

Golden Chain



Southern Alameda County Buddhist Church
32975 Alvarado-Niles Road, Union City, CA 94587

Office: 510-471-2581
Email: sacbcoffice@gmail.com

Resident Minister: Rev. Dr. Takashi Miyaji
Mobile: 253.640.4224 / Email: gishin.tmiyaji@gmail.com

www.SACBC.org

AUGUST 2022

I am a link in the Buddha's golden chain of love that stretches around the world. I must keep my link bright and strong. I will try to be kind and gentle to every living thing and protect all who are weaker than myself. I will try to think pure and beautiful thoughts, to say pure and beautiful words, and to do pure and beautiful deeds, knowing that on what I do now depends not only my happiness or unhappiness, but also that of others. May every link in the Buddha's golden chain of love become bright and strong, and may we all attain perfect peace.

Hello SACBC sangha members,

I hope your summer season is going well and we are staying cool during this hot time of year. I am attaching an article that Rev. Dean Koyama of our neighboring temple Palo Alto Buddhist Temple has kindly written about the upcoming trip to Japan in 2023. This is very informative and I wanted to share it as this month's newsletter article. Gassho, Rev. Miyaji.



How joyous I am, my heart and mind being rooted in the Buddhaground of the universal Vow, and my thoughts and feelings flowing within the dharma-ocean, which is beyond comprehension! I am deeply aware of the Tathagata's (Buddha's) immense compassion, and I sincerely revere the benevolent care behind the masters' teachings activity. My joy grows ever fuller, my gratitude and indebtedness ever more compelling.

Shinran, Kyogyoshinsho, CWS p. 291

The summer is rapidly flying by and soon we will be observing another birthday of our country, the United States of America. Given with what has been happening in the news over the past year and a half, I am looking at this up-coming observance with a renewed sense of appreciation, awe and fear. The fear stems from what we have almost lost as a country: a government functioning under the principles of a Democratic Republic. And my sense of appreciation and awe is also based upon the awareness of just how fragile these principles are and just how close we came to losing it.

One of the guiding principles in establishing our nation is found in the First Amendment of our US Constitution:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof;...

A recent on-line post I saw summarizes this as:

1. *Religious freedom means you can practice any religion you want or none at all.*
2. *Religious freedom doesn't mean you can use your beliefs to dictate what others can and cannot do. Your religion guides you, not all of us. It is as simple as that.*

This is how supposedly our country was founded almost 250 years ago. And yet, there has been a constant attempt using the principles of one religion over others to dictate and establish laws that everyone must obey. One must be of a particular religious belief in order to be considered as a viable candidate for political office. And we still have certain extremist targeting people of a particular religion with threats and violence.

But this is not just a unique characteristic of our country.

In May of 2023, the many members of the Buddhist Churches of America and the Palo Alto Buddhist Temple have been invited to our mother temple, the Hompa Hongwanji in Kyoto, Japan to participate in a very special service. It will be the 850th Birthday celebration of Shinran Shonin (1173 – 1263) and to mark the 800-year history of the establishment of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism.

The basis for the 800-year history is said to be the completion of Shinran's *magnus opus*, his *Kyogyoshinsho* which lays the doctrinal foundation of his understanding of the Nembutsu teaching. The quote above is at the very end of this work and it clearly exhibits Shinran's feelings of joy and appreciation for encountering the truth of Namu Amida Butsu.

However, this 800-year history hasn't always been a bed of roses.

During the 16th Century on the island of Kyushu, the war lord (*sengoku daimyo*) Shimazu prohibited the practice of Jodo Shinshu. The Shimazu clan reigned over a large territory in southern Kyushu which covered the areas of Miyazaki and Kagoshima. Shimazu instituted the ban on Jodo Shinshu as a precaution due to the harsh and unjust treatment from the warrior and aristocratic castes imposing unfair labor regulations and taking away much of their wages and food supply from the menial laborers and farmers to satisfy their life of luxury. Because the Nembutsu teachings addressed suffering, inequality and rejected the caste system of Edo period Japan, it attracted many of these commoners who heard the teachings that, from the perspective of Amida Buddha- the Buddha of Infinite wisdom and Boundless Compassion, all people are equal. Thus from 1555 until the Meiji period in 1875, Nembutsu was prohibited in this area. However, it took until 1912 for the ban on Jodo Shinshu to be completely lifted.

