

BUDDHIST CHURCH OF FOWLER



THE WHITE PATH

MONTHLY BULLETIN VOL. 518

APRIL 2022

APRIL

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 April services:

4/3 - CC Shotsuki Service (streaming)

- Reedley Hanamatsuri (in-person)
- Fresno Hanamatsuri (in-person, outdoors)

4/10 - Fresno Hanamatsuri (streaming)

- Parlier Hanamatsuri (in-person)
- Reedley Shotsuki & Dharma Service (in-person)

4/17 - Reedley Shotsuki & Dharma Service (streaming 4/10 svc)

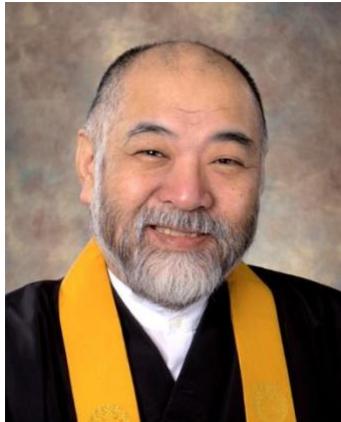
- Visalia Hanamatsuri (in-person)
- Fresno Dharma Service (in-person)

4/24 - Visalia Hanamatsuri Service (streaming 4/17 svc)

We appreciate your patience and understanding.

We hope everyone remains safe and healthy.

Namo Amida Butsu



[This message was written for the National Council Meeting morning service.]

“My eyes being hindered by blind passions, I cannot perceive the light that grasps me; Yet the great compassion, without tiring, Illuminates me always.”

煩惱にまなこ さへられて 摂取の光明 みざれども 大悲
ものうきことなくて つねにわが身を てらすなり

I hope everyone has been proactively enjoying and participating in the BCA National Council Meeting. I would like to express my deepest appreciation to Central Cal Sangha members for making this event possible. Arigatou.

I understand all BCA temples and churches have modified their activities due to the pandemic since 2020. Here in Central California, Rev. Nakata and I have been providing services to 7 temples and churches: Hanford, Fowler, Fresno, Reedley, Parlier, Kingsburg and Visalia. At yesterday's morning service, we showed the Onaijin pictures of the CC churches during the Juseige Chanting. Did you notice them?

We do not only strive to provide services to all churches, but also, we have visited 5 relocation camps in the last 2 years to show our reverence to our *Issei* and *Nisei* pioneers who endured unimaginable difficulties as you saw during today's Juseige Chanting.

Our Dharma activities do not stop there. Since the pandemic began, my colleague, Rev. Nakata, was trained on how to use the PPE, the Personal Protective Equipment by the medical professionals, to enter the ICU to provide comfort to patients who were in critical condition caused by the corona virus symptoms. We learned that many of them were concluding their life without seeing their families. Because of that, they were so lonely. We believe that we were able to deliver the sense of compassion and hope to them by holding their hands.

Shinran Shonin was born in the 12th century during the middle of Samurai war and epidemic in Kyoto. When he was 4 years old, one third of Kyoto City was destroyed by fire, followed by starvation and epidemic. In Kamakura period, many people lost their lives by the smallpox virus. These life-threatening events did not prevent Shinran Shonin to reach people who are waiting to hear his Nenbutsu propagation. We always need to learn from his passion and humbleness for Buddha Dharma.

Last Friday at the Ministers' Association meeting, our own Bishop Rev. Harada, delivered his Dharma message on how our *Issei* (first generation) Ministers were so humble and sacrificed their life for the propagation of Nenbutsu Teaching in the United States. Bishop shared that some notable *Issei* ministers refused to receive their honorarium, and they donated to their temple for its growth and to save it from financial difficulties.

I have been serving in Central California for 12 years. During my ministry, despite their strong will to keep the sangha alive, and although we tried our best to serve these sangha communities, regrettably, two temples and two Howakai in Central Cal had to stop their services permanently.

Who can say it will not happen in another district?

