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## DIRECTORY OF OFFICERS

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Ministers	Rinban Kakei Nakagawa	970-7652
	Rev. Kaz Nakata	442-4054
President	Dennis Ikuta	906-4659
Vice President	Rhea Ikemiya	
Co-Secretaries	Joyce Sasai	305-0109
	Lynne Yoshimoto	305-0535
Treasurer	Glenn Yoshimoto	859-0494
Maintenance	Dennis Ikuta	906-4659
	Kaye Kozuki	646-2538
BWA President	Lynne Yoshimoto	
Newsletter Editors	Curtis Koga	618-1528
	Sho Higuchi	(310)493-4838
Religious Chairs	Toshie Mori	638-8614
	Yuki Mori	
Webmaster	Glenn Nakamichi	
	<a href="http://www.bcparliar.org">www.bcparliar.org</a>	

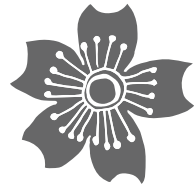
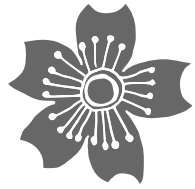


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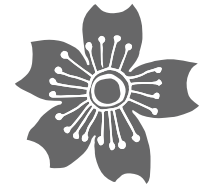
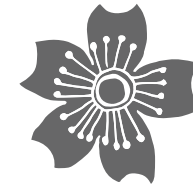
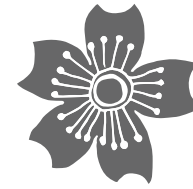
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BUDDHIST CHURCH OF PARIER

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PERMIT #23



# March



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> PBWA Yard Sale @ 8:00 a.m.
<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> Buddhism 101 Intro to Buddhism Rev. Kaz @ 7:00 via Zoom	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> Buddhism 201A Basic Japanese Rev. Midori @ 7:00 p.m. via Zoom	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> Pullen Cleaning Service @ 8:00 a.m.
<b>10</b> PBWA hosting Game Day from 1:00-3:00 p.m.	<b>11</b> Parlier BC Board Meeting 7:00pm	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> Middle & High School Buddhist Study Class Rev Kaz via Zoom @ 7:00 p.m.	<b>16</b>
<b>17</b> CCBWL Conference in Reedley w/ Rev. Patti Oshita @ 8:30 a.m.	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> Basic Japanese - Rev. Midori @ 7:00 p.m. via Zoom	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> Clean-up Group 3 @ 8:30 a.m.
<b>24</b> Spring Ohigan @ 10:00 a.m.	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>31</b>	<b>1</b>					

# What is a Betsuin?

Hello to all Central California Nishi Hongwanji Sangha friends! How did you spend the rainy month of February? I hope that no one has experienced flood or mudslides during the series of rainstorms.

We are so fortunate to welcome Rev. Mieko Majima, assigned to Central California on February 1st. As she begins her first year in this unique CC Hub system, Rinban Nakagawa and I discussed how we can make her transition from Hawaii to Central Cal as smooth as possible without creating heavy burdens on her shoulder. She has eased into her first year by taking the lead of the Reedley and Parlier temples because she lives in Reedley's parsonage, while I take the lead for Hanford, Fresno, and Visalia. Our BCA Bishop, Rev. Marvin Harada graciously announced that as of January 31st, the Fowler Buddhist Church will be under his supervision, assisted by Rev. Brian Nagata.

I was appointed to Rinban of the Fresno Betsuin Buddhist Temple, effective March 1st. Many changes are happening here in Central California. But no Shinpai (don't worry)! Rev. Majima and I will continue our Jodo Shinshu ministry and will provide the teaching of harmony and equanimity. So please continue to support us.

In the February issue of the newsletter, I introduced what a Rinban is, and I hope you now have a better understanding. I also promised that I will write about what is Betsuin in this issue with Kanamochi, my buddy.

'Hi Kanamochi, where are you?'

'I am here, Rev. Kaz. Can you tell me what a

Betsuin is?'

