

LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

jihō

WWW

No. 425

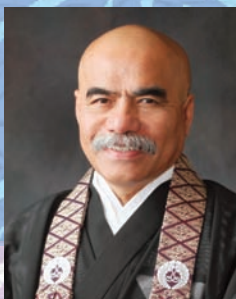
July-August 2014

LOS ANGELES HONPA HONGWANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE
FOUNDED 1905



RIMBAN'S MESSAGE

THOUGHTS ON OBOON



RIMBAN
WILLIAM BRIONES

"Bon Odori: Buddhist Dance for Ancestors' Souls Will be Performed All Over Southland" Quoted from the headline from a local newspaper.

I grew up less than half a mile from Mountain View Buddhist Temple. At that time what separated my house from the temple was a field of tomatoes. It was during the warm summer evenings, as we played in the fields that I was first exposed to the season of Obon. Unbeknownst to me, the colorful display of lights were lanterns and the strange music was traditional Japanese music.

It wasn't until I started high school that I began hanging out at the Obon with some of my Japanese friends as well as an assortment of ethnic friends. I remember, in those days, the bazaar was a bit more rowdy with back room card and crap games and even an occasional fistfight. We'd spend all our part-time job salary (\$1.25 hour) on Chuck-a-Luck and Nickel Pitch, eat hamburgers and beef and chicken teriyaki, and on Sunday evening watch the cute YBA girls dance in their colorful kimono. I had no idea why or what my Japanese-American friends and their families were celebrating.

In the beginning, I assumed what I heard was fact that Obon was a time when Buddhist welcomed the souls of their ancestors for a three-day visit to the world of the living.

Fortunately for Mountain View — unfortunately for Los Angeles Betsuin, Rev. Russell Hamada became the resident minister of Mountain View in 1991. It was Rev. Russell who got me really interested in Jodo Shinshu Buddhism and it was Rev. Russell who made me aware of some of the misconceptions of Shinshu, including Obon.

When we think of Obon, we think of ... of course bon odori, food, games, prizes, a nice cold beer and of course to be with our friends and family ..

This is nice, but I think at times the true meaning of Obon has become so clouded with "cultural identity" that at times we are compromising any religious significance. We seem to have forgotten that unlike traditional Japanese matsuri celebrations, Obon dance is not an attempt to placate or petition the "gods".

Actually, bon odori is not generally observed in Jodo Shinshu temples in Japan. The reason is that this idea of "souls" and their appeasement does not set well with Jodo Shinshu Buddhist in Japan. When I was in Japan, it seemed like the only temple that celebrated Obon with

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GATHERING OF JOY

by Rev. Koho Takata



REV. KOHO TAKATA

Here in July, we will be observing *Hatsubon* (first obon) and the *Obon* Service which is the Memorial Service for our loved ones. In memory of the deceased, we gather to express our gratitude for enabling us to encounter the teaching of Amida Buddha's Primal Vow. It is a great opportunity for us to strengthen our relationships with family members

and friends by remembering the deceased and also to deepen our understanding of life and death by listening to the *Nembutsu* teachings taught by Shinran Shonin. Let us remind ourselves about the significance and the meaning of observing the service for our loved ones who have returned to the realm of Infinite Light and Life and, yet, still co-exist and live with us, as all buddhas, in the Universal Truth of Oneness.

It has been nearly a year since I was assigned to Los Angeles Hompa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple. How quickly time has passed. I feel as if I have been here for much longer. My family and I greatly enjoy the weather of Los Angeles and listening to the Buddha-Dharma with you. This is my second opportunity to work at a Betsuin. When I was working at the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, I had an opportunity to work as an associate minister of the Hawaii Betsuin. Unlike regular temple, a Betsuin holds many funerals and memorial services.

People often ask whether the memorial service should be observed before the actual death date or after. Although I do not know whether it is a Japanese concept or a local one, those in America consider such services as memorial, inurnment, and so forth as ill-omened. Hence, it should be held earlier. On the other hand, birthdays, weddings or anniversaries are considered "good" (lucky). Hence, they should be held later.

