



# THE WHITE PATH

MONTHLY BULLETIN VOL. 5393

June 2025

## **June Service and events:**

- 6/01/2025 – Rennyō Memorial & June Shotsuki Service
  - 10:00 a.m. – Rev. Blake Honda – Gary Mukai-Guest speaker

## **July Service and events:**

- 7/19/2025 – Obon Festival – 4:30 p.m.– 9:00 p.m.
  - Obon Dancing – 6:30 p.m.
- 7/20/2025 – Obon/Hatsubon & July Shotsuki Service
  - 10:00 a.m. – Rev. Blake Honda – Guest speaker

## The Enduring Wisdom of Rennyo Shonin (1415-1499)

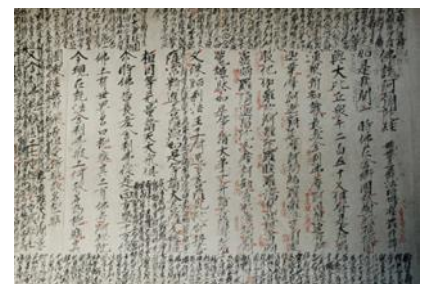
Many of us may first hear about Rennyo Shonin when we are children. We might learn that he was the teacher who made Buddhism easier to understand. But as we grow older, we begin to see that Rennyo's wisdom was not only about simplifying language. It was about offering a path of deep compassion and unwavering trust in the midst of incredible hardship.

Rennyo Shonin lived during a time of political instability, religious competition, and social upheaval. His efforts to spread the Nembutsu teaching—the simple recitation of “Namo Amida Butsu”—were not always welcomed. Powerful institutions like Mt. Hiei saw his success as a threat. In 1465, monks from Mt. Hiei destroyed the Hongwanji temple in Kyoto, forcing Rennyo into exile.

He had every reason to stop. He had lost his home. He would lose more—his wives, one after another. And yet, he never abandoned the path. He continued to share Amida Buddha’s message of boundless compassion with those who had never heard it. In fact, it was often those very people—farmers, villagers, families living far from the centers of power—who responded most deeply to his words.

Rennyo Shonin believed that the Dharma must be alive in our everyday lives. He taught that Amida’s vow was not reserved for the elite or the educated, but for all beings, just as they are. This meant speaking to people in the language they actually used. But more than that, it meant seeing ordinary life—full of work, grief, joy, and change—as the very field in which the Nembutsu can bloom.

To appreciate the radical nature of Rennyo’s approach, we only need to look at what came before him. In Shinran Shonin’s time, Buddhist texts were written in classical Chinese—a language very few people in Japan could read. Even Shinran’s own handwritten notes remain difficult to decipher today. His manuscripts, filled with dense Chinese script and technical terms, are a testament to his deep scholarship—but also a reminder of how inaccessible the teachings could be to ordinary people.



Shinran Shonin’s Notes

What makes Rennyo’s work so remarkable is that he was able to take the essence of Shinran’s profound insights—and communicate them in everyday Japanese. This was not a simplification of ideas, but a deep act of compassion. To speak

profound truths in plain language is no small task. It requires both clarity of understanding and deep empathy for the listener.

This spirit is beautifully expressed in the collection of Rennyo's pastoral letters, known as the *Gobunshō*. These letters, often read aloud to followers in remote areas, brought the Dharma into daily life. They addressed common concerns—birth and death, faith and doubt, joy and loss—with tenderness and directness.

One of the most well-known is the letter often read at funerals, the *White Ashes*. In it, Rennyo reminds us that life is fleeting and uncertain, like smoke or morning dew. But this is not a message of fear. It is a message of clarity and trust. When we recognize the fragile nature of life, we can begin to treasure each day, and entrust ourselves fully to the compassion of Amida.



Today, when we say “Namo Amida Butsu,” we echo not only the voice of Shinran, but also the steady, clear voice of Rennyo Shonin, who brought the teaching out of scholarly texts and into the language of daily life. His words remain with us—quiet, resilient, and full of hope.