'Ok, Kanamochi. After our founder Shinran Shonin died, the Jodo Shinshu community grew so their headquarters was established at Shinran Shonin's graveyard and named it [(Otani) Hongwanji], to create a place for gathering.'

"Wow, I did not know that the original mother temple was a graveyard."

'Yes, but after they settled the graveyard as (Otani) Hongwanji, they built or relocated their headquarters several times. For example, the 5th Hongwanji head minister [Monshu]' built the Zuisen-ji Temple in northeast of Japan/Hokuriku region, and later that temple became a Betsuin.'

"Wait, Rev. Kaz. Why did he build the temple although there was Hongwanji??"

'Good question, Kanamochi. "Betsuin" originally means a temple controlled by the Hongwanji, or by Monshu. This means that the Monshu directly serves these temples for a number of reasons. The 5th Monshu built the temple because he may have had the need for the headquarters to be near his propagation area, and it was far from the (Otani) Hongwanji in Kyoto.'

"So, the Hongwanji was originally located in Kyoto."

'Correct, Kanamochi, although the location is different from the current location. The headquarters was forced to relocate to another location in the mid-15th Century, due to arson of

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## MESSAGE FROM REV. KAZ NAKATA

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Tendai Sangha. The 8th Monshu, Rennyō Shōnin moved the Hongwanji to Yoshizaki.’

“Rev. Kaz! I know him! His picture is enshrined in the altar, right? I learned it at my Dharma School!”

‘Yes, he is one of famous Monshu in Hongwanji history. In the 18th century, he moved from Yoshizaki, and the Yoshizaki temple became a Betsuin. It is one of the ways a temple will be called Betsuin.’

“I see, there are several ways a temple will be called Betsuin.”

‘Yes, Kanamochi. Rennyō Shōnin relocated from Yoshizaki to Yamashina and established (Yamashina) Hongwanji. Later, it became Yamashina Betsuin in the 18th Century.’

“Wow, Rennyō Shōnin build two Hongwanji(s)??”

‘Well, he built another Hongwanji two years before his passing. It is called (Osaka) Hongwanji but it no longer exists nor was it converted to a Betsuin. The land was taken over by a Japanese Samurai clan, Toyotomi family. The temple was converted to a castle. Nowadays the castle is known as the Osaka Castle.’

“I know the Osaka Castle. It is a very beautiful building. I did not know that there was a headquarter of the Hongwanji.”

‘Last November, I had a chance to visit the castle, and took a picture of the stone monument which indicated the original location of the Osaka (Ishiyama) Hongwanji. Later, Hongwanji established many Betsuin(s) in various prefectures of Japan, making them a regional hub temple.’

“I see. How about Betsuin(s) in the United States?”

‘That is a good question. In our country, we have

5 Betsuin(s). They started as a regular temple, and later Hongwanji granted Betsuin status to these temples. Fresno Betsuin was established in 1901 and they received their Betsuin status in 1930s. Hongwanji wished Fresno sangha members will support their Rinban to make their Betsuin function as the regional hub temple.’

“On March 1st, I was officially appointed as a Rinban of Fresno Betsuin Buddhist Temple. I will continue working as a Jodo Shinshu minister of the CC hub system which means I will continue providing my ministerial support to all CC temples and churches while Rinban.”

‘Oh, you wear two hats in your ministerial duty.’

“Yes, that is why I need everyone’s help and support. As long as I can, I will try my best and work hard for everyone, for all CC temples and Sanghas. I am happy to work for YOU.” Gassho







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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The Buddhist Church of Parlier would like to extend our appreciation to the following for their generous donations

