



Illustration: Rob Sato © 2023

May We Gather 2024: Pilgrimage and Peace Walk

Saturday, March 16, 2024 | Antioch, California

Simply, what is the memorial?

On March 16, 2024, we will commemorate the three-year memorial of the 2021 Atlanta-area spa shootings. We will recover and celebrate Asian American Buddhist history in Antioch, in California, and across the United States, to strengthen the ties of kinship that connect each of us across time, place, race, religion, and gender.

What will take place on March 16, 2024?

Our 90-minute ceremony will take place at the El Campanil Theater in Antioch, California. Afterward, we will leave the Theater to begin our outdoor Peace Walk. We will cover approximately two square city blocks on our way to two ceremonial reflection points along Antioch's waterfront. At the conclusion of the Peace Walk, participants are invited to gather for light refreshments and an informal community forum at the Antioch Senior Center, across the street from the El Campanil Theater.

Why is the memorial in 2024?

Following the Buddhist ritual calendar, we organized our first memorial on the 49th day after the Atlanta-area shootings, with smaller memorials on the 100th-day and one-year anniversaries.

May We Gather 2024 marks the three-year memorial of the Atlanta shootings, in keeping with our observance of Buddhist ritual cycles of mourning and remembrance.

Altar with seven memorial tablets at Higashi Honganji Buddhist Temple in Los Angeles, May 2021, 49 Day Memorial Ceremony

Photo: Tauran Woo



Why Antioch, California?

Antioch came to our attention in 2021 when it became the first city in the United States to sign a formal apology acknowledging its history of discrimination against its Asian American community.

We selected this diverse city for our upcoming gathering because this site highlights a historical parallel between 19th-century racial, religious, and gendered violence and contemporary attitudes toward the Asian American community in the wake of Covid-19:

Why Antioch, California?

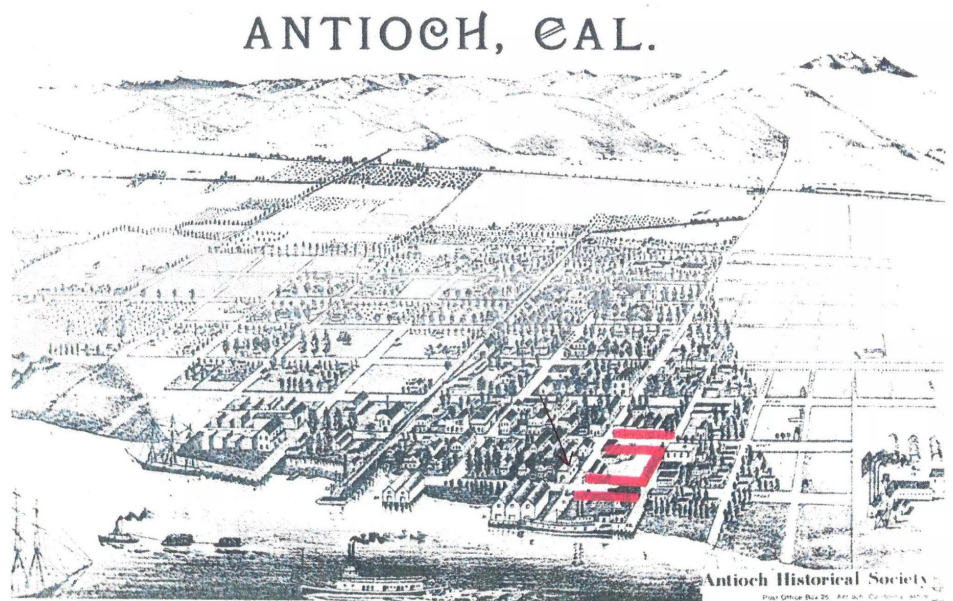
- In 1876, the scapegoating of six Chinese American women as sources of contagion led to the burning down of the city's local Chinatown
- In 2021, six Asian women were murdered during an uptick in violence against Asian Americans at the height of a global pandemic

In the case of Antioch, racial and religious prejudices prevented the long-term establishment of a Chinese community and their religious practices there. For example, a temple that once stood on Wyatt Street now only exists in the historical record.

We gather in Antioch to recover this history, to acknowledge the legacy of America's racial karma as demonstrated by the Atlanta-area shootings and the ongoing racial violence in Antioch, and to heal as an emergent sangha.

A map depicts Antioch with markings showing the old Chinatown, where Chinese-born workers lived in 1876 prior to expulsions and burning by vigilante action

Source: LA Times, "White residents burned this California Chinatown to the ground. An apology came 145 years later" by Anh Do (July 2021)



From the 1870's to 1920s, the section of Antioch known as "Chinatown" consisted of homes and stores on both sides of Second Street and First Street, from G to I Streets, as highlighted in red.

Further...

Our collective recognizes that marginalized communities across traditions have experienced the violence of having their sacred sites destroyed. We consider these experiences interlinked. The parallels we observe in the burning of Antioch's Chinatown, the fatal shootings in Atlanta, and ongoing acts of aggression toward communities seen as "others," are a reminder that racial, religious, and gendered violence affects us all. Our 2024 pilgrimage is dedicated to healing these historic and present-day harms, and to recognizing the contributions of Asian American women.

Additional Resources

May We Gather	May We Gather: About
SF Gate	The Bay Area town that drove out its Chinese residents for nearly 100 years
LA Times	White residents burned this California Chinatown to the ground. An apology came 145 years later

Our team is very happy to speak with you about our program and answer any questions you may have about our gathering in **Antioch, California** on **March 16, 2024**.

Our email is maywegather@gmail.com. As a reminder, we kindly ask that this document not be circulated or shared.

Thank you for your time and participation. We look forward to staying in touch and hosting you at the 2024 May We Gather pilgrimage.

In spiritual friendship,

The May We Gather collective:

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