Since 2019, we have started the new MAP (Ministerial Assistants Program) and Buddhist Education program in Central California to revitalize our Sangha communities. Our motto is “everyone has a right to learn everything about Jodo Shinshu teachings.” There is a reason behind this. All districts of the BCA encounter the shortage of ministers. When you lose your minister, where or how can you receive and learn the authentic Jodo Shinshu teachings? We, as Central California, became one of the first districts which encountered the critical shortage of ministers. For a certain period, I had to serve the entire district as a full-time minister. That experience made me hugely stressed. I learned it the hard way what the shortage of the full-time minister means to each local temple. They lose the source to learn the authentic Jodo Shinshu teachings. Fortunately, Rev. Nakata was assigned to Central Cal to save my district from the temple-life threatening condition. But I realized that the shortage of ministers remains, not only Central Cal, but also other districts, and so we decided to provide everything we know to whomever would like to learn Jodo Shinshu. In other words, once everyone knows everything on Jodo Shinshu, then we have no more concerns about the shortage issue.

I grew up in the temple family in Hiroshima. They have a culture that whoever would like to study Jodo Shinshu, they can learn it at no charge. The culture came from generous and compassionate characteristics of Jodo Shinshu in Hiroshima because they want to avoid students who need to stop learning due to the financial hardship. We offer over 40 different classes which includes Buddhism 101 for Beginners and Classical Chinese or Sanskrit for experts to read original document in Jodo Shinshu at no cost as a Hiroshima Jodo Shinshu spirit.

When I heard our Bishop’s Dharma talk on *Issei* the first generation minister’s contribution and eagerness to propagate Buddha Dharma, and that they refused to receive honorarium, I so admired these legendary ministers’ passion. As I mentioned, we offer all classes at no cost. We are nothing close to these legendary ministers, but we tell students that “you share what you learned to others is my reward from you.” So thank you, Bishop for your Dharma talk.

Rev. Nakata and I cannot live forever as we all know the impermanence of life. We sincerely, diligently, and humbly work hard to share everything we know to everyone who wants to learn while we can, so that everyone who learns from us, will share Buddha Dharma like Rev. Nakata or me.

In the beginning, I shared one of the Shinran Shonin’s *Go-wasan*, the hymn from Jodo Masters: “My eyes being hindered by blind passions, I cannot perceive the light that grasps me; Yet the great compassion, without tiring, Illuminates me always.”

By knowing my hindered eyes with blind passions, I try to be more humble, sincere, and diligent in sharing all I know to others. Now I happily believe that our Central Cal sangha is slowly moving forward to reach the state of equanimity with enthusiasm.

The National Council Meeting is a great opportunity to discuss in what direction your temple or district will move forward. I trust each of you will receive a great outcome and take it back to your temple and district.

Gassho

Rinban Kakei Nakagawa



SPRING HAS COME

Rev. Kaz Nakata

Hello all Central California Nishi Hongwanji Sangha friends! Now that the many restrictions have lifted, how are you spending your everyday life? Every spring I take photos of Cherry Blossoms in CC and upload them to our Twitter site. Our local flowers teach us that spring has come. However, for the last 2 years, we had a hard time seeing and enjoying the flowers blooming like how we had enjoyed them in 2019.

Since moving from Los Angeles to Central Cal, I have been attending all of the CC temple and church board meetings, except when a night with dense fog. Over the last several months, multiple temple and church boards began talking about *Omigaki* (Hondo Clean up, and Onaijin Altar Clean up). I am sure that most CC temple and churches have not had a chance to clean them since 2020, due to indoor activity restrictions. I am so glad that many temple/church leaders are showing willingness to lead and welcome back their Sangha members to their Hondos. Thank you so much! I will continue to attend the Board meetings to help and support them.

Since 2020, our CC temple and churches have stopped or postponed multiple fundraisers. I helped to plan and cook at several food fundraisers such as Curry, Yakisoba and Japanese Snacks in 2020, but 2021 was a difficult year to create or hold fundraisers with even more restrictions. The historical Buddha shared the universal truth of Duhkha at his first Dharma Talk. Duhkha means that “the life’s uncertainty is the normal state of all sentient beings.” Since he had shared the universal truth of Duhkha 2500 years ago, the truth has been unchanged.

While real-time media displays the uncertainty of life in the whole world, we should be reminded of how precious and fragile every moment of our life is. Recently, I joined the Interfaith service and meeting for Ukraine, and I had a chance to hear a real voice of clergies who are helping and rescuing people in and near Kyiv. During their presentation over Zoom, I heard an explosion. In the western world, based on the faith of God, many people understand “Justice is a standard of goodness.” Buddhism, however, does not promote “Justice”, instead we encourage people to gain the sense of balance to reach the state of peacefulness through the teaching of middle path. That is why, Buddhism does not judge

between right and wrong. What we see right now is that SOMEONE'S JUSTICE is trampling innocent people's peace and life. As an interfaith cabinet member of Fresno Mayor Jerry Dyer, I have signed to his statement of peace for Ukraine and he did a public speech on this at City Hall on March 17. I sincerely hope that their spring will come soon.

