo Shinshu.” Three key Jodo Shinshu concepts are explained in the reading. It is still a work in progress, and I appreciate your input.

Our Understanding of Jodo Shinshu

I am one of everyone, I am a part of the world. I always receive help and support from others, called “other power,” to make my life enjoyable.

Although I cannot always be kind and gentle to others, others always help me to make my life enjoyable.

How grateful I am that other people’s help and support appear here and there, to make my life enjoyable.

When I feel the kindness of others, saying Namo Amida Butsu becomes my expression of deep gratitude....

Reverence for Shinran Shonin

The continuation of each individual life is a result of others' help and support. Shinran Shonin did not see this help and support as natural occurrences. He translated these occurrences as 'very fortunate giving.' In the October issue, I wrote about "Arigato" and its Buddhist meaning. It relates to the introduction phrase of our Three Treasures, and it tells us that we are truly fortunate to have our life.

Jodo Shinshu does not focus on seeking rare or miracle occasions. The accumulation of many small happiness in our everyday life is the basis of Jodo Shinshu awareness, leading us to feel the great appreciation or equanimity which is the utmost level of achievement in our lives. Nowadays people are satisfied with material items but still complain or feel unfulfilled. Those who do not appreciate their everyday life will never be fully satisfied, even if they encounter a special occurrence from time to time. Whenever you feel that your life is unfulfilled, please read the new reading. Our everyday life is open to many sources of happiness and Shinran Shonin's teachings has left us with the opportunity to appreciate our everyday life. Saying "Namo Amida Butsu" is your reminder of his viewpoint.

Gassho

Rev. Kaz Nakata

In Case You Didn't Know . . .

Keep up to date on what's happening at the Buddhist Church of Fowler by looking at The White Path (Monthly newsletter) online. Visit: fowlerbc.org If you would like to see past editions of The White Path, hit Information, then Newsletter, and you can go back as far as 2018!

BOARD OF GOVERNORS AND TOBAN

District III

Rijis:

Kimihiro Sera
Craig Sakagushi

Toban:

Aiko Kamine
Irene Hara

The Shotsuki names for the month of December:

George Shuji Kato
Gunichi Kanenega
Munjiro Miyasaki
Sumiko Kondo
Komatsu Shimizu
Tom Kamikawa
Machiyo Sakoda
Minekichi Okasaki
Shinichi Tokubo
Tadaichi Morimatsu
Toyojiro Shimamoto
Hiroko Nakahira
Sadahei Mukai
Masato Mayebo
Yoshino Mukai
Tsunami Shimamoto
Hisaaki Notori
Shizuto Shimoda
Suye Kawamoto
Haruo Yoshimoto
Joe Sho Yokomi
Emma Kataoka
Toki Uchiyama
Larry Kazuo Ashida
Wilson Kawaguchi
Sadayuki Bob Nakayama
Sazae Kamine
Donald Hashimoto

MOCHITSUKI

The Youth Department will have its annual Mochitsuki on Saturday December 17, 2022. An order form is enclosed. Please note that the ordering deadline is December 10th. We plan to make a limited amount of mochi due to Covid and manpower issues.

Any order taken after December 10th will not be filled until all prior orders are filled and may not be available until after 2:00 PM on Dec. 17th. Please understand the problems late orders create.

We need help from as many members, volunteers from affiliated organizations and the community in general. This is a labor-intensive undertaking, as well an important social event that has its roots deep in Japanese tradition. Please try to help and support the youth of our church and at the same time pass on the knowledge and experience of this important part of Japanese culture.

It is very important that you order all yomogi and an mochi so we can plan how much material and how many batches are needed to cover everyone's orders.

Orders will be limited to 5 lbs. of each type per order.

All orders will be filled by the order they are received, no exceptions!

Mochitsuki Schedule:

Dec. 15 @ 10:00 AM – Rice washing. Bring equipment up from basement.

Dec. 16 @ TBA – Set up, test, & clean equipment & disassemble.

Dec. 17 @ 4:00 AM – Set up & start burners.

Dec. 17 @ 6:00 AM – Men, start cooking rice.

Dec. 17 @ 7:00 AM – Everyone else, start making mochi.

