

San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin

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Welcome!

We hope your visit will provide insight by enhancing your life with the teachings and practices that have been effective in different cultures and time periods for 2,600 years

Our temple is part of the Jodo Shinshu (Shin) sect of the Mahayana branch of Buddhism. The unique feature of this temple is that it is based on practices specifically suited for the common, ordinary person and not just for monks. Our doctrine emphasizes that the attitude of gratitude is basic to a joyful life. The truth of interdependence reveals that we are all connected and each of us contributes to the whole. Therefore, everyone is accepted, just as we are.

San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin is part of the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA). We are part of a global organization called the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha, headquartered in Kyoto, Japan. Our sect of Buddhism was founded in Japan by Shinran Shonin (1173-1163). BCA was founded in San Francisco in 1899 and the San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin was founded in 1902.

The popular Buddhist practices of meditation and mindfulness demonstrate how effective these practices can be for ordinary people. It will be worthwhile to be patient to allow the perspective of gratitude to be more fully realized as a Shin path to awakening. Although our services include foreign words, perspectives, and rituals that may seem difficult to comprehend, contemporary interpretations reveal the relevant truths that are conveyed. An open mind and heart will reap the benefits that you have been seeking.

Benefits of Shin in Ordinary Life.

1) Gratitude (Thank you)

Shinran realized that ordinary people could not adhere to the strict precepts demanded of monks, due to their responsibilities to support their families. He articulated another of the Buddha's paths of awakening, specifically for the common person. Gratitude is familiar to all of us and reveals our humility, respect, and sense of harmony. Daily expressions of gratitude reveal the truth that we are constantly receiving benefits from the efforts of others. This rewarding perspective can be practiced at any age and at any time. This attitude can transcend a person toward the spiritual realm.

2) Dharma (Buddhist Teachings of Truth)

Upon his enlightenment, the Buddha based his teachings on natural laws, not on blind belief, nor to the action of gods. The following are true of all things on earth.

Impermanence- All things change. Only the present moment, NOW, is the only reality. Past & future are only thoughts.

Interdependence- All things are connected and affect each other and thus nothing exists alone.

3) True Nature of the self (Insightful introspection)

Our conscious mind determines suffering or bliss. Focusing mainly on our ego-self brings discontent. By aligning with natural laws (Dharma) and others, our awakened mind brings harmony and joy. Self is an integral part of the whole as a family, community, and world. By expanding our sense of self to include others means everyone is accepted just as we are. ME=WE.

4) Temple services and activities (Community of compassion)

Services provide rituals which convey Shin in its sacred form. Temple activities reflect the Shin doctrine of mutual support. A sangha (Buddhist community) is a place to interact with others and to discuss how doctrine supports our lives. This temple is part of the BCA which is one of the oldest national Buddhist organizations in America.

5) Serving Others (Dana- Giving from the heart)

Realizing that our lives are supported by others, we express gratitude by serving others. Temple activities include education and service to others: children, youth groups, elder support, environment, Japanese cultural arts and sports. Gratitude brings joy in serving others: members, the community, and the world.

6) Spiritual Awareness (Spiritual nature of life)

Our many different memorial services emphasize our continued connection with those loved ones who have passed away. Weekly, monthly, annual, and other services keep us connected in a way that death is accepted as a natural process of life. Our awakening NOW to our spiritual connection with each other, carries us through the transition.

Temple Activities

Religious Services

Dharma School Service (families with children) 9:30-10 a.m. Sundays during school year

Adult services 10:10 a.m. during school year; 10 a.m. during summer
Meditation, chanting, rituals, and Dharma talks help us to embody the Shin principles. After service fellowship with refreshments.

Dharma School

Classes about Buddhism and Jodo Shinshu for children (PK - 12)

Young Buddhist Association (YBA)

Social groups for teens. Conducts service projects as well as social events.

Young Adult Buddhist Association (YABA)

Social group for young working adults.

Scouts

Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts

Buddhist Women's Association (BWA)

Women's group.

EcoSangha

Promotes ecological mindfulness.

Adult Buddhist Association

Social and service group for adults

Clubs

Social and activity based groups: Book, Games, Shakuhachi, Pickleball, etc.

Judo, Kendo

Japanese martial arts.

Bonsai

Japanese art of growing and taking care of miniature plants in a bowl.

The Path Forward - Toward Awakening

Religious Services

See Page 3 above.

Discussion - Study Classes

Dharma Study Class:

Meets on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays (September through June)

7:00pm-8:30pm Virtual (via Zoom). Discussion on selected topics with reading materials supplied in advance.

Buddhism: Simply & Clearly:

Introductory Class on Jodo Shinshu Buddhism. 3 sessions in Fall and Spring on Wednesdays. Please check the Betsuin website for the next session.

Newsletters:

The Dharma - Church newsletter. Sent out monthly. Hard copy sent to church members only by request.

The Wheel of Dharma - The monthly newsletter for the Buddhist Churches of America.

Books:

Ocean: An Introduction to Jodo-Shinshu Buddhism in America - Kenneth K. Tanaka

River of Fire - River of Water - An Introduction to the Pure Land Tradition of Shin

Buddhism - Taitetsu Unno

Shin Buddhism - Bits of Rubble Turned to Gold - Taitetsu Unno

Online:

Buddhist Churches of America (BCA): buddhistchurchesofamerica.org

San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin: sjbetsuin.org

Everyday Buddhist: everydaybuddhist.org

YouTube Channels:

San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin: @sjbetsuinvideos1817

BCA: @buddhistchurchesofamerica

BCA Center for Buddhist Education (CBE):

@BCAcenterforbuddhisteducation

Donations:

As with any home, our temple home requires ongoing financial support for maintenance. These facilities were built and maintained by donations from those who benefitted. Your contributions enable the Dharma to be shared now and in the future.

Coming Events

July 13-14 - Obon Festival and Bazaar, Saturday: noon-10 p.m., Sunday: noon-8 p.m.

July 20 - Hatsubon Service (families who've lost a loved one within the past year), 5 p.m.

July 21 - Obon Service, 10 a.m.

July 28 - Lahaina relief plate lunch fundraiser

Aug. 3 — Rummage Sale, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.