When I am asked such questions, I ask if they feel it is better to observe the memorial service before the actual death date. Most will agree. The belief is, if the memorial service is not held before the actual death date, "*bachi*" (punishments from the deceased or Buddha) will fall upon the family and relatives. In other words, Buddha or the beloved one will become angry and bring misfortune to the family members.

I have been in America for nearly 20 years. After all this time, it is my general impression that there are some misunderstood customs and practices of our teachings here in America. I should research and find out why these mis-

understandings have come to be. I suppose the main reason is that during the period of the Japanese immigrants' history, various customs, practices, and teachings were became intermingled. As a result, today, many have beliefs in many misunderstood customs. This is not a criticism, on my part, in regards to your ancestors.

It does not matter whether you observe a memorial service before or after the actual date. What is important is your feelings and attitudes towards listening to the voiceless voice of the Buddha, given by your loved one. Your loved one is guiding you to walk the path of the Nembutsu teachings by giving the opportunity to listen to the teachings of the Buddha.

When I was sixth grade, my grandfather passed away. My grandfather had observed a morning service every day as well as my father. If I missed the morning service, he did not allow me to eat breakfast. He was a very strict grandfather. After observing the morning service, our family ate rice which was offered to the Buddha. At that time, I always wondered why I had to eat cold rice. I preferred warm and freshly cooked rice. I now, however, truly appreciate my grandfather for what he had done for me. I now realize that I was eating the best food, offering of rice to the Buddha and the teachings. If I had not eaten that offering of rice which became cold after the morning service, I would not know the true meaning of the offering, appreciation, gratefulness, etc. It is beyond my calculated thinking. It is arisen from my mind and heart. It is what my grandfather taught me.

When I visited Japan two years ago, my family temple observed a memorial service for my grandfather. During the service, I delivered a memorial sermon and shared with my family and temple members of how my grandfather guided me and gave me the opportunities to listen to the teachings in my daily life. For me, the memorial service or memorial day for my grandfather is every day, not only his passing day. Every day, every moment, and every occasion is a precious opportunity for me to listen to the teachings of the Buddha, given by my grandfather, ancestors, and interconnected relationships with others.

The memorial service can provide the opportunity to listen to the teachings of the Buddha as well as an opportunity to remember the deceased. I feel, however, that we should not be particular about the date, place, and style of the service. Rather, it becomes a great opportunity for us to reflect and appreciate this life which had been already encompassed by the Buddha of Infinite Light and Life.

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HONGWANJI WASN'T BUILT IN A DAY

by Rev. Kazuaki Nakata



REV. KAZ

Shakyamuni Buddha proclaimed to Maitreya Bodhisattva,

“You should know that when individuals become so grateful and feel joyful by hearing the meaning of Amida Buddha, and if these individuals recite Nembutsu by knowing the meaning, they will live the life of Nembutsu within the great calmness, which is a huge benefit for everyone”.

(Muryoju Kyo “Larger Sutra of Infinite Life”. Vol. 2. para. 47.)

When I see the *yagura* – the tower around which the dancers dance – being built in the north parking lot of our Nishi Betsuin, in my mind, I can hear the Obon dance music. Obon season is approaching. This is my third Obon at Nishi Betsuin. Time passes so quickly! I have been feeling this for about the past two years. I must be getting old! I hope you will keep cool during this summer and I hope see you at Obon!

Last month in June, **Monshu Koshin Ohtani**, the head minister of our mother temple in Kyoto Nishi Hongwanji (*Honzan*), retired from his Monshu position and his son **Shin** (new) **Monshu Kojun Ohtani** succeeded the position. Rimban Briones and Rev. Takata attended the ceremonies for the retirement of the Monshu and the ascension of the New Monshu. I have a feeling of pride that our Nishi Betsuin had received this rare invitation from Honzan to attend the ceremonies.

