



THE WHITE PATH

MONTHLY BULLETIN VOL. 5394

JULY 2025



July Service and events:

07/19/2025 – Obon

07/20/2025 – Obon/Hatsubon & July Shotsuki Service – 10 am
Rev. Blake Honda

August Service:

08/10/2025 – August Shotsuki Service – 10am
Rev. Amy Umezu



A Time to Reflect with Gratitude – Welcoming the Obon Season

As July begins, we start to feel that the Obon season is drawing near once again. Many of us gradually begin preparing—cleaning the home altar, making plans to visit the cemetery—and quietly getting our hearts ready. Obon is a precious time to remember those who have passed and to renew our sense of gratitude.

In Japan, Obon has long been observed as a meaningful opportunity to express appreciation to our ancestors, to

reflect on the interconnection of life, and to touch the teachings of the Buddha. Our lives are made possible through the support of countless lives—our parents, grandparents, ancestors, and beyond. Recognizing that truth and placing our hands together in reverence is at the heart of Obon.

In our daily lives, we eat, work, and go about our routines as if everything is simply given. But not a single part of our lives is sustained by our efforts alone. When we say “Itadakimasu” before a meal, we’re not just following a custom. We are expressing thanks—for the lives of the ingredients, for the sun, earth, rain and people who nurtured them, and for those who prepared the meal. That small gesture “Itadakimasu” carries a world of gratitude.

In fact, my life continues through the lives of others. To be alive is to receive and carry the weight of countless lives before me. It is a truth that humbles and inspires. I learned to say “Itadakimasu” from my parents, and to recite “Namo Amida Butsu” from my grandmother. Though they have all passed away, it is because of them—because they lived their lives grounded in the Dharma—that I now recite the Nembutsu. Encountering the Buddha’s teaching and walking this path of Nembutsu is, I believe, what they most wished for me.

One of the things I appreciate most is when you say, “Please lead us Gassho.” But in truth, I am not the one leading the Nembutsu—it is you who reminds me to say it, and for that, I am truly grateful.

The Buddha said, “Stay close to good friends.” I truly believe this is one of the most important teachings. Over time, I’ve come to realize just how deeply true those words

are. It is through the presence of good people—those who walk the path with sincerity and kindness—that I am reminded of the Nembutsu, and encouraged to live with gratitude.

To place our hands together and say “Thank you,” “Itadakimasu,” or “Namo Amida Butsu” in our everyday lives—this is how we send our gratitude across the river of life to those who have already crossed to the other shore. It is both a sign of thanks and a heartfelt greeting.

Obon is not only a time to remember the departed, but also a quiet moment to recognize that I am here, alive, through the gift of life passed on to me. And often, it is these everyday words—“Itadakimasu” and “Namo Amida Butsu”—that help us realize this truth.

May this summer also be a time of gentle reflection and deep gratitude, as we recite the Nembutsu, embraced by the Buddha and our loved ones who continue to watch over us.

Gassho

Rev. Mieko Majima

しちがつ 七月に入ると、今年もお盆の季節が近づいてきたことを感じます。お仏壇の ぶつだん
ことし ぼん きせつ ちか かん
そうじ はかまい じゅんび すこ こころ との かた おお
掃除やお墓参りの準備など、少しずつ心を整えていかれる方も多いことでし
ぼん な ひと しの かんしや
たいせつ
ょう。お盆とは、亡き人を偲び、感謝のこころをあらたにする大切なときです。

にほん 日本では、お盆を先祖に感謝し、「いのちのつながりを確かめ、仏さまの教え おし
にふれる」機縁として受けとめてきました。私たちのいのちは、両親、祖父母、 ほとけ
せんぞかた きえん う わたし りょうしん そふぼ
ご先祖方、そして数えきれないほどのいのちとご縁に支えられています。そのこ
とに気づき、手を合わせるのがお盆のこころです。

ひびく なか わたし あまえ しまくじ せいかつ
日々の暮らしの中で、私たちは当たり前のように食事をし、生活しています
が、そのどれ一つとして「自分だけの力」で成り立っているものはありません。
しょくじ まえ ひと じぶん ちから な た
食事の前に「いただきます」と手を合わせるのは、食材となつたいのち、育てて
くれた自然や人びと、調理してくれた人……そうしたすべてのご恩へ感謝を
あらわ おこな おん かんしや
表す行いです。

