
DIRECTORY OF OFFICERS

Ministers	Rinban Kakei Nakagawa	970-7652
	Rev. Kaz Nakata	442-4059
Church President	Steve Sasai	897-7236
Co-Vice Presidents	Toshie Mori	638-8614
	Kaye Kozuki	646-2538
Secretary	Tatsumi Arakawa	859-4430
Treasurer	Glenn Yoshimoto	897-1811
Maintenance	James Goishi	638-5510
	Kaye Kozuki	646-2538
BWA President	Denise Kusunoki	246-6847
Newsletter Editors	Curtis Koga	618-1528
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Webmaster	Glenn Nakamichi	896-5240
	www.bcparlier.org	

Due to the current
COVID-19 conditions,
we will continue with
no in-person services
or activities at the
church through the
month of July.

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U.S. POSTAGE
PARLIER, CA 93648
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BUDDHIST CHURCH OF PARLIER
P.O. Box 547
Parlier, CA 93648
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Black Lives Matter

On June 5th, I attended the joint vigil for Allies of the Black Lives Matter Movement, co-sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno and Fresno Betsuin Buddhist Temple. Some church members also attended that day and the following June 12th vigil.

It is a citizens' movement that seriously faces the unsolved problem of racism in American history, which originated from the cruel incident in Minneapolis, Minnesota. It is a positive movement for the Shin Buddhist Sangha in Central California, and we must be sure it never happens in others' affairs.

The slogan of "Black Lives Matter" reminds us about the history of American African ancestry, which has taken the full brunt of discrimination for 400 years in this country. We will notice that racial-discrimination is the biggest shackle for preventing the ideal of America.

As Buddhists, we can never be indifferent.

Shin Buddhism is a way of life that is always with the Buddha's wishes. Remember how Rennyō Shōnin taught a law of living as a Dharma-Practicer:

"I shall live my remaining life without prejudice or discrimination.
I shall discard false rituals and break the bonds of unproductive actions.
I shall long for and promote a world of non-violence whether physical, mental,
cultural, or social.
I shall realize a true Sangha, where no individual would ever be impaired from
realizing their full potential."

What a resemblance between the Buddha's wishes-for-the-world and America's ideals! As D. T. Suzuki, one of the most beautiful Buddhist minds of the 20th century, clarified, "It can be asserted that there is no other country than the United States of America where Buddha's wishes-for-the-world can be best fulfilled."

This is true especially for people of American Japanese ancestry who have experienced the horror of the moment of being one step before racial extinction, due to the discrimination policy of the Federal Government during WWII.

We must not keep silent.

MESSAGE FROM REV. KAKEI NAKAGAWA, RINBAN

The following poem is written on the tombstone of one Polish man, Martin Niemoller, who died during World War II:

“First they came and knocked on the door for the socialists, and I did not speak out--
Because I was not a socialist.
Then they came and knocked on the door for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out—
Because I was not a trade unionist.
Then they came and knocked on the door for the Jews, and I did not speak out—
Because I was not a Jew.
Then they came and knocked on the door for me—
And there was no one left to speak for me.”

Thankfully, when the Issei and Nisei were in the internment camps, there were quite a few in this country who spoke up for us and spoke for our human rights, even by risking their social status. They are the original Americans. We must never forget about these people.

And even now in the 21st century, they are knocking on our doors for people of American African ancestry, 150 years after the Emancipation Proclamation, basically because of the difference in skin color.....

May we speak strong for establishing the society where no individual would ever be impaired from realizing their full potential.

Phony Email Requests -- Be aware of any emails asking for gift cards or money on behalf of a temple minister or member. It is a scam!! This has already happened to Parlier ministers and members. Rev. Kaz said this is a problem throughout the BCA. If you are in doubt, call the person who you think sent the email and ask. Be careful, and stay safe!!

Obon Lanterns...bringing back memories of our loved ones

Hello, all Central California Sangha friends! This is my fourth Newsletter article after the stay-at-home/shelter-in-place order was enacted. How you are adapting to your new normal life? I get up at 6:30 each morning to walk with my children. After a breakfast, I start my ministry activities such as writing emails and articles, reading books, making phone calls, attending virtual meetings, and preparing materials for Sunday Services. After the stay-at-home/shelter-in-place orders were lifted, I started accepting in-person meetings at the office. Since the orders were enacted, I conduct Sunday Service every weekend, and funeral/memorial Services upon request. Usually we suspend Sunday Services after Obon service and resume in September but for this year, Rinban and I decided to continue streaming Sunday Service throughout the summer. I do less driving to attend meetings or to conduct services, but I have more “deskwork” making posters and service programs. So, I keep myself active under the new normal life.