Over several months, I have been working on the Onaijin Altar ornament restorations when I have spare time. As you may know some of my restoration works are completed and their pictures are on the Twitter. As I mentioned in the last newsletter, I restored the Dinuba Incense burner, and the Fresno Onaijin Special Chair. I've tried to speed up my restoration work because Fresno Sangha members will finally see their spring come as their new Hondo construction will be completed after 20+ years of fundraisers and contributions by many supporters. Congratulations Fresno Betsuin and members.

Last year, the Parlier Buddhist Church celebrated its 90th anniversary. They planned it from 2020. This month, Fresno will be celebrating its new Hondo opening. As a CC minister, I am so happy to see the CC temple and churches host their celebrations, especially during the pandemic. I think Reedley's church celebration is coming closer as I discussed at their board meeting. Each CC temple and churches has its unique history, and dedicated ancestors and members. Without having their tireless effort and generosity, we might not have our Hondo right now. Every year, our nature brings us Spring or the celebration of the new life cycle with flower blooming, but we often take it for granted. As a Buddhist, we shall be extra-mindful to our everyday life's fragileness and rareness, especially under the pandemic and turmoil in the world. By doing so, we can walk the path of Buddhahood for deeper appreciation of our life. Gassho.

Hello, all Central California Sangha friends! Have you driven around Central California and our beautiful Blossom Trail? I recently drove Hwy99 to Southern Cal and enjoyed the layers of the white blossoms on both sides of the freeway from Fresno to Bakersfield. Flowers blooming reminds us that the nature of seasons is continuously moving forward, although many of us feel that time stopped in March of 2020. Let's keep moving forward!!!

On Nov 2, 2019, the Dinuba Buddhist Church concluded its history after a century of service in their local community. Last June, the Dinuba Onaijin (a complex of Buddhist altar furniture and the central object of reverence) was moved to the Fresno Betsuin Buddhist Temple, and it was enshrined as an Onaijin of the Fresno Betsuin Small Chapel. Since then, Rinban Nakagawa, Rev. Midori, and I have been fixing pieces of the furniture. Some photos of the restoration have been posted on our Twitter site, "Central California Nishi Hongwanji" or @Fresno_Nishi.

Originally the Dinuba Onaijin came from Japan and their sangha members conducted the Onaijin Installation Ceremony on Nov 20, 1927 (see picture below).

Many of Japanese American ancestry in Central California started their lives in Dinuba which was one of most active Buddhist communities of that period. Many of children in the picture are now about 100 years old. 2 years ago, one of my friends in the picture (a little girl with Kimono) passed away. Now we may have only a handful people who remember the activities at the Dinuba Buddhist Church in 1920's to 1930's. Since its installation ceremony, how many couples have exchanged wedding vows, how many families shared eulogies to express their appreciation to their loved ones, how many Dharma School Students have sung Gatha (Buddhist Song) loudly every Sunday in front of THE Onaijin? The Onaijin contains countless memories of generations of happiness and sadness.

When the Dinuba Onaijin was moved to Fresno, I inspected the Onaijin furniture, and I found metal pieces eroding and wood damaged by dehydration. The surface on the incense burner (Ko-ro) especially, lost all the gold-plated decorations. As one of my hobbies, I have become skilled at repairing gold decoration. I decided to restore the Incense burner to its original appearance, carefully applying 24k gold pigment on its decoration and revived it to its original color that Dinuba sangha members had seen in 1920's. Many old pictures are mono color prints, but their real life had color, like pink and red flower blossoms. I am sure that the Dinuba sangha members were so proud and appreciative to see the Incense Burner at the time of the installation. Now again, the Dinuba Incense Burners has a shiny gold appearance.

