



THE WHITE PATH

MONTHLY BULLETIN VOL. 530

JUNE 2023

June Service and Events:

6/04 –Shotsuki Service & Dharma School
Gary Mukai – Guest Speaker
10:00 AM

6/14-Teacher Obon practice – Fresno

6/20-Teacher Obon practice – Fresno

6/28-Obon Practice – Fresno

July Service and Events:

7/03-Obon Practice – Fresno

7/06-*Obon Practice – Fowler*

7/11-Obon Practice – Fresno

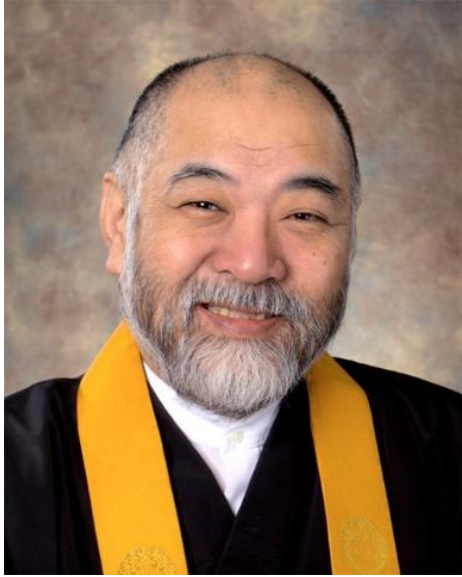
7/13-Obon Practice – Fowler

7/18-Obon Practice – Fowler

7/20-Obon Practice – Fowler

All Obon practices are at 7 p.m.

7/22-Fowler Obon & Hatsubon Lantern Ceremony
Food Sales – 5 p.m./ Dancing (in-doors) – 8 p.m.



What we should know is the fact that in the history of the Jodo Shinshu, no one was better than Rennyo Shōnin to share the teachings of Shinran Shōnin accurately.

Today, we will read together **“My Ryōge-Mon - How can I realize the Nenbutsu into my Life.”** , which was originally given to us by Rennyo Shōnin as "reference" of the guideline of our own life. However, Rennyo Shōnin is a person who lived his life in the society of the 15th century in Japan. And all the contents of the original text were addressed to the Japanese people of the 15th century.

Buddhist scriptures are crucially different from Bible-like sacred scriptures. All teachings are delivered according to the conditions of each country, each age, and each person. All Buddhist leaders inherits the spirit of historical Śākyamuni Buddha.

The second of the seven masters, **Vasubandu Bodsav** provides the following important counsel to those who study Buddhism in one "commentary". As follows.... [True enlightenment is to "read the true meaning of the scriptures in your own words." To "read the true meaning in one's own words" does not mean that the scriptures are enlightenment itself but means it's just a hypothesis expressed in words of the period.]

“Dharmadharmatā-vibhāga”

Therefore, the translation I have given you today is my interpretation of Rennyo Shonin's "Ryogebun" as I read it in my 21st century language. It can be said that "How do I feel about Rennyo Shonin."

Now, **“My Ryōge-Mon - How can I realize the Nenbutsu into my Life.”** 'is divided into four sections.

The First; **[Peace of Mind]** - The real "Peace of Mind" begins when each of us finds that the path to Buddha-hood is equally opened by Śākyamuni Buddha, no matter how different conditions we live. As follows:

“In order not to lose sight of my true self in a life of ego-driven "self-reliance" delusion, I entrust myself to the Buddha's words of awakening, the "Myōgō". The Buddha's compassionate wisdom, called "Amitabha," manifests itself to me as the natural voice of Buddha, vibrating through our being and guiding me beyond my limited potential to the path of enlightenment that is omnipresent in this universe. My awakening is accomplished by the fact that the original Buddha nature is unconditionally active without being beseeched. “

The Second; **[Gratitude]** - If we know the true meaning and background of the Nenbutsu that the Śākyamuni Buddha chanted, and its current working, we can only appreciate the immeasurable kindness of Śākyamuni Buddha. As follows....

“By reciting the Nenbutsu and joining in the natural voice of Buddha, this "Myōgō" becomes the cause and the targeting "Clinging-karma" become the condition and arise interdependently, and with the sharp joy that associated with the "awakening," each individual Buddha nature emerges. At this moment, the karma of piled-up evil is transformed into the cause of liberation. From now on, I will repay indebtedness to Buddha's compassionate wisdom in gratitude, I will rejoice this rare and marvelous moment of Nenbutsu recitation.”

The Third; [**Masters**] - Being able to experience the true-and-real purpose of life as human is due to the existence of many masters, especially Shinran Shōnin. As follows....