So, for many, until as recently as a little more than just 100 years ago, people in Kyushu had to practice Nembutsu in secrecy. They held services in caves after midnight, and hid their Buddhist images of the 6-character word, Namu Amida Butsu and statues and pictures of Amida Buddha in support beams of their homes, in umbrellas and inside a secret compartment of cutting boards. This was how the Nembutsu tradition was handed down from one generation to the next for over 360 years during that ban.

One individual, Densuke is chronicled to have led services in caves, collected donations and secretly sent them to the Mother temple in Kyoto. But someone betrayed Densuke and told the authorities about his activities where he was subsequently captured, tortured and executed.

Densuke's last words were:

“Even as my life ends and disappears like the drops of dew on these execution ground, I have no doubt about my birth in the Pure Land of Amida Buddha.”

Imagine, during the 360 years, people like Densuke practiced their religion at the risk of their lives. Can we say that we have that same conviction today when we are free to be able to practice our religion without restrictions? Truly, their devotion and dedication to the Nembutsu religion is an inspiration for us all.

As I mentioned earlier, in May of 2023, there will be a major service commemorating Shinran's 850 birthday and 800-year history of Jodo Shinshu in Kyoto. In conjunction with those services, there will also be the 17th World Buddhist Women's Convention to be held in Kyoto as well. The Bay District Ministers led by Rev. Takashi Miyaji and assisted by Rev. Henry Adams and Rev. Koyama have put together a tour to Japan. In addition to the activities in Kyoto, the purpose of the tour is to visit the historical sites in Kyushu where these devout followers of the Nembutsu endured the 300-year prohibition of their way to practice their religion. Although the tour has the purpose of being educational and informative, it should also be mentioned that it will be pleasurable as well. There will be opportunities to visit shochu distilleries and beer breweries and a couple of places to take advantage of bathing in hot springs. Also, the many places that we will be staying are famous for the local cuisines. The dates for the tour are: May 6th through the 19th of 2023. Won't you join us? You will find more information elsewhere in the newsletter, or you can ask you minister for further details.

The history of *Kakure* (Hidden) Nembutsu made me think of: “What is our religious conviction? What is our Nembutsu path?”

Because of the compassionate and wise vows of Amida Buddha, the Nembutsu does not discriminate and calls to each one of us, anywhere and anytime. It reaches us here and now. Through this call, we can rest assured and be filled with joy for our eventual birth in the Pure Land and attainment of Buddhahood. It is this assurance that Shinran realized and said, “My joy grows ever fuller, my gratitude and indebtedness ever more compelling.” And that is why he spent the rest of his 90-year life some 800 years ago dedicated to helping others realize this truth of Nembutsu so that the people of today may also walk upon a path of life not hindered by the various obstructions that will undoubtedly be encountered in our lives.

Gassho,
Rev. Dean Koyama

SACBC の日本語のメンバーの皆様へ、

来月から日本語の法話を続けさせていただきたいと思います。ご了承ありがとうございます。
合掌。宮地 崇

1. My Personal Podcast Covering Jodo Shinshu Buddhism

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/no-doubt-a-shin-buddhist-approach/id1511351502>

2. Our Weekly Sunday Services Can Be Found Here:

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/shin-buddhist-sangha-services/id1517181914>



Services and Observances for August 2022

Friday, August 5, 2022
Hiroshima Bomb Memorial Observance
4:15 P.M. (PDT)

On August 6th, 1945 at 8:15 AM (JST), the atomic bomb on Hiroshima city was dropped killing initially 140,000 people and affecting countless more lives. Sensei will conduct a brief service and ring the *kansho* in our reflection of hope for world peace.

Saturday, August 6, 2022 Obon Cemetery Services were held on July 30 due to a scheduling conflict.

August 7, 2022 – July and August Shotsuki Hoyo
10 A.M.

At this monthly memorial service, we will honor those loved ones who passed away in the months of July and August.

