



WIND BELL

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ON OBON

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Originality and universality are the same thing for a sincere student. Universal truth must have an original approach for everyone. Mind and body are one; subjective and objective worlds are one in our single minded practice. Observing that mind and body are one, and that subjective and objective worlds are one, many people fear death. Reasoning will not solve this problem. Hakuin Zenji said, "If you want to know about life after death, ask the man who wants to know!". Thus there is no other way than to ask yourself, for this problem does not belong to the category of knowledge. You yourself must solve it by practice. Buddha's practice after his enlightenment is not different from each individual's practice before enlightenment, if there is no idea of self. When you are engaged in selfless practice, you are free from the idea of past, present and future; from the idea of this world or another; from the idea of coming or going.

OBON FESTIVAL - "ALL SOULS' DAY"

This festival is Buddhist observance of DANA, the saving of others through charitable acts. When Ananda in meditation saw his mother suffering in hell, he asked the Buddha how he could save her. In answer to this question, the Buddha provided a series of ceremonies, including the offering of food, to be performed by his disciples yearly.

The original Japanese religion included a strong concept of soul, so this festival became very popular. The ancestors are supposed to return to the household alters on the night of July 13, where they remain until the morning of the 16th. Offerings of food, drink, flowers and money are made at each house and temple. Pine pitch is burned on tiles at the front gates, and the temple priests visit each home. Lanterns are lit everywhere to dispel darkness, fear and ignorance. There is much rejoicing and dancing in the streets. On the night of July 16, little wooden boats with flowing lanterns are set adrift to conduct the souls safely back to their abodes.

Obon will be celebrated at Sokoji on July 15 at 2:00 P.M. Bishop Yamada will preside at the occasion. (There will be no 11:00 A.M. service on this day.) It is customary to bring offerings of food, preferably staples which will keep.

On the evening of July 14, the Japanese Buddhist churches of San Francisco will join in dancing and festivities on Buchanan Street between Post and Sutter.

COMING EVENT

Plan for the Sesshin, August 27 to September 2, to be conducted by Bishop Yamada.