I gratefully acknowledge that my listening to the universal solid Truth is due to the unique achievements of Shinran, who be entitled "Shōnin" as "the Hearer of Buddha-Dharma", and the untiring efforts of successive masters.

The Fourth; [**Law**] - And as a practicer of Nenbutsu, I want to live as follows.

As a person of Nenbutsu Practicer;

I will live a humane life free of prejudice or discrimination.

I will renounce false practice, and will not be biased, will not be obsessed, or will not be constrained.

*I will promote a world of non-violence (**Ahimsā**), whether physical, mental, cultural, or social.*

And, I will realize the real Sangha-community, where no individual would ever be hindered from pursuing his full potential.

We are, now as a Buddhist, let's try not to 'swallow' the words of Rennyō Shōnin in 15th century, Japan. We should heed the advice of Vasubandhu Bodsav and, as Americans in the 21st century, inspect our current lives by reading the "**Ryōge-Mon**" as a daily "hand mirror" in order to "read the truth in our own words". If you can, you may refer to it in your own "**Ryōge-Mon**", or to mine, Rinban Nakagawa's "**My Ryōge-Mon**".

Gassho,

Rinban Kakei Nakagawa



How does Jodo Shinshu treat HELL?

Hello to all Central California Nishi Hongwanji Sangha friends! It is mid-May and Summer has finally arrived in the Central Valley with 90 plus degree weather and becoming warmer and warmer. Please keep hydrated while you do outdoor activities! Pretty soon our biggest outdoor activities, the Central Cal Obon season, begins at Visalia on June 24. The last Obon will be on August 5 at Parlier. You will find the detailed schedule of Obon and Obon Dance practice in our temple newsletter.

In the March newsletter, I wrote on whether Jodo Shinshu believes in fate. After reading my article, you now know that Jodo Shinshu is not fate-based teaching. Every individual has the right and power to change and manage their own course of life. That is why Jodo Shinshu Buddhists live as they are or *Sono mi Sono mama* (“live as they are,” in Japanese). The expressions of *live as they are* and *live as you are*, only apply to Jodo Shinshu Buddhists while other Buddhist traditions limit or add obstacles to your course of life. One of the biggest obstacles is hell. Hell is a common idea among various faith traditions and each faith has a detailed and unique explanation of it. The general perception of hell is that it would be a place or world where no one wants to go or fall into.

Tannisho records Shinran Shonin used the word hell or *Jigoku* (“hell,” in Japanese) several times (in chapter. 2). It does not mean that he believed hell at that time. He grew up in Kyoto in the medieval era. I assume he heard many stories of hell in his childhood and those stories might have forced him to believe in it. His understanding and belief of hell might not have changed while studying Tendai Buddhism as a monk at Mt. Hiei because Tendai Buddhism heavily associates with an idea of hell as a part of the 6 realm-world view. His encounter with the Jodo Shinshu main texts was the turning point for Shinran Shonin, changing his understanding of hell. Have you encountered such a turning point in your life? Is there something which you have believed in since childhood that was completely different from the actual

meaning or concept? I assume that Shinran Shonin was surprised and changed his understanding on hell by learning from these Jodo Shinshu texts.

We have 3 main texts in Jodo Shinshu: Larger Sutra, Contemplation Sutra, and Smaller (Amida) Sutra. The text of Larger Sutra expresses how Jodo Shinshu teaching is uniquely inclusive. The idea of inclusiveness derives from 48 vows of Dharmakara in the Sutra. The first vow states,

when I attain Buddhahood, if there are beings of hell, ghost, or fallen-creature in my land, I should not attain enlightenment.

You may wonder who are these beings? These are formed from the 5 realms in the Hinduism worldview. Later some Buddhist traditions copied the Hindu realm worldview as the 6 realms. Some of you may know the Buddhist's 6 realm. These realm worldviews tie into reincarnation. Reincarnation explains if you did something wrong in the previous life, your present life is in misery. This 1st vow avoids these worldviews or reincarnation. When people become Jodo Shinshu Buddhists, there are no concerns of becoming such being or falling into hell while they are living.

How about after we die? Do we have a chance to fall into hell? The 2nd vow states,

When I attain Buddhahood, if noble or ordinary people fall into the realms of hell, ghost or fallen-creature when they die, I should not attain enlightenment.

It clearly explains Jodo Shinshu Buddhists will not be sent to these realms (afterlife). Now you know how Jodo Shinshu treats hell.

Although the Obon story by Moggallāna tells that his mother is in a realm like hell after she died, it will not happen in Jodo Shinshu! As Jodo Shinshu-ists, we express deep appreciation by dancing Obon songs to our loved ones who have died before us. Also, we treat them as Buddhas and as lifelong teachers, so that we can continue learning of life's impermanence and appreciation from them.