Since the passing of Shinran Shonin, the history of Hongwanji began with his daughter Kakushin-ni in Kyoto about 750 years ago. The Shin Monshu Kojun Ohtani is the 25th generation descendent of Shinran Shonin. The Ohtani family has a long history with a traceable family tree.

On the personal side, I enjoy researching history by means of field studies. Since moving to the US, I have visited many national parks and I have been impressed by the many US World Heritage sites. There are 21 sites in the US that include both cultural and natural sites. The well-known Grand Canyon National Park is one. It was registered as a Natural World Heritage in 1979.

My favorite National Park is the Chaco Culture National Historical Park in New Mexico. I have visited this site on two occasions. The first visit was made in 2008 and the second was last summer. It took four days to get this Na-

tional Park from Los Angeles, because it located in the unpaved desert. If you ever decide to visit there, I strongly recommend that you take a four-wheel-drive. I drove my Toyota Corolla. The ruins of the Chaco Culture have remained in the Chaco Canyon and the canyon is known as the cultural center of the ancient Pueblos during 9th to 12th century. The Chaco Culture was abandoned after a severe drought that took place around 1150 to 1200. It was during the time when Shinran Shonin was born in Japan.

The Chaco Culture existed for three centuries. About 800 years later, however, the abandoned ruins were recognized and was eventually preserved as a World Heritage site.

Our Hongwanji tradition began with the passing of Shinran Shonin. It was not his intention to form his own sangha nor have his own temple. Shinran’s followers built a little shrine for his remains after he was cremated. This shrine became the origin of the Hongwanji. Since then, for 750 years,



Goei-Do

Hongwanji has been a center for all Nembutsu fellows. It is hard to imagine how many have been involved in maintaining the Hongwanji tradition for so many centuries. I would imagine tens of millions have enjoyed the great calmness through hearing the meaning of Amida Buddha. These tens of thousands have helped to share the Nembutsu teachings from generation to generation since its beginnings. As I utter the Nembutsu, I can feel these individuals with me reciting *Namo Amida Butsu...* they continue to live in my life of *O-Nembutsu...*

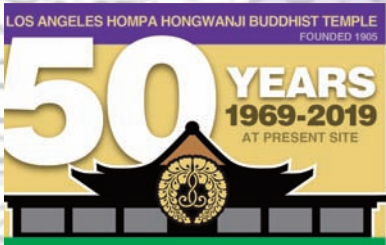
After Hongwanji had been serving the Nembutsu fellows for 750 years, the Cultural Council under the Agency for Cultural Affairs of Japan submitted a report to Mr. Hirofumi Shimomura, the minister at the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology on May 16, 2014. The report is a recommendation to the federal government to consider the two main structures at Hongwanji as National Treasures. These two structures are Goei-Do and Amida-Do.

The Goei-Do was rebuilt in 1636 and Shinran Shonin’s wooden statue is placed in the Goei-Do. “Goei” generally means a picture or a statue of founders. “Do” means structure with an altar. We have the “hondo” at the Nishi Betsuin. “Hon” means main, so “hondo” means a structure

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“50 YEARS” UPDATE REPORT

by Ernest Hida



On November 11, 1969, the dedication service of the newly constructed temple was officiated by the late **Abbott (Monshu) Kosho Ohtani**. The temple was built at its new location, as the redevelopment of Little Tokyo by the City of Los Angeles would affect the existence of the temple at its Central Avenue location, which is now a part of the Japanese American National Museum.

In 2019, the Nishi Betsuin will be commemorating the 50th year anniversary of the temple at its current location. Since 1969, the temple has been serving its members and the community at this new location with weekly Sunday dharma services, special services, weekly Buddhist study classes, memorial services, weddings, funerals, Obon festivals, Kohaku Utagassen, temple affiliated organization meetings, weekly temple youth programs (Jr YBA, Sr YBA, Sangha Teens, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts), temple sports programs (judo, basketball), cultural classes, and community meetings and events. It is evident that the Betsuin has been an active and busy temple for 45 continuous years at its current location.