Nowadays, most materials in the world can be acquired by monetary exchange. I understand that sometimes (maybe often) the replacement of something is financially convenient than restoration. When we deeply contemplate on the universal truth of interdependent of life, we realize the essential value of the unique and historical artifact which is cared for and filled by the memories and sentiments of countless people's memories and sentiment. I hope all pioneers of the Dinuba Buddhist Church of the 1920's will be happy to see and hear that their legacy is certainly preserved, revived and respected at the Fresno Betsuin, so that their appreciation of Namo Amida Butsu will continue on... Gassho

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Streaming Services

Please view, join and participate in the April virtual services on Twitter or YOUTUBE 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.

Golf Club

The Buddhist Church of Fowler will once again be hosting their Annual Fellowship Golf Tournament. It will be held on **April 16, 2022**, at the Ridge Creek Golf Course in Dinuba, so mark your calendars.

A copy of the “Tee Sponsor” and “Donor” letters are attached to the White Path. Please feel free to print these letters and pass them out to your friends and businesses you frequent. If you would also like to make a donation, please contact Barton Ashida at (559) 284-2955 or b.ashida@sbcglobal.net .

The Shōtsuki names for the month of April are:

Misa Ninomiya
Arthur Shigeo Ninomiya
Toyokichi Kuramoto
Naomi Kuramoto
Sentaro Toyama
Koichi Miyasaki
Sen Yamane
Shigetaro Hagihara
Kitaro Asakawa
Toyo Asakawa
Kiyoshi Hirasuna
Taka Hirasuna
Kakuji Tasaka
Rita Honda
Reiko Nishina
Eiichi Hiyama
Saji Wada
Ayako Mayebo
Masao Tsuboi
Kinyei Toyama
James Hashimoto
Meimi Hagihara
Morito Miyasaki
Asako Masui
Ted Hirasuna
Mary Nakahira
Yasuo Koyanagi
Frank Tsutomu Kawano
June Masaye Gibson
Haruko Tsuboi
Joe Masumoto
Hiroshi Hal Tsuboi
Toshiko Yamamoto Arasuna
Mae Umeyo Koyanagi
Fumiye Pauline Kikuta
Misao Edith Hiyama

Gary Iwai
Hisa Iwamoto
Shizue Nakamura

CHURCH TOBAN FOR APRIL

District III

Rijis:

Kimihiro Sera
Craig Sakaguchi

Toban:

Aiko Kamine
Irene Hara

2022 Church Dues

Just a friendly reminder that if your 2022 have not been sent in yet, please do so at your earliest convenience.

Family dues - \$450.00
Young family dues - \$225.00
Single dues - \$225.00

March 2022 Donations

Shotsuki

\$ 100.00	Rodney Kikuta
\$ 100.00	The Shimizu Family
\$ 75.00	Greg & Patti Miyake
\$ 75.00	Ken & Kim Miyake
\$ 50.00	Alex & Roberta Araki
\$ 30.00	May Mukai
\$ 30.00	Greg & Gay Mukai

In Memory of Shizuko Takeuchi, 49th Day Service

\$ 200.00	Wayne Takeuchi
	Norman & Nadine
	Takeuchi
	Aileen & Larry Parmeter
	Diane Eskelsen

Japanese American Incarceration Memorial Legacy Project

Flag Signing Event

To: ALL Japanese-American WWII Incarceration Camp Internees

Date: Saturday, April 2, 2022

Time: 10am – noon

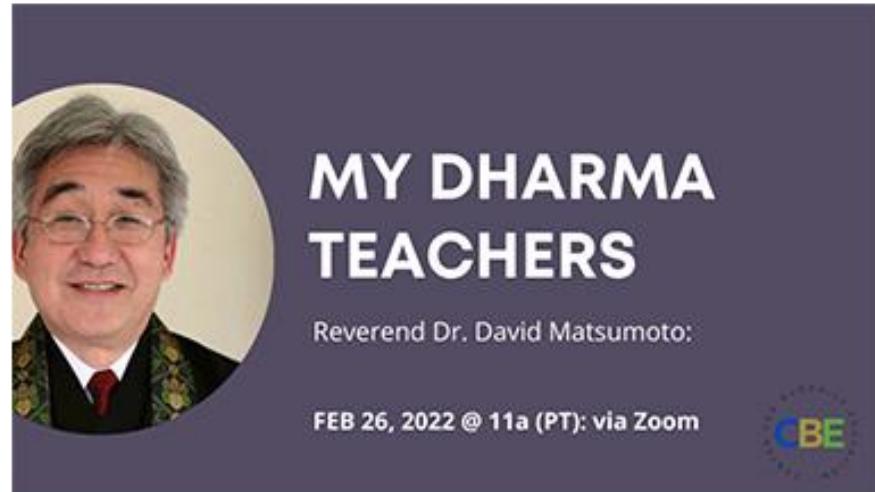
Location: Fowler Buddhist Church – 210 S. 9th Street
Fowler, CA 93625



