



# THE WHITE PATH

MONTHLY BULLETIN VOL. 536

DECEMBER 2023

## December Service and Events:

**12/03** – December Shotsuki Service and Dharma School – Rev. Brian Nagata  
Guest speaker – Paula Kanagawa

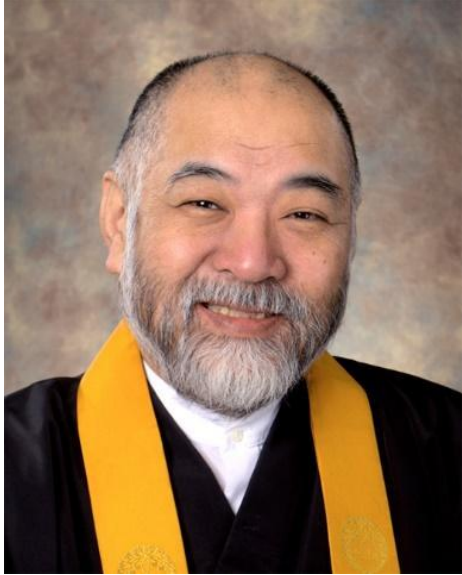
**12/16** - ~~Fowler Mochitsuki~~ - **CANCELLED**

**12/31** – New Year's Eve Service – 7:00 pm - Rev. Brian Nagata

## Future Services:

**1/01/2024** – New Year's Day Service – 9:00 am - Rev. Brian Nagata

**1/21** – January Shotsuki/Ho-onko Service and Dharma School – 10:00 am  
Rev. Brian Nagata



## Ho-on-ko Home Visitations

The other day I had an amazingly vivid dream of my first Ho-on-ko service visit 50 years ago when I was still in Japan. During this period, the temple minister would visit almost all of the members' homes and conduct the special Ho-on-ko service in front of their family O-Butsudan.

At the family temple where I grew up, my father, brother, and I would visit 40 to 45 homes on some days, almost every day during the month of November, to conduct the Ho-on-ko service for each family.

For me as a freshman priest, honestly speaking, those days were torturous. I had to sit on the tatami mats for more than 10 hours every day at old-style houses. This time, however, it was not the memory of my painful feet that gave me impressive dreams, but rather the visits to longtime temple members' homes which was a very memorable event for me.

When I arrived early in the morning in the town where most families were longtime members of my family temple, I was going to visit them that day. One guide, named 'Kuman-Jii' who went by 'Old Bear,' was waiting for me to lead the way to all the homes.

He was a big man, more than 6 feet and 220 pounds, and I couldn't see the front as I walked behind him. He was mumbling the O-Nenbutsu in his mouth the whole time. When I finished the first house and was about to move onto the second house, something unexpected happened. To my surprise, the entire family from the first home followed me to the next house to pay their respects at the Ho-on-ko service.

This meant that the Dharma talk I gave at the first house could not be done at the next house. If all the families were to continue to follow me, I would have to give more than 50 different Dharma talks. Since my father had not told me any information about it, I simply thought that I would only have to repeat about five Dharma talks.

I broke out in a cold sweat, but I quickly thought, "Yes, there are 120 lines of Shōshin-ge chanting, so I should just repeat them in order." The visit went smoothly, and after an hour with more than 20 people in tow, something unusual happened.

Suddenly, Kuman-jii turned around, his face bright red, and began to scold me loudly.

He said, "Hey you, young son of temple. I can read the O-Shōshin-ge myself, so there's no need for you to come all the way here. You're too cocky. It doesn't do you any good to talk about something you learned from someone else. We would be better off listening to '*Rakugo* comedy' and kill time."

I think my face turned blue with anger when he said this in front of everyone, but I could not say anything back because he was a former Imperial Navy officer. The service at the next house was a disaster.

During the chanting, many things came to mind, and I realized that I had nothing to say to Old Bear who knew exactly what I was up to.

I turned to everyone and tried to speak, but nothing came out. I just said greetings to them and ran out of the house.

I said, "Old Bear, I will study hard next year, so please be patient this year. I can't give Dharma talks anymore." He became angry again. "If you have so little mercy that you can talk to five or six houses and then run away, we won't listen to you so seriously. If you could talk for the rest of your life and never run out of things to say, that would be the mercy of the Buddha Sakyamuni. What nonsense are you talking about? If you have nothing to say, then tell the same story from now on. The Buddha's words always have a fresh impact on those who hear them, regardless of the time and place."