In my previous article, I wrote on the significance of Obon for the Jodo Shinshu Sangha. On July 11th, we will have a virtual Obon Dance. I am currently preparing the equipment needed and preparing procedures for the event. When someone asks you about Obon, what do you recall? Maybe you recall Kimono, Obon Songs, Taiko, or Chicken Teriyaki. These are all important components of Obon. I personally, recall the Obon lanterns. You may remember that many colorful lanterns are fastened on the lines above. Once the sun sets, these lanterns are illuminated by lights or candles. Although it is very hot, dancers enjoy Obon odori under these lanterns. Some of these lanterns display people’s names on its surface. Many are of those loved ones who passed since the last Obon season. Traditionally, we call these the Hatusbon deceased. Hatsu means “first time” and bon means “Obon”. So Hatusbon means that the family of the deceased is observing Obon for the first time, without their loved one. You may wonder why we use lanterns. There are many old traditions regarding the Obon lantern so I would like to introduce one of the Jodo Shinshu stories on the Obon lantern.

But before sharing this, we should know the history of a lantern in the Buddhist tradition. A lantern is known as Toro, in Japanese or Chinese. It literally means “a basket for a candle”. According to the Mahīśāsaka-vinaya (ancient precepts for Buddhist monks), originally monks were using an open-flame light. They realized that this may cause a fire, so the vinaya text permitted monks to make a basket for the candle, made from copper, iron, clay brick, or wood. In the Vinaya-ksudraka-vastu (another ancient precept for Buddhist monks), it says a monk was chanting a sutra one night. He was using an open flame for his source of light. A bug flew over his flame and was killed. He decided to make a basket with bamboo sticks for a covering to avoid such unnecessary killing. So originally a lantern was not a part of the Buddhist ornaments. Later in China, lanterns were used to light up a temple altar, and placed in front of a temple building as a stone structured lantern. Nowadays, you may see these stone lanterns as decoration in Japanese gardens, and you may also find it at a gardening supply store or nurseries.

MESSAGE FROM REV. KAZ NAKATA

A bamboo structured lantern was introduced to Japan from China in the early 14th Century. It was used amongst nobles and warriors for daily use, and Buddhist priests for ornaments. In fact, a drawn picture in the 15th Century shows that people were hanging bamboo lanterns to lead a funeral procession to the gravesite. By the 15th Century, the Japanese invented a foldable lantern for portability and storability. It is now what we use for Obon.

The bamboo lantern was inexpensive to make but the candle itself was very expensive for people, in general. The lantern became popular amongst people in the beginning of the Edo period (1603-1868), when the mass-production of the candle began. One of the prototypes of the Bon odori dances is recorded in Ippen Hijiri-e which was written in the 14th Century. Ippen was one of the well-known Nenbutsu teachers. Shinran Shonin lived in the 14th Century too. They might have danced together...

In our Jodo Shinshu tradition, the usage of the lantern at Obon has no official starting date. Instead, there are stories of how local Jodo Shinshu Sangha started to use the lantern at Obon. One of the biggest Sangha groups in Japan was a group in the Hiroshima region. They were called "Aki-monto."

In the middle of the Edo period, there was a couple who owned a wholesale paper store in the territory of the Hiroshima Castle town. Unfortunately, they lost their young daughter. They lamented the death of their beloved child, and wished to build a stone structured lantern, like the one which is situated in a temple. However, they were not able to afford the cost of the construction. They hand-crafted a lantern with bamboo and wrapped it with paper. Later, they placed the lantern in front of their daughter's grave. This is the origin of a lantern at Obon. In Hiroshima, these lanterns are known as "Bon Toro" or "Bon Doro." I have included a Bon Toro picture from the Mainichi Newspaper, so you can imagine how people place the lantern in front and around gravesites. Hatsubon families place a white lantern, while other families place a colorful lantern. This way, people will recognize which families have recently lost an immediate family member.