Inspired by Santa Clara County Superior Court Judge Roberta Hayashi, Dr. Karen Korematsu, and Civil Rights Attorney Dale Minami, Santa Clara Judge Johnny Cepeda Gogo obtained a WWII era, 48-star, American flag with the goal of inviting ALL Japanese American incarceration camp internees to sign the flag. The first flags has been donated to the Japanese American Museum of San Jose, Japanese American National Museum, the Fred T. Korematsu Institute, and JAM-Oregon; one flag will travel to colleges and universities. For more information about the project, please see the following site:
www.discovermikkei.org/en/journal/2021/5/27/flag-signing-project/

Please register to sign the flag on April 2nd at b.ashida@sbcglobal.net or 408-111-1111. Please leave your name and phone number.

For questions about the flag signing project, please contact Judge Gogo at JGogo@scscourt.org
this event will follow all Covid-19 requirements: please wear face coverings/masks; physical distancing; etc.





Reedley Buddhist Church

2nd Annual - A Taste of Bazaar

Teriyaki Beefsticks • RBC Chow Mein • Namasu Salad • Rice • Cookies

Sunday, April 24, 2022

Drive Thru/Pick Up Only - 3:00 - 5:00 PM

\$17 each

Pre-sale ONLY

* A limited number of dinners available

Deadline: Tuesday, April 4, 2022

Send to: Reedley Buddhist Church - P.O. Box 24

Reedley, CA 93654 Attn: A Taste of Bazaar

Cut and return the bottom portion

Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Address: _____

Email: (for confirmation) _____

Taste of Bazaar Dinner: _____ x \$17.00 = Total Enclosed: _____

Deadline: Tuesday, April 4, 2022

Make checks payable to: REEDLEY BUDDHIST CHURCH

Questions: Call Vickie Nishida at (559)903-0317 or email: vlnishida1@gmail.com
or email Karen Sakata at: kgsakata@verizon.net



Honolulu & Oahu Districts Buddhist Education Committee

2022 SPRING VIRTUAL NEMBUTSU SEMINAR

Registration Now Open for...

Building Sangha Together: Nurturing Dharma-Centered Communities

Community has always been a strength of Shin Buddhism in America. Innovative and responsive community building grounded in the Dharma has enabled temples to thrive for more than a century. However, the traditional ways of building Sangha have been less effective as we face new challenges during this time of pandemic.

Rev. Blayne will explore what it means to be Sangha in today's world. How do we journey together as spiritual friends? And how can we nurture an authentic community of fellow travelers inspired by the Buddha's teachings? Participants will have an opportunity to cultivate Sangha through a facilitated group discussion. Bring your whole self as we learn and grow in the Dharma together.



Saturday, April 30, 2022

9:00-11:00 AM

(Hawaii Standard Time)

Presented by Rev. Blayne Higa

Kona Hongwanji Buddhist Temple

FREE Registration

Deadline: April 22, 2022

Register Online

Print Manual Registration Form

Donations are welcome!
All funds received will be designated
for Buddhist Education.

Donate

Visit our Dharma Hub calendar
for more statewide educational
offerings.

Dharma Hub

Questions? Please contact the Mililani Hongwanji office at (808) 625-0925 or
email susanoshiro@hawaii.rr.com

Central California Nikkei Foundation

Shredding Community Service and Fundraiser



Saturday, May 21, 2022

9am to 12 noon

Securely dispose of personal documents, tax papers,

Books-hardback & paperback.

Hard Drives.

Limit: 10 Banker Sized Boxes per car

Cost: \$15 per Banker Sized Box

\$15 per Hard Drive

Cash or Check only

Please make check payable to CCNF

Event will be Drive-Thru

Boxes will be emptied from your trunk/tailgate and returned

Held at Vintage Gardens

540 S. Peach Ave., Fresno

Questions contact: Susan Hayashi – 325-1457 or text 906-8540

Seniors who cannot drive to the event, call Susan by April 30

and arrange for pick-up.