Rev. Kakei Nakagawa, Rinban

For all the smiles, gifts, hugs, food and many other expressions of love that I have received, my heart is full of gratitude for the continuous flow of happiness you have given me. For all the hours put into planning, preparing, and generally working hard for the temple to support the Sangha and give us a place to share the Dharma, I am thankful and proud to say I was able to be part of such an industrious and enthusiastic community. All the groups and organizations I was invited to be a part of have been so welcoming and really made me feel like I belonged there.

I am going to miss everyone very dearly. It has been quite difficult thinking about not being able to see all your friendly faces and greet you. However, I must continue my journey and I appreciate how understanding many of you have been, although expressing your sadness, still wishing me luck in my life and career. I will try to take everything given to me and put it to use as I try to grow even more as a person. In the same way, I hope that if I have made any kind of impact on any particular temple, organization, or individual life that you strive to push that effect to its limit. It is my wish that everyone maintains or even increases the amount of energy they put into the activity of the Dharma and to try out and invent new ways to share the teaching. Change can be saddening but it does not always have to also be discouraging! Impermanence is an opportunity for us to create something new with circumstances that were not present before. So although I am leaving, you all still possess the ability to construct an atmosphere that will stimulate growth in the temples. In other words, it is with my genuine desire and perhaps request for you all that you be well, to endeavor to share our wonderful tradition, and to live with the Nembutsu in your hearts.

Rev. Matthew Hamasaki

I am sad to say that this will be my last article for the Central California District newsletters.

At the end of this year I will be transferring out to another temple. I have had such an incredible experience in the short amount of time I was here and I could not think of a better place to begin my ministry. I’ve found that Central California is such a nurturing place not just for agriculture, but for also for a young working man such as myself. I feel like I have grown a tremendous amount both as a minister and a person and I attribute this to all my teachers here. Not just people who are teachers by trade, but every single person who has encouraged me in some way. Whether it was by being understanding of the mistakes I made or expressing potential actions that would generate more interest or even just telling me that they liked a part of a sermon I did, I have had so many teachers, both young and experienced, that have given me valuable lessons.

I would like to continue to express my sincere gratitude to the people who have made my time in the Central Valley so meaningful. Many people have been caring to me both to my face and behind the scenes and I appreciate everything that they’ve done for me. It would be impossible for me to name all the people who have impacted me in some way and so I will refrain from naming anyone, lest I forget one person.