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!

- **Makuragyo** – to request a Makura-kyo service, please contact Lee Osaki during business hours at (559)442-4054. If it is after hours you may contact Rev. Nakata at (424)666-7101 or Rinban Nakagawa at (559)970-7652.

- **Funeral or Hoji** – Please contact Barton Ashida, President, at (559)284-2955 for Fowler Buddhist Church availability and to schedule a meeting for assistance with funeral arrangements. The family will also need to contact Lee Osaki at (559)442-4054 for minister preference and availability.

Board of Governors District 1/2

Riji

Ken Hashimoto
Rick Miyasaki

Toban

Marlene Miyasaki
Ken Hashimoto

The Shotsuki names for the month of June are:

Kenso Okamura
Kakuichi Kawano
Otoichi Oba
Randy Iwamoto
Yutaka Nakamura
Tomoichi Yamamoto
Natsuyo Otani
Shime Nakayama
Asano Teraoka
Yasu Kawano
Masaichi Fujimoto
Mikayo Nakamura
Tsuneyo Fujimoto
Ushi Toyama
Akira Yokomi
James Masaru Otani
Tom Teramoto
Tsukiye Teramoto
Ted Tomohiko Kondo
Jean Sakaye Ideta

Laraine Miyake-Combs
Amy Emiko Taniguchi
Roy Takeshi Nakamura
Atsushi Roy Kato
Tadao Uyemura
James Yamamoto
Hiroyuki Hiro Kamine

Obon

Obon for the Fowler Buddhist Church is July 22, 2023, Saturday. The different church organizations will have food booths and once again, dancing will be inside!

(Please check the Obon dance practice schedule on the front cover)

Obon service will be Sunday, July 23, 2023, 10:00 am.

Hatsubon

The Hatsubon names for 2022-2023 are:

Ross Kondo
Hiroyuki Hiro Kamine
Shizue Sakoda
Etsuko Uyemura
Chizu Nonaka

Lanterns will be made in the above Hatsubon names for the lantern ceremony preceding Obon dancing and the lantern presentation during Sunday's Obon service.

CC Obon Schedule

6/28 – Visalia Buddhist Church
7/01 – Reedley Buddhist Church
7/15 – Fresno Buddhist Church
7/22 – Fowler Buddhist Church
7/29 – Kingsburg Buddhist Church
8/05 – Parlier Buddhist Church

May 2023 Donations

Shotsuki

\$ 150.00	Jean Ideta Family
\$ 100.00	Nicole Reher
\$ 50.00	Sally Yemoto
\$ 50.00	Linda, Nick & Chris Matsumoto
\$ 50.00	M/M Gerald Nakayama
\$ 50.00	Bey & Susan Driss & Family
\$ 40.00	Gary & Arlene Keithley
\$ 30.00	Shinkawa Family
\$ 30.00	May Mukai
\$ 30.00	Greg & Gay Mukai
\$ 30.00	Janice Yoshimoto
\$ 25.00	Gordon & Susan Hayashi

Special Donations

\$ 100.00 Nakayama Social Club
Use of the Church
Kitchen
\$ 100.00 Vicki Ideta Allison
In Honor of the
Publishing of Revs. Bob
& Patti Oshita's book
"Dharma is Everywhere"

Gotan-e

\$ 25.00 Joe & Irene Hara
\$ 15.00 Megan Mori
\$ 10.00 Blake Honda

Centennial Reunion

\$ 100.00 Colleen (Nagata) Alvarez
\$ 100.00 Arthur & Alice Fujikawa
\$ 100.00 Jane Nagata
\$ 50.00 Bey & Susan Driss
\$ 40.00 Howard & Satomi
Hiyama

In Memory of Michiko (Tokubo) Suzuki

\$ 100.00 Karen Kondo

Reedley Obon Festival



Saturday, July 1, 2023

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

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

Food Vendors: RBC Shave Ice, BWA Somen Noodles & Spam Sushi,

Yoshi's Japanese Plates, Papa Murphy's Pizza, Jr. YBA Drinks,

Dharma School Mochi Ice Cream, & Sergio's Tacos & Churros

Entertainment: Fresno Gumyo Taiko

Come and dance! No experience needed!



Hatsubon/Obon Service - Sunday, July 2, 2023 at 10 AM

Guest Speaker - Rev. Marvin Harada, Bishop - Buddhist Churches of America

Questions? - Email: reedleybc@gmail.com



**77TH ANNUAL
OBON – FESTIVAL OF LANTERNS
SATURDAY, JULY 15, 2023**

OBON ... It is honoring the past and appreciating the moment. It is watching the lanterns sway in the breeze. It is the sight of young and old alike, in colorful yukatas & happi coats. It is spending an evening with family and friends. It is a sense of being.