With Gratitude,

Rev. Mieko Majima

れんにょしょうにん  
蓮如上人

こんげつ ほんがんにじだいはちだいしゅうしゅ れんにょしょうにん おも だ いっしょ ねんぶつ  
今月 は、本願寺第八代宗主、蓮如上人 のおはたらきを 思い 出 しながら、ご 一緒 にお 念仏 のみ  
おし あじ おも  
教 えを 味 わってまいりたいと 思 います。

れんにょしょうにん いま ごひゃくねんまえ かつやく ぼう なむ あみ だぶつ たた  
蓮如上人 は、今 からおよそ 五百年前 に 活躍 されたお 坊 さまで、「南無阿弥陀仏」と 称 えるみ  
おし おお ひと つた  
教 えを、多くの 人 びとにわかりやすく 伝 えてくださいました。

なかでも『ごぶんしょう』と 呼 ばれるお 手紙 では、日々 の 暮 らしの 出 来事 を 通 して、やさしく、そ  
して 身 近 な 言 葉 で 語 りかけておられます。

みなさんがよくご 存 じの『はつこつ ごぶんしょう』——「人間 のいのちははかないものである」と 語 り  
はじめる、あの 印象 深 いご 文 章 も、実 は 蓮如上人 によって 書 かれたものです。

れんにょしょうにん かずおお てがみ もん と のこ わたし とく こころ のこ  
蓮如上人 は数多くのお 手紙 をご 門徒 に 残 されましたが、私 が 特 に 心 に 残 っているのは、お  
でしさま にか てがみ つぎ  
弟子様 にあてて 書 かれたお 手紙 のなかの、次 の一節です。

ただ ねんぶつ み だ  
念仏 して 弥陀 にたすけまゐらすべしと、よきひとのおおせをかぶりて、  
しんじんけつじょう  
信心決定 せしめたまふべきなり

ここでいう「よきひと」とは、仏 さまのみ 教 えを 伝 えてくださる 方 のことです。また、「  
しんじんけつじょう うたが あみ だぶつ こころ え い み  
信心決定」とは、疑 いなく 阿弥陀仏 にまかせる 心 を 得 ることを 意 味 します。

このように、蓮如上人 は、お 手紙 を 通 して——疑 いなく 阿弥陀仏 にまかせていくことの 大 切  
さを、く かえ つた  
繰 り返 し 伝 えておられました。

れんにょしょうにん ごひゃくねん とし いま わたし ぶつぼう みちび たいせつ  
その 蓮如上人 は、五百年 の 時 をこえて、今 もなお、私 たちを 仏 法 へと 導 いてくださる 大 切  
な 存 在 であり、「ただ ねんぶつ  
念仏 してまいりなさい」と、やさしく 背 中 を 押 してくださっているよう  
に 思 います。

わたし かぎ い にんげん  
私 たちは、限 りあるいのちを 生 きる 人間 です。

だからこそ、み 教 えのことばにふと 出 あったとき、心 がふっと 軽 くなり、前 を 向 く 力 をいた  
だけののではないのでしょうか。

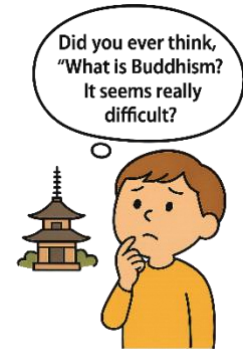
こんげつ れんにょしょうにん ごぶんしょう よ かえ ひ び なか い  
今月 は、蓮如上人 の 御 文 章 をあらためて 読 み返 しながら、日々 のくらしの 中 に 生 きてはたら  
く 仏 さまの 願 いに、静 かに 耳 をすませてまいりましょう。

がっしょう  
合掌

## Who is Rennyo Shonin?

Have you ever wondered,  
“What is Buddhism? It sounds really difficult...”

A long time ago in Japan, **Buddha’s teachings were written in super old Chinese!**



Back then, **many people in Japan couldn’t read and write at all**, so being able to read was something really special.