### TEMPLE

Yorizane & Koga Families	In memory of Akiko Yorizane
David & Aya Windle	50th year memorial for Nobuichi Kimura
Shiz & Keiko Kimura	50th year memorial for Nobuichi Kimura
Laurence & Sharon Kimura	50th year memorial for Nobuichi Kimura
Glenn & Lynne Yoshimoto	13th year memorial for Irene Yoshimoto
Asher Family	1st year memorial for Jodie Asher
Sandy Ohara & Roland Ohara	1st year memorial for Jodie Asher
Tad Kozuki	Monthly memorial for Hisaye Kozuki
Stanley Kobashi	Monthly memorial for Gerald Kobashi
Kanemoto Family	Monthly memorial for Chiyosuke Yoshizaki
Glenn & Cyndy Tokubo	Monthly memorial for Orio Yamanaka
Ada Yamamoto	Monthly memorial for Yaichi & Edna Nishida
David & Stephani Ogami	Monthly memorial for Terry Ogami
Matsuko Suehiro & Lloyd Suehiro	Nirvana Day
Randall Asher	Nirvana Day
Fusa Ishimaru & Family	Nirvana Day
Curtis & Cheryl Koga	Use of social hall
Donations	Sangha Gathering

### BWA DONATIONS

Shiz Kimura	In honor of Keiko's 88th Birthday
Yorizane & Koga families	In memory of Akiko Yorizane

### MEMBERSHIP DUES:

Dennis & Denice Ikuta	Nob Takasaki	Setsuko Yotori
Glenn Nakamichi	Clyde Yoshikawa	

### DONATIONS for MONTHLY SHOTSUKIS:

Varlene Kimura	Glenn Nakamichi
Curtis & Cheryl Koga	Steven & Joyce Sasai
Gary & Kaye Kozuki	Setsuko Yotori

### HO-ONKO DONATIONS:

Jan Koga

### NIRVANA DAY DONATIONS:

Tats & Andrea Arakawa	Tad Kozuki
Flo Doi	Arthur Mihara & Barbara Goto
Julie Doi	Lynn Sasai
Gail Hachiya	Tom Wilson & Nancy Doi
Dennis & Denice Ikuta	Anonymous (cash)

### END OF YEAR DONATIONS:

Tad Kozuki

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# BOARD MEETING MINUTES FOR FEB 2024 - DRAFT

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## Buddhist Church of Parlier

February Board Meeting Minutes – DRAFT

February 12, 2024 via Zoom – 7:00 pm

- I. Call to order by President Denny at 7:07 pm. Gassho led by Rev Kaz.
- II. Quorum was established. Those in attendance: Tats Arakawa, Denny Ikuta, Curtis & Cheryl Koga, Kaye Kozuki, Yuki & Toshie Mori, Rev Kaz, Steve & Joyce Sasai, Janette Wong-Sing, Glenn & Lynne Yoshimoto.
- III. Minutes – Minutes reviewed. Correction: Call to order at 7:06 **pm** instead of 7:06 **am**. It was moved by Curtis and seconded by Kaye to accept the minutes as corrected. Motion carried.
- IV. Treasurer’s Report – Glenn reported on January finances. It was moved by Joyce and seconded by Cheryl to accept the treasurer’s report as presented. Motion carried.
- V. Minister’s Report – Rev Kaz reported on activities – Rev Mieko Majima of Kapaa Hongwanji is assigned to CC Hub system as of February 1, 2024.  
Arthur Ando of Kingsburg plans to attend BCA MAP at JSC in March.  
CC Educational Programs: February 15 – CCBEC MAP by Rev Sugahara of Sacramento;  
February 27 – CCBEC MAP by Rev Wondra of OCBC (Shinran Shonin 1);  
March 4 – Rev Kaz (Buddhism 101); March 1, 8, 15, 22 – Rev Kaz (Youth Buddhist Education). All programs via Zoom.  
Outreach – February 15 – Rev Kaz (Mahayana Bodhi Day Service hosted by George Washington University; February 22 – Rev Kaz (Interfaith Tabling Event at Merced College); March 28 – Rev Kaz (Interfaith Crisis Recovery & Hope at Merced College).  
BCA Activities – February 22-25 – BCA National Council Meeting in Sacramento.  
Revs Kaz and Majima will attend.
- VI. Committee Reports
  - A. Maintenance/Security – There are weeds growing on the lawn through the artificial turf. Gardener said he would work on spraying. Orkin has inspected for termites – all good.
  - B. BWA – Lynne reported Group 2 will clean on Saturday, February 24. Yard sale drop off is Sunday, February 25 from noon to 3:00 pm. Yard sale will be Saturday, March 2, from 8:00 am to 11:00 am. Sunday, March 10, Denise and Barb are planning a game day with snacks from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm. Twelve people will attend CCBWL conference in Reedley March 17.  
Directory is complete and ready to distribute.
  - C. Finance – see ew Business – D.
  - D. CCMAC – Email report by Donald. Steve also reported on last meeting.
  - E. CCDC – Janette reported the next meeting will be March 9. Meetings may begin to rotate amongst the temples.