Do you remember when you were child, how your grandparents were enjoying Obon under the hanging lanterns? I remember that my grandfather took me to the Obon dance. He bought me snacks such as shaved ice and cotton candy and gave me money for the game booths. He passed away 11 years ago at the age of 94. He left me a lot of fun memories of Obon, which I still remember. The Obon lanterns brings back memories of my loved ones, grandfather, grandmother, and cousin. When you see the Obon lanterns, who do you recall? I am sure that they bring back many sweet memories for you.

Again, under the current situation, we can only have a virtual Obon dance and Hatsubon Service on July 11. I will try my best to maintain our annual events as much as possible, so please watch the Service through your monitor or screen. If you do not have access to the internet, please let me know. I will record the Obon event on DVD and am happy to give you one.

In Gassho.

BOARD MEETING JUNE 8, 2020

Attendees: Rev Kaz, Brandon Hill, Donald Ikemiya, Denny Ikuta, Cheryl Koga, Curtis Koga, Kaye Kozuki, Tad Kozuki, Denise Kusunoki, Toshie Mori, Yuki Mori, Steve Sasai, Joyce Sasai, Glenn Yoshimoto, Janette Wong-Sing, Tatsumi Arakawa

I. Call to Order – Gassho (7:11 p.m.)

II. Quorum (Established)

III. Minutes from board meeting – May 11, 2020

IV. Treasurer’s Report

*Donations are down this year for the food bazaar. 44 out of 77 members have made a donation for the food bazaar.

V. Minister’s Report

*Continuing online services

*Rinban Nakagawa attended the BLM vigil.

*June 11, 2020: The Fresno Betsuin will have a virtual Obon.

*Reverend Marvin Harada staying in Anaheim, California because he is unable to move to San Francisco at this time.

VI. Ministers Assistant’s Report

*June 14, 2020, the Mori’s will conduct the June Shotsuki and Rennyho Shonin’s memorial service.

VII. Committee Reports

A. Maintenance

*Dennis contacted an electrician about a problematic light. The electrician did not call him back. Steve reported that the light was not making anymore noise. It might be okay for now.

*Yuki trimmed the sago palm. It looks good!

B. BWA

*Sixteen senior members were sent a card.

*Mrs. Nagare will be sent flowers for her 100th birthday.

*Donations for Mr. Fred Nagare can be sent to St. Agnes, the Parlier Buddhist Church, or UJCC Friends Care.

*A National BWA Board meeting will be conducted in October 2020 via Zoom.

C. Publication

*The newsletter is being sent digitally and by hard copy if requested.

*The newsletter videos and hard copies cost over \$70 to send.

D. Finance (quarterly)

*The online account looks like it’s making a comeback. The money is almost back to what it was at the beginning of the year.

E. V & P

*No report.

F. CCMAC

*Next meeting is scheduled for June 29, 2020.

G. CCDC

*Committee Reports: Move to Accept, Seconded,

Passed.

VIII. Old Business

A. Review of church activities

1. No in-person activities in May

2. Curtis’ Dharma Discussion - May 20 – via Zoom

B. Obon odori and bento - cancelled

C. Shotsuki notices – sent out for April and May with envelope. June will include envelope.

D. Streaming by CC ministers – May Shotsuki and Rennyho Shonin memorial – Sun, May 17

E. 90th Anniversary in 2021

F. Technology and streaming

*Donald attended a meeting on how other churches use technology:

- Topic: “Technology for Temples” -38 participants

-Next meeting: Scheduled for June 20, 2020

*Tad’s son-in-law will be donating a 65 inch television to the church.

G. Sale of property

*The permit for the sale of the property is on track. The Parlier City Council has the permit, and it will go to Fresno County next.

H. Fund raiser

*Tahoe Joe’s fundraiser for July 2020? Should we wait until September?

I. Other Old Business

*Rummage sale?

IX. New Business

A. Upcoming events

a. No in-person activities in June

b. Dharma Discussion – Wed, Jun 10 @ 7:00 pm (Zoom)

B. Virtual Obon and snack bag sales

a. Obon practices and how to wear kimono – Jun 25, Jul 2, Jul 9 @ 7:00 pm (Zoom)

b. CC Obon and Hatsubon Service – Jul 11 @ 5:30 pm (live stream)

c. Photos from past Obons

*ALL Central California temples submit pictures of past Obons.

d. Snack bags sales ends June 25, 2020.

