



August 2023

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.

Amida Buddha at Every Turn

As I sit here in my hotel room writing this article, I recall my short stay here in Japan. As chance would have it, this is my second time here in this beautiful country, the last time being in May, when a group of us went to the 850th and 800th Joint Celebration of Shinran Shonin's Birth and the Founding of the Jodo Shinshu tradition. This time, I am here to take my family back to America, who were here in Japan, to spend some time with extended family. In addition, we made our way through the country, visiting family and friends we hadn't seen since the pandemic began.



Every day seemed to have passed by in this short trip so quickly. The friends and family we saw along the way were short interactions, some longer than others, but nothing that lasted very long. Even my time in Kumamoto with my wife's family was for a few days, but even that seemed to have passed quickly. All along the way, I noticed one other thing—a statue of Amida Buddha, or what we reverentially call *gohonzon*. Every place we went along the way, through the karmic connection that I have with these places that I visited, there was the statue, the *gohonzon*. As I went to the morning 6 AM service at Nishi Hongwanji, there was Amida Buddha. I went to my cousin's temple; there was Amida Buddha. I passed by Higashi Hongwanji, went to several bookstores, and flipped through the pages of many books... even one of the main train stations had a picture of Amida Buddha there. All along the way, through all the places that I saw, all of the places that I ate and enjoyed a meal, all of the friends and family that I saw, all of the leisure places that I went, in every instance I was constantly reminded that Amida Buddha was there and not far away.

This life is short; it passes by in a blink of an eye. Through this short time, we are always in a rush wanting to go from one place to the next, seeing the different sites and people, eating the local foods, and relaxing in the various areas we happen to go. We see old friends, perhaps meet new ones, forge new relationships, end old ones, experience hardships, and enjoy certain fortuitous life episodes. It all happens so quickly that we hardly have time to process these different experiences. And then it ends. What was this all for?

Just remember, in every turn you make, every life decision, every meal you eat, every relationship you start, and every one that ends, Amida Buddha is there with you. I had the wonderful karmic connection to be able to, quite literally, have a statue of Amida Buddha to remind me of this, which is something I feel that I particularly need, knowing what kind of person I am.

Truth is always here to embrace us. Just as the night stars that are always there. Based on my perspective of where I am on this Earth I may or may not see them. However, that does not mean they are not there. I am just not completely understanding the situation. Amida Buddha is always with you wherever you may go, whatever you may do. This is not a statement meant to scare or shame you somehow. Instead, it is a statement to share with you that you are embraced by the light and warmth of truth whether you realize that or not. Gassho.

いつでも、どこでも、そこに阿弥陀様

今年には日本に行くチャンスが2度ありました。一回目は2ヶ月前、親鸞聖人降誕会の

850周年そして立教開宗の800周年を迎え、団体参拝で日本に行きました。2回目は、家族が1ヶ月前から里帰りをしていましたので、一週間ほど前に迎えにいきました。2回目の時は九州から関東に向かい、友人や親戚に会いに行きました。パンデミック以来会っていなかったもので、4年ぶりの日本でした。

今度の旅行では、毎日があっという間に過ぎていきました。友人や家族との話しは少しできましたが、すぐに時間が過ぎ、何か物足りないような気がしました。ちょうど、誰かが私たちの会話の時間を測っていて、はい、次の予定ですと区切られた移動の様でした。

しかし不思議なことがありました。どこへ行っても阿弥陀如来像か名号が近くにあったのです。妻の実家はお寺でありまして、本堂には当然ご本尊が安置されています。親戚の家、二軒に行きましたが、これらの家もお寺ですので、阿弥陀如来像がありました。京都駅や東京駅に行ってもそこに阿弥陀如来像の写真が貼ってありました。西本願寺の朝のお参りにも阿弥陀様はいてくださいますし、東本願寺を訪れても当然阿弥陀如来像にお目にかかります。熊本から博多、京都から三重県、そして東京へ行って来ましたが、どこへ行ってもその近くに阿弥陀如来のご本尊にお会いしたのです。これは私にとってのご縁ですけれども、ここに何か大きなメッセージがあるのではないかと感じました。それは、いつでも、どこでも、阿弥陀如来様が私と一緒におられるということです。

この人生はあっという間に過ぎていきます。一つの場所から次の場所へとたんとんと過ぎて行きます。あれがしたいこれがしたい、あれが食べたい、これが食べたい、あれが見たいこれが見たいなどと忙しく人生を歩みます。時には新しい友人や知り合いができ、時には昔からのご縁のあった人たちとの関係が終わったりします。いいことも経験しながらも、悪ことももちろん経験していきます。こういう経験が積み重なっていき、人生が過ぎていきます。そしてついにこの人生が終わってしまいます。そこで思うのは、この人生は何のためのものだったのかと。