この「いただきます」には、いのちを尊ぶ心が凝縮されています。私は、他の
いのちをいただいて生きている。だからこそ、「私が生きている」ということは、
かぞえきれないいのちの上に成り立っている尊い現実なのだと気づかされます。

わたし りょうしん おし おし そぼ なもあみだぶつ とな
私は、両親から「いただきます」を教えてもらい、祖母から南無阿弥陀仏と唱え
ることを教えてもらいました。もう両親も祖父母も亡くなりましたが、これは、
わたし なもあみだぶつ とな ひと み ぶっぽう でん
いま私が南無阿弥陀仏と唱えるのは、亡き人びとがその身をもって仏法を伝
えてくださったことに他なりません。私自身が仏法に出遇い、お念佛の道を歩
むことこそ、なによりご先祖方が望んでいたことと受けとめています。

「いただきます」「ありがとう」「南無阿弥陀仏」と、日々のなかで手を合わせること。
それは、いのちの川のこちら岸から、すでに向こう岸へと渡られたご
先祖方にむけた感謝のしるしであり、心からのご挨拶でもあります。

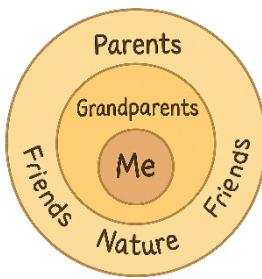
お盆は、亡き人を偲ぶだけではなく、私がいのちを受け継いで生かされている
という事実に、静かに手を合わせる時間です。そして、それに気づかせてくれる
のが、「いただきます」や「南無阿弥陀仏」といった、日常の中で使われる言葉
なのです。

この夏 なつ もどうぞ、仏 ほとけ さまとご先祖 せんぞ に見守 みまも られながら、お念佛 ねんぶつ とともに静 しず かな
感謝 かんしゃ のひとときをお迎 むか えくださいますように。

合掌

“Saying Thank You with Our Hearts — What Obon Teaches Us”

Have you ever said “*Itadakimasu*” before a meal? Maybe your parents or grandparents say it. In Japan, we say “*Itadakimasu*” to show respect and gratitude before eating. It means, “I humbly receive,” and it’s a way of saying thank you—not just for the food, but for everything that made the meal possible: the sunlight, the rain, the farmers, the cooks, and the life of the animals and plants that became part of our meal.



In the Buddhist tradition, we learn that everything is connected. No one lives all by themselves. We are here because many people helped us—our parents, teachers, friends, and even people we’ve never met. Obon is a special time in summer when we remember our ancestors, the family members who came before us. Even if we don’t know their names, they are part of our story.

During Obon, many families go to the temple. They clean their home altars, visit graves, offer flowers or incense, and say *Namo Amida Butsu*. When we say *Namo Amida Butsu*, we are remembering that we are loved, supported, and never alone. It is also a way of saying “thank you” from deep inside our hearts.



Obon is not a spooky holiday. It is a peaceful and warm time. It reminds us to appreciate the life we have and to be kind to others. Even something simple—like saying “thank you,” offering a flower, or saying *Namo Amida Butsu*—can help us feel connected to the people who came before us and to everyone around us today.

So next time you say “*Itadakimasu*” or *Namo Amida Butsu*, remember:

You are never alone. You are part of a big family of life.



JULY 2025 PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I hope everyone is having a wonderful Summer. The start of Summer means Obon season is right around the corner. The popularity of the Fowler Obon continues to grow due to the comfort of indoor dancing and the interaction and intimacy of a crowded dance floor. We also offer great food offerings. There is still an opportunity to learn this year's dancing moves since there is one dance practice available on July 8th at 6 o'clock. We wish to thank the Guerra sisters, Leslie and Lindsay, for keeping us up-to-date with current Obon dances. None the less, we invite all of you to join in on the dancing and follow along with everyone else to express your joy of the season.

Fowler's Obon Odori is on Saturday, July 19th. Food booths will open around 4:30 PM. There will be teriyaki chicken bowls, somen noodles, spam musubi, and bento boxes available, as well as water, soft drinks, beer and sake. If you wish to honor a deceased family member on a celebratory lantern, see Rev. Karen Mukai at the Obon. I hope to see all of you there. Please invite your friends. It will be a good time for all.