This year's OBON will be back to a full scale event and we hope to see each of you on July 15th!

The memorial lanterns have such special meaning of honoring a loved one & beloved pets. Won't you please order or re-hang lanterns?

It is our hope that our Sangha will purchase or sell the enclosed raffle tickets. Return completed ticket stubs for your chance to win \$2000, \$1000 or \$500!! And if so inclined, we would graciously accept an additional "special" donation to offset the costs associated with this event.

You are an important part of the Temple, and we thank you for all past donations made for the well-being of the Fresno Betsuin.

===== Return form below =====

NAME _____ EMAIL _____

ADDRESS _____ PHONE _____

RAFFLE TICKET(S) _____ @ \$10.00 each = \$ _____ (Please return **stubs** for your chance to win!)

MEMORIAL LANTERN(S)

NEW _____ @ \$22.00 each = \$ _____

In memory of _____ (one name per lantern, please)
If necessary, use separate sheet for additional names

RE-HANG _____ @ \$8.00 each = \$ _____ (bring to Dharma Center by July 12 and please do not return damaged or torn lanterns for re-hanging)

NEW PET _____ @ \$10.00 each = \$ _____

Pet's Name _____ (one name per lantern, please)
If necessary, use separate sheet for additional names

PET RE-HANG _____ @ \$8.00 each = \$ _____ (bring to Dharma Center by July 5)

ADDITIONAL "SPECIAL" DONATION = \$ _____ Thank you for your generosity!

TOTAL ENCLOSED = \$ _____ Your support is most appreciated!

RETURN ORDER FORM, RAFFLE TICKET STUBS AND CHECK PAYABLE TO "FRESNO BUDDHIST CHURCH" BY **JULY 9TH**
PLEASE MAIL TO: 2690 E. ALLUVIAL AVE., FRESNO CA 93720

Questions? Call (559) 442-4054, or email: info@fresnobuddhisttemple.org



Volunteering is a work of heart...

The most important hours of your week may be those you give away!

“ALL HANDS ON DECK” is a naval term that calls everyone to report for action! We know that many of you will do double duty, or triple duty and some can give us just a couple hours. Any amount of time is valuable to us. With this year’s Obon back to a full scale event, we have much to do and we know you are proud of this annual OBON celebration, so won’t you consider giving us a couple hours or more of your time?

Volunteer by July 9th:

Mail this form to the Betsuin office - 2690 E. Alluvial Ave., Fresno 93720, or
Call 442-4054, or

E-mail Gordon Ah-Tye gahtyes@aol.com, Gordon Misaki glmmmisaki@comcast.net or Lee Osaki
losaki@fresnobuddhisttemple.org

You will receive a call or e-mail prior to or during the week of July 10th, confirming your help and notifying you of your shift time & assignment. **Thank you, in advance!**

Name(s) _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Yes, I am willing to help! Please sign me up for the following shift(s):

___ Booth construction: **THURSDAY, JULY 13 - 6:00PM**

___ Yagura construction, lanterns, outside wiring: **FRIDAY, JULY 14 - 8:00AM**

BOOTH SALES - SATURDAY, JULY 15

___ 3:00PM to 5:00PM

___ 5:00PM to 7:00PM

___ 7:00PM to 9:00PM (booths will close when sold out, so shift may be shorter!)

KITCHEN HELP - SATURDAY, JULY 15

___ 3:00PM to 5:00PM

___ 5:00PM to 7:00PM

___ 7:00PM to 9:00PM

Cleanup - Sunday, July 16 - 8:00AM

No response necessary. Come on out... the more the merrier!

BAKING NEWS...

**AFTER 3 LONGS YEARS, DESSERT SALES AND BAKE WALKS
ARE BACK AT THE FRESNO OBON!**



SATURDAY, JULY 15, 2023
FOOD BOOTHS OPEN AT 3:00PM



It's a great opportunity for our Sangha & friends to come together to share the experience of Dana. Please, won't you consider giving us a much needed hand?

In addition to the many work shifts that need to be filled throughout the day, we are also asking for your delicious **homemade** contributions for the dessert booth and bake walks.

SHARE YOUR LOVE FOR BAKING!

Donate cookies or cupcakes for the BAKE WALKS!
Drop off on Friday, July 14 by noon

Donate a pie or cake for the DESSERT booth!

Drop off on Friday, July 14 by 4:00PM
or
Saturday, July 15 by noon