The vibrancy of this temple has been made possible due to the dedication of current and past ministers, its leaders and members. Having an active bustling temple keeps it alive, but, after 45 years, it has taken a toll on the temple structure.

From a distance, the *onaijin* (altar area) looks beautiful with no blemishes. Upon closer look, however, deterioration and damages can be seen in many parts of the *onaijin*. Further damage will take place unless repairs are made. Damage and disrepair can be found throughout the temple facilities (roof, gates, porch, etc.) For the 50th Year Com-memoration, a Central Committee was form to plan this celebration, which includes the Commemoration Service, various Buddhist Edu-cation programs, and the Commemoration projects. This 50th Year Commemo-ration projects include the refurbishment of the *onaijin* and other parts of the temple structure. Mr. Shoichi Sayano is the Chairman of the Commemoration Projects Committee and will oversee the refurbishments and repairs. The *onaijin* will be refurbished by the Wakabayashi Butsugu Mfg Company of Kyoto, who originally built this *onaijin*. It will be shipped to Kyoto to be expertly and properly refurbished.

In order to be able to do the necessary repairs and refurbishments will require funds. At the 2013 temple General Membership meeting (*Sokai*), it was approved to have a 50th Commemoration Fundraising Campaign to raise \$2.5 million. The Central Committee formed the Fundraising Committee with Mr. Gary Kawaguchi as its chairperson.

The Fundraising Campaign has begun and we sincerely ask for your understanding and participation in this fundraising for the 50th Year Commemoration. Please reflect upon the legacy and contributions of our Issei pioneers and past members, and be encouraged to continue this legacy by preserving the temple so that it can continue to serve its members and community, and the teachings of Shinran Shonin can continue to be shared with our future generations.



Gassho



The onaijin ceiling panels are water-stained from roof leakage.



Top view of the security wrought iron fence that is rusting and flaking.



Crumbling concrete in the temple porch area.

(Rimban - continued from page 1)

odori, food and game booths was at the Honzan, the mother temple in Kyoto.

It was within the American Jodoshinshu temples that bon odori first began. Ironically, bon odori in the US took root in Jodoshinshu temples and not amongst the other Japanese Buddhist sects where the idea of “souls” returning was more accepted.

Bon odori in the US, historically, was a cultural event, that attracted the immigrant Japanese and Japanese-American community. And since over 90% of the Japanese and Japanese-American Buddhist were Jodoshinshu, bon odori came to be a major feature of American Jodoshinshu temple life.

However, the Obon services and bon odori did not adopt the Japanese interpretation of the returning of the “ancestral souls”. It was instead an annual memorial service for the loved ones who had passed on and an acknowledgment and celebration of the continuing influence our loved ones have upon our lives.

In spite of our message of Obon which our temples have carefully cultivated over the many years, it never fails, newspapers, magazines articles and on websites, explain that Obon is a time that the souls of our ancestors return for a visit and that we clean house and welcome them with lights and then guild them home by sending floating paper lanterns on river.

For orthodox Buddhists, especially Jodoshinshu Buddhists there is no such thing as an eternal soul, unique and distinct to each individual. Nor is there a soul that floats around in another dimension, demanding offerings from the living and awarding good fortune or misfortune.

Obon is a time for us to reflect upon the Truth of My existence. Obon is a time to express our gratitude for being given those conditions to live this life. To visit the graves or our ancestors and attend memorial services is an expression of the pureness of heart that arises when we embrace the Truth of those causes and conditions of my life.

And when such a feeling flows through our hearts and minds, we are overwhelmed with a sense of joy and gratitude. Therefore, in our Jodoshinshu tradition, we call Obon, Kangi-e or “Gathering of Joy”.

It is this sense of gratitude towards our family, friends, community and ancestors arises in our hearts and minds, we cannot help but feel joyful and gracious. Therefore, we visit the cemeteries, conduct memorial services and just enjoy the company of good friends and relatives. This is Obon, and this is why we dance.