The Obon/Hatsubon service will be at 10 o'clock the following day, Sunday, July 20th. Rev. Blake Honda will be our guest speaker, which will be a farewell by Rev. Blake, who will be leaving for his BCA Kyoshi

assignment to the Oxnard Buddhist Church. After the service, there will be a celebration of Rev. Blake's fulfilment of his ministerial studies and ordination and an appreciation of his service to the Fowler Sangha over the years. Best wishes to Rev. Blake for his new exciting and wonderful life of spreading the Buddha Dharma. Please respond to your riji on whether you will be attending the luncheon, as the golf club will need to know how many lunches to purchase. The FBC Golf Club will be providing the lunches for the celebration.

On July 1st, we will begin our relationship with the Reedley Buddhist Church as a supervised temple. Rev. Meiko Majima will provide our ministerial services. I assure you that we will remain an independent BCA temple and will retain autonomy over any future administration and policy of our church.

I hope to see all of you at the Obon on the 19th and the Hatsubon service on the 20th. Have a great rest of the Summer and go Dodgers!

Dues

In case it slipped your mind, this is just a friendly reminder that your church dues for 2025 are now past due. Dues have not increased and remain: \$225.00 – individuals; \$450.00 couples/family. Please send in your dues as soon as possible.

Board of Governors - July

(A new District order starts at the beginning of each year.)

District 5

Riji

Cherie Nakayama
Diane Eskelson

Toban

Satomi Hiyama
Alice Fujikawa

The Shotsuki names for the month of July are:

Hiroshi T. Mayebo
Torao Sera
Noriyuki Arasuna
Sumiko Doi
Kama Toyama
Futayo Okamura
Kazuo Otani
Kuma Kato
Kichiro Takemoto
Yakichi Honda
Sadao Onaka
Sato Kurata
Shizuko Tokubo
Masami Matsuoka
Dorothy Kanenaga
Tom Mukai
Setsuko Asakawa
Masao Sakoda
Kazu Wada

Yumi Onaka
Shizue Fujikawa
Chuck Ideta
Joe Yoshimura
Mikiko Nakahira
Toshiaki Shinkawa
Flora Murashige
Richard Shimoda
Joyce Keiko Kubose

June 2025 Donations

Rennyo Memorial Service

\$ 30.00	Jan Yoshimoto
\$ 30.00	Gary & Arlene Keithely
\$ 20.00	Ms. Sharon Asakawa

Obon

\$ 30.00	Howard & Satomi Hiyama
\$ 25.00	Rodney Kikuta

Shotsuki

\$ 150.00	Jean Ideta Family
\$ 75.00	Greg & Patti Miyake
\$ 75.00	Ken & Kim Miyake
\$ 30.00	Howard & Satomi Hiyama
\$ 30.00	Shig & Aiko Kamine
\$ 25.00	Gordon & Susan Hayashi
\$ 25.00	Hitomi Sera

In Memory of Clifford Sera & Tad Nakamura

\$ 300.00

In Memory of Clifford Sera

\$ 75.00	Richard & Rita Watkins
\$ 30.00	Joyce Imai
\$ 25.00	Donald & Irene Miyasaki

In Memory of Ronald Hiroshi Ashida

\$ 100.00	Terry Mukai
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Gary & Karen Mukai

Golden Wedding Anniversary

\$ 300.00	Gary & Karen Mukai
\$ 200.00	Ken & Alice Tanimoto
\$ 100.00	Rick & Marlene Miyasaki
\$ 100.00	Hitomi Sera
\$ 100.00	Howard & Satomi Hiyama
\$ 100.00	Ron & Sandi Yamabe

Special Donations

\$ 500.00	Hitomi Sera & Family
	In Memory of Clifford Sera
\$ 420.00	Fowler Ikebana Class



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Fowler Buddhist Church
OBON

July 19th. 4:30pm - 9pm



Somen. Bento. Chicken Bowl. Spam Musubi.

Beer. Soft Drinks. Water

*Lanterns for Loved Ones Personalized
(family members. friends. pets)*



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 1ST, 2025



Central Cal Nenbutsu Family Gathering

(Fresno, Fowler, Hanford, Kingsburg, Parlier, Reedley, Visalia)

Saturday, September 20, 2025

9:30AM ~ 2:00PM

Fresno Buddhist Temple

Guest Speaker: Rev. Kodo Umezu

Activities for Children

Bounce House

Taco Truck, Pizza, Shave Ice

Bingo for Everyone