When someone wanted to write a letter, they often had to go to a temple to and ask a monk to write it for them.

For monks, it wasn’t just Japanese, they had to learn Chinese, too! Even they had to go to a special school and study for many years to read and write when they study the teachings.



**Rennyo Shonin** was born in a temple family. He learned how to read from his father and his teachers, and he studied very hard. After he learned the teachings, he thought:

**“Let’s share the Dharma in a way that everyone can understand!”**

Isn’t that amazing?

He began to teach using **everyday language**, so even people who worked all day, people who couldn’t read, and even children could understand **the kindness of Amida Buddha**.

That’s something truly special, don’t you think?



And now, when we say “**Namo Amida Butsu**,” it feels like **Rennyo Shonin’s kindness is right there with us**, too.



## **FOWLER WHITE PATH JUNE 2025 PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

With our observance of Memorial Day, we welcome the beginning of Summer. We had a good turnout for our Memorial cemetery services at the Selma and Fowler Cemeteries. It is a time to reflect upon the soldiers that have made the ultimate sacrifice to preserve our freedoms that we enjoy today, particularly our Nisei soldiers that served in the military while their families were incarcerated behind barbed wire.

We will be starting a new era for our church starting next month. We are no longer in the "Hub" system in the Central Valley. Starting in July we will be supervised by the Reedley Buddhist Church and Rev. Mieko Majima. The Reedley Buddhist Church will have Rev. Majima as their resident minister, and the Jodo Shinshu temples of Fowler, Parlier, Visalia, and Hanford will be under the supervision of Reedley. We will be responsible for paying Reedley a monthly assessment, which is similar to the amount we were paying under the Hub system. Rev. Majima will be conducting our monthly services and will tend to any ministerial needs of our membership, e.g., funerals, memorials, pillow services, etc. The Fresno Betsuin will have Rev.

Nakata as their resident minister and he will serve the Fresno Sangha exclusively.

As you know, the schedule of the Obon celebrations of the Central Valley temples have changed. Reedley had their Obon on May 17<sup>th</sup> and Fresno's was on May 31<sup>st</sup>. I hope you had a chance to enjoy their events. It's too bad that Fresno's attempt to have their Obon in cooler weather didn't quite work out for them. We will be holding our Obon Odori on Saturday, July 19<sup>th</sup> and our Obon Hatsubon Service on July 20<sup>th</sup>. We are still planning an indoor event. Our speaker for the Obon service will be Rev. Blake Honda.

This month's service will be on June 1<sup>st</sup> at 10:00 and we will be observing the Memorial for Rennyō Shonin. Rev. Blake will be conducting the service, Rev. Karen will be giving the children's message, and Gary Mukai will be the Dharma speaker. 'Hope to see you all there.'

### **In Case You Didn't Know . . .**

- Keep up to date on what's happening at the Buddhist Church of Fowler by reading the White Path (monthly newsletter) online. Visit: [fowlerbc.org](http://fowlerbc.org)

**Dues**

In case it slipped your mind, this is just a friendly reminder that your church dues for 2025 are now being accepted. Dues have not increased and remain:  
\$225.00 – individuals; \$450.00 couples/family.

**Board of Governors****Riji**

Aiko Kamine  
Craig Sakaguchi

**Toban**

Irene Hara  
Aiko Kamine

**Obon Practice**

The final Obon practices in Fowler are 5/27/2025 and 7/8/2025 at 6:00 p.m.