C. Re-opening of church

*We will be taking a “cautious” approach to re-opening. We probably not be re-opening for the foreseeable future.

D. BCA Update #845

E. Other new business

X. Adjournment – Gassho (8:24 p.m.)

*Donald motioned to adjourn meeting. Glenn seconded. Motion passed.

Next meeting – Mon, Jul 13, 2020 @ 7:00 pm



MONTHLY MEMORIAL SERVICE



July Shotsuki

DECEASED

Mrs. Rurie Suehiro	72
Mr. Seisuke Miyakawa	71
Mr. Juichi Yamamoto	67
Mrs. Shige Takano	54
Mrs. Betty Sumiko Doi	46
Mrs. Atsuko Saiki	45
Mrs. Jean Kubo	41
Mr. Jitsuo Nishida	38
Mrs. Fujiko Yoshida	33
Mr. Hisata Hachiya	32
Mr. Hiroshi Sakai	31
Mrs. Sekino Yamada	29
Mr. Nobuo Ebisuba	23
Mr. Zenjiro Yamashita	
Mrs. Hatsuno Yamashita	
Mrs. Kikuye Hirakawa	15
Mrs. Masayo Yano	14
Mr. Minoru Yamada	6
Mr. Tom Koga	6
Mr. Arthur Miyakawa	4
Mrs. Kuni Nishimura	3

MOURNER

Mrs. Matsuko Suehiro
Mr. Kelvin Miyakawa
Mr. Paul Hirakawa
Mr. David Doi
Mrs. Toshie Mori
Mr. George Kubo
Mrs. Ada Yamamoto
Ms. Gail Hachiya
Mr. Tom Sakai
Mrs. Julie Doi
Mrs. Sumiko Ebisuda
Mrs. Naomi Tamura
Mrs. Naomi Tamura
Mrs. Christine Yano-Goss
Mrs. Julie Doi
Mr. Curtis Koga
Mr. Kelvin Miyakawa
Mrs. Theo Kushi

2020 is the memorial year for those deceased in:

2019..... One Year Memorial	2008..... 13th Year Memorial	1988..... 33rd Year Memorial
2018..... 3rd Year Memorial	2004..... 17th Year Memorial	1971..... 50th Year Memorial
2014..... 7th Year Memorial	1996..... 25th Year Memorial	

Even though we have not been able to physically meet at church, the church still needs to be maintained - the monthly bills do not stop coming in - insurance and utilities being the main expenses. These costs would not be met without the generous donations given by our Sangha at special and monthly Shatsuki services.

Please continue to support the church by sending in your donations.

Thank you.





Condolences to the Family of Fred & Tomi Nagare

Fred and Tomi were the oldest members of Parlier Buddhist Temple at the time of their passing. Fred passed in May and Tomi passed in June. 2020 was their 100th birthday year. Both were lifelong members of the Parlier Temple and active supporters throughout the years. Fred & Tomi are survived by daughter Geraldine & husband and son Gordon & family. In lieu of koden to the family, remembrances may be made to Parlier Buddhist Church, P.O. Box 547, Parlier, 93648; UJCC Friends Care, 136 N. Villa, Clovis 93612; or St. Agnes Home Health & Hospice, 6729 N. Willow #103, Fresno, CA 93710.

gratitude

Although most of us are not going to the Temple because of “shelter in place”, activities to some extent does go on. Maintenance is an ongoing task which Dennis I. and his team do. Steve S. & Yuki M. were weeding across the street in the vacant lot one Sat. morning. Even though no one can attend, the Moris continue to perform the Monthly Shotsuki Services and special monthly services in the Hondo. We have dedicated members who check the Temple to make sure it is not lonely and in good condition.



Again, for the month of July, all church activities are suspended including no Obon dancing, no obento fundraiser, nothing; as we all continue to stay safe from the Coronavirus.

Scrip Program

Thank you to everyone who orders from our Scrip Program. Your orders make money for our Temple. Every order helps with our monthly church expenses especially during this time when we can't get out and attend church.