After that, Kuman-jii continued to mumble the O-Nenbutsu in his mouth, and at the end of each service, his criticism would still be something piercing and painful.

At the time, I was a graduate student and was about to gain confidence in my Buddhist studies, but in the end, I spent the rest of the day saying, "I am not qualified to convey compassion to all of you, but I am feeling compassion from all of you."

That night as we were parting, Kuman-jii tossed me a phrase that he had heard directly from one venerable *Kangaku* teacher when he was young:

***“When you say the Nenbutsu with your mouth, it immediately turns into an incantation. If you say it with your mind, it remains the same, a blind faith. Therefore, we are solely praising Buddha's wisdom only when Buddha's wish comes really alive to me.”***

In a dream the other day, these words came to my ears in the voice of Old Bear that day. Today, I shared them with you all.

Namōamitābha,

Reverend Kakei Nakagawa, Rinban



## **What is Peace in the Buddhist teaching?**

Hello to all Central California Nishi Hongwanji Sangha friends! This is the last month before welcoming 2024... how quickly time flies by. I sincerely appreciate your generous and tireless support of our Central Cal Temple and Churches. Arigato Gozaimasu.

I took a two-week vacation to visit my parents, grandma, and parents-in law. It was the first time to see my 5-month young niece and hold her while visiting the Japanese Castle Park near Kobe. My younger sister (who acts like my older brother) drove me wherever I wanted to go. I would like to share some of my memories of my visit in the next several issues of my article. I specifically want to share the topic of ‘peace.’

While in Japan, many TV channels were talking about one topic, the Japanese baseball championship. Two teams, Hanshin Tigers from Osaka, and Orix from Kobe were battling in several rounds of championship games to become the national baseball champion. I was born near Kobe, so when I was riding a train or shopping near my hometown, (almost) everyone was talking about Orix and wishing them to be a champion with a happy face. When I was waiting for a train, I had time to search US news. As you are aware, nearly all major channels were talking about conflict, argument, offensive comments, etc. Japan and California are only 10 hours apart by plane, but I felt like things happens on different planets.

People often talk about peace. But do you know exactly what peace means? Especially, do you know what peace is in (Jodo Shinshu) Buddhist teaching or context?

Buddhism is originally designed to learn how to be peaceful or harmonious. Peaceful does not mean you force someone to be peaceful, or harmonious does not mean you demand someone to be harmonious. Buddhism encourages “You,” yourself become peaceful or harmonious. It is considered as one of the paths to be enlightened. You may wonder, “what does peace mean in Buddhism?”

In Buddhism, peace is about your mental condition which is calm, equanimity, or tranquility. In other words, when you are calm, you are peaceful. That is the (Jodo Shinshu) Buddhist understanding of peace.

BCA temples such as our CC Temples and Churches are a part of Jodo Shinshu Buddhist school. Do you know what Jodo Shinshu means? It simply means the teaching of becoming calm or reaching the state of equanimity or tranquility without having any practices nor merit accumulations. (Jodo, it spells “Sukhavati” in ancient Indian language)

At what moment do you feel you are calm in your everyday life?

My youngest daughter Akika says, “when I play Nintendo Switch video game!” My middle daughter Michilu says, “when I make accessories.” My oldest daughter Kanon says, “when I eat delicious Japanese food!” My wife Michiko says, “when I am taking a nap after waking up early in the morning to prepare box lunches for my daughters.”

I like video games like Akika, but also, I fish. When I was in Japan last month, I went fishing on a riverbank with my father-in-law, sat for 2 hours and caught nothing! We enjoyed it a lot. We enjoyed the moments of doing nothing. It was a great moment of calmness. Everyone has their own way to achieve calmness.

If my wife forces Akika to nap or make a lunch box because she says it makes her calm, do you think Akika agree with her? Of course not! Or if Akika asks her mom to play Nintendo Switch to make her calm, she would respond, “Akika, you should play by yourself.”

If someone forces or demands you to do something to become calm, you may become upset, and you cannot become calm.

This is the same thing for peace. The things that make you peaceful, and things make your family or friends peaceful are different, just like different hobbies. In everyday life, there are many individuals or groups that try to promote their own way of peace to you or others, which often creates another conflict or unpeaceful condition when you or others feel it is not your way.