**The Shotsuki names for the month of June are:**

Kenso Okamura  
Kakuichi Kawano  
Otoichi Oba  
Randy Iwamoto  
Yutaka Nakamura  
Tomoichi Yamamoto  
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

## May 2025 Donations

### **Gotan-e Service**

\$ 100.00	Darryl & Janette Wong-Sing
\$ 30.00	Joe & Irene Hara
\$ 30.00	Howard & Satomi Hiyama
\$ 30.00	Art & Alice Fujikawa
\$ 30.00	Jan Yoshimoto
\$ 30.00	Gary & Arlene Keithley
\$ 25.00	Mrs. Janie Yuen
\$ 20.00	Craig & Tayoko Honda
\$ 10.00	Blake Honda

### **Shotsuki**

\$ 200.00	Rick & Marlene Miyasaki
\$ 100.00	Sally Yemoto
\$ 50.00	Mitsuye Shinkawa
\$ 50.00	Jan Yoshimoto
\$ 50.00	Linda, Nick & Chris Matsumoto
\$ 50.00	Bey & Susan Driss & Family
\$ 40.00	Gerald & Cherie Nakayama
\$ 40.00	Greg & Gay Mukai
\$ 30.00	Ron & Maxine Yoshimoto
\$ 30.00	Gary & Arlene Keithley
\$ 25.00	Gordon & Susan

	Hayashi
\$ 25.00	Earl Honda
\$ 20.00	Sharon Asakawa
\$ 20.00	George & Kim Hashimoto
\$ 10.00	Yoshiye Ii

### **In Memory of Tina Kato-Clarey**

\$ 50.00	Rick & Marlene Miyasaki
\$ 40.00	Greg & Gay Mukai
\$ 30.00	Hitomi Sera
\$ 25.00	Maryann Miyasaki

### **In Memory of Ronald Hiroshi**

#### **Ashida**

\$ 400.00	Ms Eunice Muramoto
\$ 50.00	Darryl & Janette Wong-Sing
\$ 50.00	Ron & Maxine Yoshimoto
\$ 50.00	Hitomi Sera & Family
\$ 40.00	Rick & Marlene Miyasaki
\$ 40.00	Rick & Stacy Ideta
\$ 35.00	Brian Nagata
\$ 30.00	Tayoko & Craig Honda
\$ 25.00	Tom Kathe Shimizu
\$ 20.00	Les & Donna Ishii
\$ 20.00	Wayne & Gail Yamagiwa

## Special Donations

\$ 400.00 Ashida Family  
\$ 170.00 Fowler Ikebana Club

## Ikebana Exhibit 2025

\$ 50.00 Gail Nakamura  
\$ 50.00 Janie Yuen &  
Miki & Jade  
\$ 50.00 Rick & Marlene  
Miyasaki  
\$ 50.00 Karen Kondo  
\$ 30.00 Dinuba Palm Methodist  
\$ 25.00 Art & Alice Fujikawa  
\$ 20.00 & Shig & Aiko Kamine  
3 sets Dai  
\$ 10.00 Jack & Betty Mori  
\$ 10.00 Joe & Irene Hara



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# BYR SUMMER

Join us for the 8th annual BCA YOUTH RETREAT. This is a special program open to high school age students that spans over one week learning about Buddhism and creating memories and friends that will last a lifetime.



**6.22.25 – 6.28.25**



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

**<https://TINYURL.com/BYRVIII>**



CLICK THE REG LINK FOR MORE INFO. QUESTIONS EMAIL:  
koichi Mizushima: [bkmizushima@bcahq.org](mailto:bkmizushima@bcahq.org)





## **BCA MEMBERS RED CARPET WEEKEND**

*A VIP EXPERIENCE LIKE NO OTHER*

JOIN US FOR A SPECIAL EVENT EXCLUSIVELY FOR  
MEMBERS OF OUR BCA TEMPLES, CHURCHES, AND THE BCA  
INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM

THIS **FREE** EVENT WILL TAKE PLACE

**JULY 11-13, 2025**

AT THE

**JODO SHINSHU CENTER IN BERKELEY, CA**

TO LEARN MORE AND REGISTER GO TO:

**[HTTPS://WWW.BUDDHISTCHURCHESOFAMERICA.ORG/RED-CARPET-WEEKEND](https://www.buddhistchurchesofamerica.org/red-carpet-weekend)**

Password: bcarcw2025

***REGISTRATION BEGINS MAY 1<sup>ST</sup>, 2025***