Rev. Dr. Takashi Miyaji will officiate this hybrid service

Monday, August 8, 2022
Nagasaki Bomb Memorial Observance
7:02 P.M. (PDT)

On August 9th, 1945 at 11:02 AM (JST), the atomic bomb on Nagasaki city was dropped killing initially 70,000 people and affecting countless more lives. Sensei will conduct a brief service and ring the *kansho* in our reflection of hope for world peace.

August 14, 2022 – Hatsubon & Urabon-e Service
10 A.M.

At this memorial service, we will honor those loved ones who passed away since the Obon service in 2021.

Rev. Dr. Takashi Miyaji will officiate this hybrid service.

No Services on August 21 or 28, 2022

September Shotsuki will be on September 11, 2022

OBON Dance – In-Person August 13 @ SACBC
Bento orders due Monday, August 8, (510-471-2581). Pick up August 13 @ 5-7 P.M.
Dance at 7pm.





CBE/IBS/JSIO

SUMMER PACIFIC SEMINAR

REFLECTIONS ON THE PURELAND

AUGUST 5-6, 2022

IN PERSON & VIRTUAL

Jodo Shinshu Center, 2140 Durant Ave, Berkeley 94704



DR. AARON PROFFITT

Dr. Proffitt received his PhD in Buddhist Studies from the University of Michigan, and works as an Assistant Professor of Japanese Studies at the University at Albany-SUNY. Dr. Proffitt has published in English and Japanese on East Asian Buddhism, Pure Land Buddhism, Esoteric Buddhism, and the Lotus Sutra.



DR. MELISSA CURLEY

Dr. Curley is associate professor in the Department of the Comparative Studies at Ohio State University and the author of *Pure Land, Real World: Modern Buddhism, Japanese Leftists, and the Utopian Imagination*. Her current research focuses on the body in twentieth-century Japanese Buddhism.

Moderated by Reverend Dr. Takashi Miyaji

Institute of Buddhist Studies/Southern Alameda County Buddhist Temple

REGISTRATION & INFO: <https://tinyurl.com/PacificSeminar>

CBE/IBS/JSIO will be hosting the **Summer Pacific Seminar on August 5 & 6th**. This is our first hybrid seminar. and our speakers will be speaking in person from the JSC. Speakers: Dr. Melissa Curley and Dr. Aaron Proffitt with Rev. Takashi Miyaji as the moderator. People have been registering but are selecting to view the seminar online.

Please let your members know about the seminar

We are hoping some local members will attend in person on Saturday, Aug. 6th.

Tentative Schedule (all events are Pacific Time) Friday, August 5th

7:00 - 9:00 pm Informal gathering to meet the speakers and hear how they came to Buddhism

Saturday, August 6th

8:00 - 9:00am Breakfast

9:30 - 9:45am Service

10:00 -12:00pm First lecture - Dr. Melissa Curley & Dr. Aaron Proffitt (Live & Zoom)

12:00 - 1:00pm Lunch (sandwiches)

1:00 - 3:00pm Second lecture - Dr. Melissa Curley & Dr. Aaron Proffitt (Live & Zoom)

3:00 - 3:20pm Break

3:20 - 5:00pm Open Discussion & Closing Service

REGISTRATION & INFO: <https://tinyurl.com/PacificSeminar> Registration is free.



SACBC

Japanese Language School

**SEEKING JAPANESE LANGUAGE SCHOOL INSTRUCTORS
FOR K-12 STUDENTS**

School: SACBC Japanese Language School

Website: www.sacbc-jls.org

Location: Southern Alameda County Buddhist Temple
32975 Alvarado-Niles Road
Union City, CA 94587

Details:

- Paid position
- Training provided
- Prior teaching experience preferred but not required
- Classes are on Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and run from August through June

Contact: For more information email: info.sacbcjls@gmail.com

Southern Alameda County
Buddhist Church
Obon Festival



EVERYONE IS INVITED
FREE ADMISSION

Saturday August 13

Bento Sales: 5:00 pm–6:00 pm

Obon Dance: 7:00 pm

You're invited to the Southern Alameda County Buddhist Church's Buddhist Festival of Obon.