I often encourage everyone to be “MYOB” or “MYOP.”

“MYOB” means *Mind Your Own Business* and “MYOP” means *Mind Your Own Peace*.

Jodo Shinshu is the teaching of “Live as You Are,” so we welcome others by saying “come as you are” to our temple. Because our teaching encourages us to live as we are, everyone has their own way for calm, equanimity, and the same as peace. There is no peace out there for you, but your peace is in you.

While the holiday season is approaching, you should think about your own peace and stay calm during the wonderful season. Have a peaceful holiday with “MYOP.”

Gassho

Rev. Kaz Nakata

### **Temporary Status:**

For the months of December 2023 and January 2024, the Buddhist Church of Fowler will be overseen by the Office of the Bishop.

### **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](http://fowlerbc.org)

-**Makurakyo** – to request a Makura-kyo service, please contact Lee Osaki during business hours at (559)442-4054. Please do not contact the ministers.

- **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.

### **Board of Governors - December**

#### **District III**

#### **Riji**

Irene Hara  
Aiko Kamine

#### **Toban**

Aiko Kamine  
Irene Hara

### **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



## November 2023 Donations

### Eitaikyo

\$ 30.00	M/M Gary Keithley
\$ 30.00	Jan Yoshimoto
\$ 30.00	Gary & Karen Mukai
\$ 25.00	Joe & Irene Hara
\$ 25.00	Ms. Janie Yuen
\$ 20.00	Sharon Asakawa
\$ 10.00	Megan Mori
\$ 10.00	Blake Honda

### In Memory of Kimihiro Sera

\$ 300.00	Muto-Czymonteks Family Sheila, Herbert, Liesel and Xavi
\$ 200.00	Elizabeth Steinberg
\$ 200.00	Josie & Edgar Tadios
\$ 100.00	David Okazaki & Linda Gong
\$ 100.00	Ryoko Okazaki
\$ 50.00	Donald & Irene Miyasaki
\$ 50.00	Cedric Yoshimoto
\$ 50.00	Georgette Kopp
\$ 40.00	Ken Ishimoto
\$ 35.00	Jean Tonooka
\$ 30.00	Tina Kato-Clarey
\$ 20.00	June Kamigawachi

### In Memory of Yaeko Iwai

\$ 100.00	Harry & Shizuko Takeuchi Trust
\$ 50.00	Norman & Nadine Takeuchi

## Shotsuki

\$ 100.00	Junko Jofuku
\$ 100.00	Mari Sakoda
\$ 100.00	Art & Lori Sakoda
\$ 100.00	Tom & Grace Calewarts
\$ 100.00	The T. Kawamoto Family
\$ 50.00	Robert & Kaitlin Calewarts
\$ 50.00	Earl Honda
\$ 50.00	Susan Driss
\$ 40.00	Greg & Gay Mukai
\$ 30.00	Art & Alice Fujikawa
\$ 25.00	Kyle Sakoda
\$ 25.00	Allison Calewarts
\$ 25.00	Tayoko & Craig Honda
\$ 25.00	M/M Gene & Gale Nakai & Stephanie
\$ 25.00	Mrs. Mary Mukai & Family
\$ 25.00	Gordon & Susan Hayashi
\$ 25.00	Maryann Miyasaki
\$ 20.00	M/M Gerald Nakayama
\$ 20.00	Gary & Karen Mukai
\$ 20.00	Barton Ashida

### Special Donation

\$ 100.00	Nakayama Social Club Use of the Church
\$ 100.00	Brian Nagata & Colleen Alvarez Mom's 94 <sup>th</sup> Birthday
\$ 20.00	Derek, Yim, Verona & Violet Honda Dharma School

BCA: Center For Buddhist Education

# BCA: MA CONTINUING EDUCATION



Open to all BCA  
Minister's Assistants:  
-Chanting -Onaijin  
Etiquette -Lectures -  
Meet MAs from other  
districts

**DEC 7-9  
2023**



@Jodo Shinshu Center 2140 Durant Ave, Berkeley,  
CA 94704

**REGISTRATION & INFORMATION:**  
**[tinyurl.com/BCAMAPSESSION](https://tinyurl.com/BCAMAPSESSION)**