It was moved by Joyce and seconded by Toshie to accept committee reports. Motion carried.

- VII. Old Buinesss
  - A. Ho-Onko/January Shotsuki Services was Sunday, January 28. Guest speaker was Bishop Harada. No lodging expenses. Potato bar was served.
  - B. Medaka no Gakko will meet Sunday, February 25, at 1:30 pm. They will be in the meeting room in the back as there will be yard sale drop off. This year’s Gakko dates: June 14 for cleaning, June 17 to 28 for classes (plus clean up the last day). Undokai will be June 22.

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## BOARD MEETING MINUTES FOR FEB 2024 - DRAFT

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- C. BCA calendar had no Parlier pictures.
  - D. Cleaning service – Pullen Cleaning Service given key and code to enter building to clean.
  - E. Other Old Business - none
- VIII. New Business
- A. Akiko Yorizane Memorial Service – Saturday, February 17, from 1:00 pm. Cheryl reported Family will clean after service.
  - B. Keiro Kai/Nirvana Day/ February Shotsuki Services – Sunday, February 18, from 10:00 am. Honor 3 BWA ladies who turn 88, bid farewell to Rev. Nakagawa (retirement), and welcome to Rev. Majima. Lunches will be from Bento2Go in Kingsburg.
  - C. BCA National Council Meeting – February 23 – 25, 2024, in Sacramento. Denny is attending with proxies from Parlier, Visalia, and Rinban Nakagawa.
  - D. Finance Committee meeting – Committee met Monday, February 5, at the church and reviewed financial situation.
  - E. Sangha Gathering has been suspended for now.
  - F. Informal discussion group gatherings? Denny will host a few people to get together to this month. Informal setting. About half dozen people will attend Wednesday, February 28, from 7:00 pm, at the Ikutas. Possibly meet monthly.
  - G. Service schedule for 2024 has been set with chairpeople.
  - H. Other new business – Address listing for people collected any dues will be church PO Box.
- IX. Correspondence received from the Moris for oseibo gifts. Debbie Takata (May Takata's daughter-in-law) sent a thank you for food brought to May T in Visalia.
- X. Adjournment – It was moved by Joyce and seconded by Curtis to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 pm. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.

Next BCP Board Meeting – Monday, March 11, 2024, 7:00 pm – via Zoom

PARLIER BUDDHIST CHURCH



Spring Ohigan & March Shotsuki

Our Spring Ohigan/March Shotsuki Will be held on March 24, 2024 at 10am. Our new Reverend Mieko Majima will be officiating with the help of the Moris. A luncheon after the service will be headed by Rhea I. This will be Rev Majima's first Parlier Temple service .



BWA Conference 2024

The 2024 BWA Conference will be held on March 17 in Reedley. *Patti Oshita*, who is a very interesting presenter will be the guest speaker. 9 members and 2 spouses will be attending from Parlier.

BWA Yard Sale March 3



BWA will be having a yard sale on March 3 from 8:00a - 11a. Please help!! We need pick up trucks to take left over items to a Thrift store after the sale.

Help Needed!!

Someone is needed to write this page for the monthly newsletter. Please contact Kaye.