We will have Obon Dancing, Japanese Music with the San Jose Chidori Band, and Japanese Bento Boxes for sale.

Fun for everyone!

Colorful yukata-clad participants gather for the Obon dance – a memorial day for our departed loved ones, and a day to give thanks to them. With joy and gratitude, we honor and remember our deceased loved ones, whose very existence has made our own lives possible.

Obon Dance Practices (Optional)

7:30 pm on 8/1, 8/3, 8/4, 8/8, 8/9 & 8/11 in the Sangha Hall at SACBC. Dance Practices are OPTIONAL – you need not practice. You can just come & join our Obon Dance. EVERYONE is invited to DANCE!

Obon Service: Sunday, August 14, 2022 at 10:00am.

Rev. Dr. Takashi Miyaji will conduct an in-person and online service for all our departed loved ones. Those who lost their loved ones this past year are especially welcome. We will conduct a special service for them called **Hatsubon** (First Obon Service).



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SACBC OBON FESTIVAL AUGUST 13, 2022

FOOD ORDER FORM

Pre-Order Deadline – August 8, 2022

Pickup: August 13, Sangha Hall Lobby
Between 5:00-7:00pm. **NO** drive-thru; park and walk-in only.

Name: _____

Phone, email: _____

Item	Price	Qty	Subtotal
Teriyaki Chicken & Miso Salmon Bento **Tazukuri, Moyashi Goma-ae, Shira-ae, Sunomono, Takuwan	\$22.00		
Udon Soft Boiled Egg, Kamaboko and Green Onions	\$10.00		
Soda or water	\$2.00		
Total			

Pre-Order Deadline – August 8, 2022

Call 510-471-2581 or email SACBCoffice@gmail.com

Paypal or Venmo (sacbc.treasurer@gmail.com)

Credit card: VISA or MasterCard will be processed during pickup

***Tazukuri: roasted baby sardine fish with sweet soy glaze*

Moyashi Goma-ae: Bean sprout salad with sweet sesame seed dressing

Shira-ae: Mashed tofu salad with sesame miso dressing

Sunomono: Japanese cucumber Salad

Takuwan: Pickled daikon radish



WE WANT YOU!
As our next SACBC Treasurer for 2023!

Job Description:

- Bank deposits: organize & copy checks. (SACBC Office Manager can assist).
Review deposits and total checks by type of donation:
Membership, Memorial, Special service, etc. Input deposit information into SACBC Financial Reports.
- Payments: issue checks and make online payments. Update SACBC Financial Reports.
- Payroll: issue paychecks. Update SACBC Payroll Worksheets & SACBC Financial Reports.
- Quarterly: prepare & submit reports to EDD and IRS. Annual: send information to our Payroll Consultant to prepare W-2 and W-3.
- Property Tax: Annually file Property Tax Exemption.
- Insurance: Annual Workers Compensation Audit. Annually review coverage and consider whether limits should be increased.

Time required:

When deposits are processed, it takes 1 – 2 hours to do the various tasks depending upon how many checks are received. If there is no deposit, it takes 30 minutes or less to do the various tasks per week. Month-end tasks (payroll & preparing the next month's financial statements) takes about 1 ½ hours. Except for the copying of checks, it can all be done at home on your computer on your own timing.

Larry Gissible has been a tremendous asset to SACBC and given back for over a decade as our treasurer and wishes to transition his duties. Larry is willing to train!

Larry, John Arai, and myself, are forever grateful for a volunteer for the 2022 church fiscal year.

Please send your interest to SACBCOffice@gmail.com or reach out to John or myself directly.

Gassho,

John Arai, President

Kyle Yamasaki, Vice-President



AUGUST EVENTS

Aug. 7 – Sunday	Shotsuki Hoyo / Family Service
Aug. 13 – Saturday	Obon Festival
Aug. 14 – Sunday	Hatsubon and Urabon-e Service
Aug. 21 – Sunday	No Services
Aug. 28 – Sunday	No Services

ALL SUNDAY SERVICES START AT 10:00 AM IN-PERSON OR VIA ZOOM

Meeting ID: 818 7869 6300

Passcode: 549504