はそこにおられます。私は、日本に行って感じたことはそのことでした。どこへ行っても、阿弥陀如来様の銅像があって本当にありがたいご縁に出会えた感じがしました。今回の旅はまるで人生のショート体験みたいなものでした。

真実の世界は私と一緒にいつもあります。というよりも、私が真実の世界に抱かれていますのですが、それに気づいていないだけです。夜の星は、私が立っている位置によって観えるか観えないかのどちらかと同じように、真実の世界に抱かれているかどうかは、この私がそれに気づいているかどうかの問題です。この自分は決して一人ではないのです。常に阿弥陀如来様が私と一緒にいてくださるのです。合掌。

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>

BWA NEWS

Please join us at our next BWA meeting on September 10th, at 9:00am before service. Come with ideas about an activity we can do before the end of the year; cooking, crafting, community involvement, etc.



Services and Observances for August 2023

Saturday, August 5, 2023 Obon Cemetery Services (see below)

Saturday, August 5, 2023

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.

August 6, 2023 - Shotsuki Hoyo

10 A.M.

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

Rev. Dr. Takashi Miyaji will officiate this hybrid service

Tuesday, August 8, 2023

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.

Saturday, August 12, 2023 – Obon Dance

Food at 5 P.M. Dancing at 7 P.M.

August 13, 2023 – Hatsubon & Urabon-e Service

10 A.M.

We will honor those loved ones who passed away since the Obon service in 2022. Rev. Dr. Takashi Miyaji will officiate this hybrid service.

August 20, 2023 – No Service

— Correction! — ~~Rev. Dr. Takashi Miyaji will officiate this hybrid service.~~

No Service on August 27, 2023

September Shotsuki will be on September 10, 2023

OBON Cemetery Visitations

Saturday, Aug. 5, 2023



9:00 AM	Mt. Eden Cemetery, Hayward
9:40 AM	Lone Tree Cemetery, Hayward
10:20 AM	Chapel of the Chimes, Hayward (Courage Mausoleum)
11:30 AM	Irvington Cemetery, Fremont
12:15 PM	Cedar Lawn Memorial Park, Fremont
1:15 PM	Oakhill Cemetery, San Jose

AUGUST 2023

SACBC ACTIVITIES CALENDAR (subject to change)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 7:30pm Obon dance practice 6:30 pm Scouts	2 7pm Taiko	3 7:30pm Obon dance practice 7pm Kendo	4	5 Obon Cemetery visitation (see Service page of GC)
6 10 am Shotsuki Hoyo	7 8:30am Qi-gong class 7pm Kendo	8 7:02 pm Nagasaki Mem'l 7:30pm Obon dance practice	9 7pm Taiko	10 7:30pm Obon dance practice 7pm Kendo	11	12 5pm- Food 7pm Obon Dance
13 10 am Hatsubon & Urabon-e service	14 8:30am Qi-gong class 7pm Kendo	15 6:30 pm Scouts	16 7pm Taiko	17 7pm Kendo	18	19
20 10 am No Service	21 8:30am Qi-gong class (Free) 7pm Kendo	22 6:30pm Scouts	23 7pm Taiko	24 7pm Kendo	25	26
27 10 am No Service	28 8:30am Qi-gong class (Free) 7pm Kendo	29 6:30pm Scouts	30 7pm Taiko	31 7pm Kendo		

Southern Alameda County Buddhist Church

Annual Obon Festival

EVERYONE IS INVITED • FREE ADMISSION

Saturday August 12, 2023

Food Sales: 5pm • Obon Dance: 7pm

You're invited to the Southern Alameda County Buddhist Church's Buddhist Festival of Obon. We will have Buddhist Dancing, Japanese Music with the San Jose Chidori Band, and Japanese Foods.

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, 8/8, & 8/10 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 13, 2023 at 10:00am. SACBC will conduct its Annual Buddhist Obon Spiritual 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*).



Southern Alameda Co. Buddhist Church

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510-471-2581 www.SACBC.org

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AUGUST EVENTS

5th—SAT	OBON CEMETERY VISITATION
6th—SUN	SHOTSUKI HOYO
8th—TUES	NAGASAKI BOMB MEMORIAL OBSERVANCE 7:02pm
12th—SAT	OBON FESTIVAL— Food Sales at 5pm • Dancing at 7pm
13th—SUN	HATSUBON & URABON-e SERVICE
20th—SUN	NO SERVICE
27th—SUN	NO SERVICE

SUNDAY SERVICES START AT 10:00 AM
 Zoom Meeting ID: 818 7869 6300
 PASSCODE: 549504