The fertile fields are gone now and in its place are rows of condominiums and a shopping center. Never-the-less, on

a warm summer Obon evening one can still smell the chicken teriyaki being barbequed and hear the distinct sound of Japanese music crackling over the loud speakers from my mother’s house. And while I am unable to attend Mountain View’s Obon this year, I can be sure that my family will be in attendance, partaking in the festivities. And in continuing this tradition, I hope my grandsons and granddaughter, in time, will cultivate an awareness of gratitude and appreciation for family, friends, community and ancestors that has made their life possible. For it is within this realization of the past with this life now, that we can pass this Truth on to future generations.

Namo Amida Butsu



GATHERING OF JOY

by Rev. Koho Takata

The annual *Hatsubon* (First Obon) Service for those who passed away from last Obon until now is scheduled for Saturday, July 12 and Sunday, July 13, 2014 at 2:00PM in conjunction with Obon dance which will be from 7:00PM to 9:00PM on Saturday, July 12 and 6:30PM to 9:00PM on Sunday, July 13, 2014.

The annual Obon service is scheduled for Sunday, July 20, 2014, with guest speaker, the **Reverend Patti Usuki** of San Fernando Hongwanji Buddhist Temple for the English Service and **Rev. Seikan Fukuma** of former Rimban and the BCA Minister Emeritus for Japanese Service, guiding us through this reflective time. The members of Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple and their families are invited to attend the Obon Service which is one of the *Six Major Services in the Hongwanji* tradition.

The term “*Bon*” is an abbreviation of a Japanese Buddhist term “*Urabon*,” which is derived from the Sanskrit term “*Ullambana*.” Ullambana means to be liberated from a spiritual state of pain and hunger caused by greediness, one of three blind desires.

Even as we reflect on the sorrowful consequence of basic human defilement, we, as Jodo Shinshu Buddhists, joyfully reflect on the Primal Vow Power of Amida Buddha which has been fulfilled, thus enabling us to live in gratitude. The *Bon* Service is called the “*Gathering of Joy*” in the Shin Buddhist tradition, instead of being merely called a “Memorial Service.”



DID YOU KNOW?

by Eiko Masuyama

“New Temple Project, Part 2”

Hompa Hongwanji Los Angeles Betsuin Dedication,
November 14, 15, and 16, 1969,
815 E. First Street, Los Angeles, California 90012



On August 11, 1963, a general meeting of the entire Betsuin membership was held. Members were informed of the events leading up to the latest development. Also, introduced was a general plan for the entire area worked out by the Little Tokyo Redevelopment Association.

Among the many proposals included in the plan was the elimination of Jackson Street and Central Avenue, and the rebuilding of the Betsuin temple on its present but expanded site.

A proposal to rebuild on the present lot was formally made and accepted. Mr. Masami Sasaki was named chairman of the Building Trust Fund. Selected to serve as vice chairmen to assist him were Mr. Eiju Sasajima and Mr. Tets Nakamura. The fund was to direct all activities concerned with the rebuilding project.

Subsequently, a goal of one million dollars was set to cover the complete costs involved in the building of the new temple. To realize the goal, all the resources of the Betsuin in the form of real and personal properties totaling \$500,000 was to be made available. The balance was to be raised from pledges of \$1,000 each from five hundred members, to be paid to the Building Trust Fund within five years.

The drive to raise funds started in March of 1964. Rimban Matsuoka appointed Fuku Rimban Masami Nakagaki to direct the fund raising drive. Rev. Nakagaki set himself a man-killing pace, visiting Buddhists all over the greater metropolitan area, acquainting them of the plans and needs of the Betsuin.

By the end of May, 1966, Rev. Nakagaki, assisted by teams of district representatives, had collected pledges from 673 families amounting to \$672,000. The fund goal by then had been raised to \$750,000.

Before the year was out, the Betsuin lost Rev. Nakagaki. He was recalled to Japan to take over his father’s temple. Rev. Keizo Norimoto was assigned to take over as chairman of the fund drive.