Save this date for the annual Church picnic

**BURGERS**



**HOT DOGS**

April 28, 2024



Don't forget to Spring Forward

Sunday, March 12, 2023  
Move your clocks ahead one hour





Join us for a

# Game Day

**Board games, card games, etc.**

at the Buddhist Church of Parlier  
Social Hall

**Sunday, March 10**

**1:00–3:00 pm**

Bring an appetizer to share

Bring a game to share or play one of ours

For more information, contact:

Denise (559) 246-6847, [denisegk52@gmail.com](mailto:denisegk52@gmail.com)

Barbara (559) 260-9894, [barbgoto@gmail.com](mailto:barbgoto@gmail.com)



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## PARLIER BUDDHIST CHURCH

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### This Was a Fun Day!

On Saturday, Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup>, members of the BWA and some spouses had a great time at Eagle Mountain Casino in Porterville. Cheryl & Curtis, Toshie & Yuki, Janette & Darryl, Karen & Kristen, Charlene & Kelvin, Carol, Gail H., Kaye, Barb, Julie and Denise enjoyed great company and meals. All enjoyed a BWA gathering that didn't require cooking and cleaning!! Now we are looking forward to Game Day on Sunday, Mar. 10<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 - 3:00 pm. Hope to see you all then!



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# PARLIER BUDDHIST CHURCH

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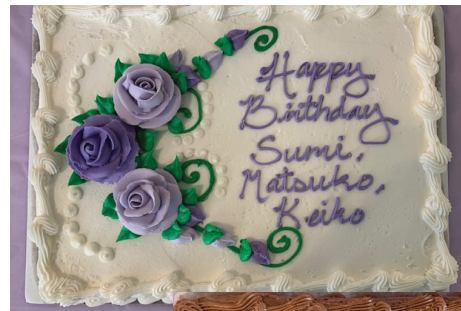




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# PARLIER BUDDHIST CHURCH

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# PARLIER BUDDHIST CHURCH

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MONTHLY MEMORIAL SERVICE

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March Shotsuki

**DECEASED**

Mr. Matsujoro Okada	83
Mrs. Satsu Yamamoto	83
Mr. Sosuke Yamamoto	82
Mr. Ryo Furumoto	73
Mr. Shiemi Fujii	60
Mr. Takejiro Yagi	56
Mr. Akira Chiamori	55
Mr. Masaki Ohara	53
Mrs. Suye Sunada	53
Mrs. Kiyoko Matsushima	53
Mrs. Shizuko Nagare	41
Mrs. Hisako Okino	32
Mr. Isaburo Izumo	
Mr. Masayuki Ohara	29
Mr. Katsuso Arifuku	29
Mr. Fred Fumio Kusunoki	22
Mr. Henry Tanouye	20
Mrs. Aiko Tanouye	20
Mr. Ban Yorizane	19
Mr. Tom Kobashi	18
Ms. Kathleen Reiko Tanouye	11
Mrs. Takako Kanemoto	6
Mrs. Kimiyo Doi	5
Mrs. Josie Tsuboi	4
Mr. Hajime Yonemitsu	4

**MOURNER**

Ms. Ellen Okada
Mr. Kelvin Miyakawa
Mr. Kelvin Miyakawa
Mrs. Donna Chiamori
Miss Gail Hachiya
Mrs. Hiroko Kimoto
Mrs. Gerry Kawamura
Mr. Neil Okino
Miss Gail Hachiya
Mrs. Denise Kusunoki
Mrs. Janice Kebo
Mrs. Lee Osaki
Mrs. Lee Osaki
Mrs. Cheryl Koga
Mr. Stan Kobashi
Mrs. Lee Osaki
Mr. Ken Kanemoto
Mrs. Judy Inzerella
Mrs. Julie Doi
Mrs. Kaye Kozuki
Ms Mutsuko Yonemitsu

2024 is the memorial year for those deceased in:

2023..... One Year Memorial	2012..... 13th Year Memorial	1992..... 33rd Year Memorial
2022..... 3rd Year Memorial	2008..... 17th Year Memorial	1975..... 50th Year Memorial
2018..... 7th Year Memorial	2000..... 25th Year Memorial	

# 2024 February CCBMA Ministers' Report

## 1. Central Cal Ministerial Update.

Rev. Mieko Majima of Kapaa Hongwanji is assigned to the CC Hub system on Feb 1, 2024.