Dec. 17 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM – Order pickup. Yomogi orders will not be available before noon.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Thank you,

Craig Honda & Gerald Nakayama

Youth Directors

November 2022 Donations

Year End

\$ 100.00 Alex & Roberta Araki

Eitaikyo Service

\$ 20.00 Gary & Arlene Keithley

Shotsuki

\$ 300.00 Robert & Deanna
Hanashiro

*Applied to Ministerial Fund

\$ 100.00 Lynn & Mitch
Nakashima

\$ 100.00 David & Laureen
(Honda) Uyematsu

\$ 100.00 Earl Honda

\$ 50.00 Kimihiro & Hitomi Sera

\$ 50.00 Rick & Marlene
Miyasaki

\$ 50.00 Mary Mukai & Family

\$ 50.00 Richard Fujikawa

\$ 30.00 Arthur & Alice Fujikawa

\$ 30.00 Jan Yoshimoto

\$ 25.00 Frank Gibson

\$ 20.00 Sharon Asakawa

\$ 20.00 Barton, Sharon & Lani
Ashida

In Memory of Russell

Matsumoto, 7th Year Memorial

\$ 200.00 Robert & Linda
Glassman

\$ 150.00 Linda, Nick & Chris
Matsumoto

\$ 100.00 Keith & Heidi Nakayama

\$ 100.00 Mr. & Mrs. Gerald
Nakayama

\$ 100.00 Bey & Susan Driss &
Family

\$ 100.00 Hanako Y. Lord

\$ 100.00 Eileen & Glenn Thornton

\$ 100.00 Rick & Glenda Okamura

\$ 50.00 Jason Crawford &
Shannon Nakayama

\$ 50.00 Lloyd & Janis Hiramoto

\$ 50.00 Violet Makashima

\$ 50.00 Denise & Wayne
Montgomery

\$ 50.00 James & Doris Murai

\$ 50.00 Ben & Amanda
Nakayama

\$ 50.00 Kenny & Nimka
Nakayama

\$ 50.00 Mr. & Mrs. Dale
Okamura

\$ 50.00 Mike & Kristin
Rademaker

\$ 50.00 Lisa J. Rice

\$ 50.00 Shari & Kevin Chao

\$ 50.00 Timothy & Beverly
Noonan

\$ 50.00 Barton, Sharon & Lani
Ashida
\$ 40.00 Bill & Ruth Kitagawa
\$ 40.00 Gary & Kathy
Matsumoto
\$ 40.00 Shigeko Matsumoto
\$ 40.00 Lisa Sakomoto
\$ 40.00 Rick Sakomoto
\$ 30.00 Warren & Marlene
Hirakawa
\$ 30.00 Mr. & Mrs. Kurosaki
\$ 30.00 Elaine Maeda
\$ 30.00 Craig & Tayoko Honda

**In Memory of Marjorie Tamiye
Miyasaki**

\$ 40.00 David & Laureen
(Honda) Uyematsu

Special Donations

\$ 450.00 2022 Tsukemono
Festival – Blake Honda

\$ 100.00 Nakayama Social Club
Use of the Church

ANNUAL MOCHITSUKI PROJECT FOR YOUTH

The Buddhist Church of Fowler and the Youth Department will have the 2022 Mochitsuki on Saturday December 17th. All orders will be accepted on a first come, first serve basis. We would appreciate anyone who would like to come and help. We will start making mochi about 7:00 AM, Saturday morning,

Limit is 5 lbs. of each type per order. Orders will be filled in the order they are received, no exceptions! Please honor this request. We will be making 400 lbs. of mochi, approximately 1/2 of what was made in the past.

ORDERING DEADLINE: Monday, December 10th, All orders after this date are subject to supply.

PRICES: \$7.00 per pound
 \$9.00 per pound, an
 \$5.00 per O kagami set
 \$15.00 per large O kagami set

PICK-UP TIME: Saturday, December 17th, **from 10:00AM to 2:00PM.** **Yomogi orders will not be ready before noon.** All orders not picked up by 2:00PM are subject to be sold.

TO ORDER: Send this order form to the Church or call or text Cherie Nakayama, 284-1669 or email to cnkym@aol.com.

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: Council of Youth - Fowler Buddhist Church

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2022 Buddhist Church of Fowler Mochitsuki Order Form

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

O kagami set	regular size	_____ sets	X	\$5.00 =	_____
	Large size	_____ sets	X	\$15.00 =	_____
Ko Mochi		_____ lbs.	X	\$7.00 =	_____
Yomogi Mochi		_____ lbs.	X	\$7.00 =	_____
An Mochi		_____ lbs.	X	\$9.00 =	_____
An Yomogi		_____ lbs.	X	\$9.00 =	_____
TOTAL					_____

DO NOT SEND CASH. WE WILL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR CASH SENT THROUGH THE MAIL! Mail to: Council of Youths - Fowler Buddhist Church, P.O. Box 335, Fowler, CA 93625
TO GUARANTEE YOUR ORDER IS FILLED, PLEASE RETURN OR CALL BY DECEMBER 10th.

Reedley Jr YBA Pancake Breakfast



Sunday, December 11, 2022

Reedley Buddhist Church Conference Room

7:30am – 10:00am



2 Large Pancakes
2 Sausage Links
Scrambled Eggs
Orange Juice
Coffee



\$10.00 each