



Fresno Betsuin Buddhist Temple Nokotsudo



FUTURE OF BUDDHISM

The Future of Buddhism committee sent out brochures to all Fresno Betsuin members regarding their new fund raising campaign last month. This campaign gives our Sangha an opportunity to buy a niche in our Nokotsudo which will be located in our Hondo building. This campaign was unveiled at our Obon Service on July 16, 2017. The following is excerpts from the talk given at that service:

I'm here to talk about our Nokotsudo, a columbarium, which will be in our new Hondo building. It is a room with niches for funeral urns to be stored. Before I talk about our proposed Nokotsudo, I want to talk about the history of the Future of Buddhism project to remind you of where we came from and advise you where we are going.

On August 16, 1998 the Fresno Betsuin held a town hall meeting to discuss whether we should form a committee to investigate the feasibility of building a new Hondo and Family Dharma Center. On that date almost 19 years ago our Future of Buddhism project started.

The hardest task for the Future of Buddhism committee was to raise money to buy land and build our Hondo and Family Dharma Center. Our Sangha supported this project from the beginning and gave generously to this project.

Our Dharma School children were given piggy banks which they filled up with their allowances and donated to our project. Seniors dipped into their life time savings and gave generously to our project. Our organizations especially our Fujinkai held fund raisers and donated the proceeds to our project. Donations came as far away as Japan. 62% of our Sangha were major donors to our project. 100% of our Sangha participated in our fund raisers or donated for our fund raisers. Clovis Community sold their property and donated the proceeds to our project. We sold our parsonage and the proceeds were donated to our project. Somehow, somehow our Sangha was able to raise 4.75 million dollars and we were able to start construction of the Fresno Betsuin Dharma Center. Our Dharma Center was completed in January of 2010 and we held our grand opening on January 30, 2010.

The only thing that the Future of Buddhism committee could promise our major donors was that their names would be on the Dana Wall which is located in the foyer of our Dharma Center. We also assured our donors that their contributions would help perpetuate our Jodo Shinshu religion and help carry on the culture and traditions that our Issei ancestors brought with them from Japan.

Future of Buddhism, contined

From the beginning of this project, our committee always believed that our project would not be complete unless we built a formal Hondo. The Fresno Betsuin is the hub of Buddhism in the Central Valley and it is imperative that we have a formal place to hear and receive the Jodo Shinshu teachings. Therefore, after January 30, 2010 we started the second phase of our project, a campaign to build our Hondo building and again asked donations from our Sangha. Since January 30, 2010 the communities of Bowles, North Fresno and Selma have sold their community centers and those communities have generously donated much of the proceeds from the sale of their property to our project. In the last seven years we have raised approximately 2.2 million dollars.

We are now on the eve of a significant event for our Betsuin, the pending sale of our Hondo and Annex in West Fresno. The proceeds of that sale will go to our project. Even with those proceeds of that sale, our project will still be 1-1.5 million dollars short of our fund raising goal to build our Hondo building. Realistically, our committee realizes that our Sangha has consistently donated to our project for almost 19 years and it would be asking too much for our Sangha to come up with another 1-1.5 million dollars. Our Sangha has been extremely loyal to us but that loyalty and dana can only go so far.

A couple of months ago I met a man that was a fund raiser in our valley representing major universities and hospitals. I told him about our fund raising project. He told me that he had raised millions of dollars but not once did he ask his prospective donors for money. What he did say was that he tried to pair the needs of the prospective donor to the needs of the institution he was representing.

For all of us, there is one universal truth that we can all agree upon, that we will not live forever. We will all eventually die. For all of us whether we are in the autumn of our life or whether we are young and vibrant, we will all eventually have a need for a place where we can put our last remains, our ashes. We will also want or need a place that is convenient

for our children and our loved ones to pay their respect to us.

There is no better place in our valley than our proposed Nokotsudo to fulfill your needs to have a convenient place to deposit your ashes. Our Nokotsudo will be a stunning addition to our Hondo building. The altar in the small chapel will be used as the altar in our Nokotsudo. This altar's theme is based on the parable, "On the White Path, Between the River of Fire and the River of Water". This parable expresses our spiritual journey through life, our struggles with greed, passion and the material world and the Nenbutsu Teachings, the White Path, which will lead us to enlightenment. Our Nokotsudo will have a transparent look and an ethereal atmosphere.

You may also want or have a need to honor your spouse, parents or grandparents by either symbolically, (purchasing an urn and putting it in a niche) or actually transferring some of their ashes or all of their ashes to our Nokotsudo. Our present estimate is that if we sell 200 niches we will be able to start construction.

The location of your niche may be important to you. Eye level niches seem to be the most popular. If location is important to you, the faster you commit to purchasing a niche in the Nokotsudo, the earlier in line you will be to pick the location of your niche.

Buying a niche will satisfy your needs to have a secure, ethereal place where your final remains will rest and it will also be a great help to our project. If you know of someone that might be interested in buying a niche and want us to send them a brochure or if you have any questions, feel free to call Gordy Misaki at 559-313-8833 or Bob Ishikawa at 559-970-5834.

Together in Gassho
FOB Committee