Rev. Marvin Harada, the Bishop of the BCA assigned himself to the Folwer Buddhist Church, effective January 31, 2024, assisted by Rev. Brian Nagata.

## 2. Central Cal MAP Update

Arthur Ando plans to attend the BCA Ministers' Assistant Program, held at Jodo Shinshu Center in March.

## 3. CC Educational program

2/15 7pm CCBEC MAP Zoom Seminar by Rinban Yuki Sugahara of Sacramento

2/27 7pm CCBEC MAP Zoom Seminar "Shinran Shonin (1) by Rev. Dr. Mutsumi Wondra of OCBC

3/4 Buddhism 101 by Rev. Kaz

3/1, 3/8, 3/15, 3/22 Youth Buddhist Education by Rev. Kaz

## 4. Outreach activities

2/15 3pm Mahayana Bodhi day Service @ Zoom, hosted by George Washington University – Rev. Kaz

2/22 10am Interfaith Tabling Event @ Merced College – Rev. Kaz

3/28 1pm Interfaith Crisis Recovery & Hope - Addiction and Recovery with Central Valley Opioid Safety Coalition @ Merced College – Rev. Kaz

## 5. BCA Activities

2/22-25 BCA National Meeting @ Sacramento Betsuin – Rev. Kaz and Rev. Majima

Gassho, Rev. Kaz Nakata, CC Kyokucho

1

Dear members,

I hope this message finds you in good health and high spirits. As the new minister in our community, I am filled with gratitude and excitement to be part of this vibrant neighborhood. My journey has brought me here with a heart open to learn, share, and grow alongside each of you.

Buddhism teaches us the value of connection, compassion, and mindfulness. These principles guide me not only in my spiritual path but also in the way I hope to engage with all of you. My door is always open to those who seek peace, understanding, or simply a conversation over a cup of tea.

In the coming weeks, I look forward to meeting many of you, whether it be during community events, through visits to our local churches, or during casual encounters around the neighborhood. I am here to serve, to listen, and to contribute to the wellbeing of our community.

Let us embrace the opportunities to learn from one another, to build bridges of understanding, and to cultivate a community of kindness and mutual respect. Together, we can create an environment where every individual feel valued and connected.

Thank you for welcoming me into your lives. I am eager to embark on this journey with you, filled with hope for the many moments of joy, reflection, and togetherness we will share.

In gassho,

Mieko Majima  
Associate Minister  
Central California



Fresno Betsuin  
“Camping in the Sierras”  
**Steak Dinner**

**Saturday – May 11, 2024**

**\$25.00 Eat-In or Take-Out**

**4:00 - 7:00 pm**

Fresno Betsuin Family Dharma Center

Tickets can be purchased from:

Campers

Betsuin Office – 559-442-4054

Jenny Kubo – jkubo@comcast.net

Or Send in Order Form Below

**Steak Dinner Order Form – Return with Check by 4/27/2024**

Make Checks Payable to: Fresno Buddhist Temple

In memo line please note: Camping in the Sierras

Mail to: Jenny Kubo 10544 N Old Course Dr, Fresno, CA 93730

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Dinner Tickets \_\_\_\_\_ x \$25 = \_\_\_\_\_

Donation = \_\_\_\_\_

Total Enclosed = \_\_\_\_\_

Eat In \_\_\_\_\_ Take Out \_\_\_\_\_



Thank you for your support of the campers!

Geppo





You are cordially invited to a  
Double Celebration!

RETIREMENT OF REV. KAKEI & REV. MIDORI NAKAGAWA  
AND  
ACCESSION TO RINBAN OF REV. KAZUAKI NAKATA


Please join us on  
SUNDAY, MARCH 31, 2024  
10:00 A.M.

Fresno Betsuin Buddhist Temple Hondo  
2690 E. Alluvial Ave., Fresno 93720

Farewell Address by Rev. Kakei & Rev. Midori Nakagawa  
Dharma Message by newly appointed Rinban, Rev. Kazuaki Nakata

Immediately following the Dharma Service, please  
“Join Us for a Potluck” in the Family Dharma Center  
(Please bring any dish you wish to share!)





# You can save lives!

**SPONSORED BY**  
**THE FRESNO BUDDHIST CHURCH**

**WHEN?**  
**SATURDAY, MARCH 9, 2024**  
**8:30AM – NOON**

**WHERE?**  
**Family Dharma Center**  
**2690 E Alluvial Ave., Fresno 93720**

**APPOINTMENTS ENCOURAGED!**  
 To sign up, contact:  
 Lee Osaki (559) 442-4054  
[losaki@fresnobuddhisttemple.org](mailto:losaki@fresnobuddhisttemple.org)  
 or  
 Hunter Arakawa (559) 269-2925  
[hharla40@gmail.com](mailto:hharla40@gmail.com)

**DID YOU KNOW? IF YOU DONATE JUST ONE PINT OF BLOOD, YOU CAN SAVE UP TO 3 LIVES!**  
**SIGN UP NOW AND PLEASE ENCOURAGE OTHERS!**

FUNDRAISER FOR  
**The Fresno Buddhist Church**

**VIRTUAL COMMUNITY**  
 FUNDRAISERS



- **When**  
**Friday, March 22, 2024**  
 Place your order for pickup or delivery on Friday, March 22!
- **Where**  
**Available at Panda Express locations nationwide**  
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**Online orders only**  
 Apply code **921649** in the Fundraiser Code box during online checkout at [www.pandaexpress.com](http://www.pandaexpress.com) or via App

28% of sales will be donated to: The Fresno Buddhist Church

## Title: The Virtue of Gratitude: Reflections on Buddha's Teachings

As I begin my journey with you in this beautiful neighborhood, I am filled with a deep sense of gratitude. Gratitude not only for the warm welcome I have received but also for the opportunity to share and grow together in Dharma. Today, I wish to reflect on the virtue of gratitude, a fundamental aspect of our practice, as taught by the Buddha.

The Buddha once said, "Let us rise up and be thankful, for if we didn't learn a lot today, at least we learned a little, and if we didn't learn a little, at least we didn't get sick, and if we got sick, at least we didn't die; so, let us all be thankful." This profound teaching reminds us of the importance of gratitude in our daily lives. It teaches us to find something to be thankful for, even in our most challenging moments.

Gratitude opens our hearts to the abundance of life. It shifts our focus from what we lack to the countless blessings we receive each day – the air we breathe, the community we are part of, the teachings we explore, and the very presence of each moment. By cultivating a grateful heart, we also cultivate a heart of contentment, joy, and peace.

In our practice, gratitude serves as a foundation for developing other qualities such as generosity, compassion, and loving-kindness. When we are grateful, we are more likely to share what we have, to empathize with others, and to act with kindness. Gratitude strengthens our connections with others, fostering a sense of interdependence and mutual support.

Moreover, gratitude is a powerful antidote to negative emotions. It helps us to let go of envy, anger, and greed, replacing them with appreciation, joy, and generosity. In this way, gratitude not only enriches our own lives but also the lives of those around us.

As your new monk, I am committed to practicing gratitude every day, to appreciate the gift of life, the teachings of the Buddha, and the beauty of our community. I invite you to join me in this practice. Let us take a moment each day to reflect on our blessings, to express our gratitude to others, and to cherish the precious opportunity to practice the Dharma together.

Our founder Shinran wrote in his hymn,

The light of the Buddha of Unhindered Light  
Harbors the lights of purity, joy, and wisdom;  
Its virtuous working surpasses conceptual understanding,  
As it benefits the beings throughout the ten quarters.

May our hearts be filled with gratitude, and may this gratitude guide us on the path towards the land of Bliss. Together, let us cultivate a community where gratitude flourishes, enriching our lives and the world around us embraced within Amida's compassion.

Thank you for your presence, your understanding, and your support. I am truly grateful to walk this Nembutsu path with you.

With deepest respect and gratitude,

Rev. Mieko Majima