... TO BE CONTINUED

* * * *

“Rev. Goldwater Addresses Bussei

[YBA membership]”,

BUSSEI-REVIEW,

Published by *POSTON III Buddhist Church*, March, 1942

The 306 [building number] Buddhist Church was filled to capacity on Wednesday night to hear the address by Rev. Julius A. Goldwater of Los Angeles, Director of Buddhist Brotherhood of America.

Following Rev. Goldwater’s inspiring talk, an informal discussion took place at which time other relocation centers which he visited were the subject of interest.

As one of his many gifts to the Bussei here, Rev. Goldwater presented pamphlets on Buddhism to the congregation.

Rev. Goldwater was the caretaker of the Los Angeles Betsuin during WWII and delivered items stored at temple as he visited many of the relocation centers.

* * * *

“Ushers & Usherettes”,

LA YBA SANGHA, Official Publication,
Los Angeles Young Buddhist Association,
April 1958 (Monthly Publication)

The following is the ushering schedule for the next five Young People’s Services. If you are unable to usher on the Sunday you are assigned, please call Jack Oriba...

April 27: Penny Ahn, Robert Ahn, Dorothy Hayashida, Marie Koga, Shoichi Sayano, Ryozo Itow

May 4: Toshi Kusumoto, Akiko Kuratomi, George Okada, Kanji Sayano, Kiyo Teramaye, Tom Kurosawa

May 11: Nola Aoyagi, Elaine Kawaharada, Art Takahashi, Sam Ariza, Rose Kaneshige, Bob Kubo

May 18: Ben Jinkawa, Ken Kaya, Mariko Iwamoto, Hannah Kamo, Hiro Mizuki, Bobbie Yanase

May 25: Jimmy Iwamoto, Mary Iwamoto, Hideko Hiram, Rose Goto, Tak Matsumoto, Roy Ichikawa

* * * *

Donations to archives and library are gratefully accepted. Please leave your name so we know who to thank. If possible, let ministers know what you are planning on bringing, or leave a list of items and your contact number in the office. Thank you.

BOOK CENTER NEWS

The Obon season is here!
Available at the Book Center:



- * Children's happi
- * Adult Betsuin Happi
- * Kachi kachi
- * Uchiwa (fan)
- * Tenugui (towel)
- * Bon odori CD and instructional DVD


New Books

Dharma Breeze: Essays on Shin Buddhism by Nobuo Haneda

Description: Most people think the ultimate goal in Buddhism is to become enlightened, but in reading this book we gain another perspective through Dr. Haneda's insights

into the teachings of Shinran, which show us the importance of humility as a key aspect in Shin Buddhist spiritual growth.

Buddha at Bedtime: Tales of Love and Wisdom for You to Read with Your Child to Enchant, Enlighten and Inspire

Description: Many of today's children face challenges and obstacles far beyond what their parents ever imagined. These 20 thoroughly modern retellings of ancient Buddhist tales give parents a fun, low-pressure way to impart wisdom and moral guidance without preaching. Each story highlights a moral or ethical dilemma that echoes those that children face in their own lives, providing insight and enlightenment that they can use to defuse trying situations. At the conclusion of each story, applicable Buddhist principles are discussed. Featuring engaging characters, enthralling adventures, and modern language that speaks to today's kids, these beautifully illustrated stories can help children relieve stress, attain greater academic and social achievement, and enjoy a more positive outlook on life. **FANTASTIC** and can be read to ALL ages. Since this book's stories are short, they are perfect for kids (and adults...my Mom liked it so much she bought one for herself!) and adults... 

Nakata - continued from page 3)

with a main altar. The size of the Goeido structure is 203(W) x 157(D) x 95(F) feet. It is the biggest temple structure in the Edo-era as an existing structure. The *gejin* (hondo audience area) of the Goei-Do can hold more than 1,000 members. Our Betsuin hondo can hold about 450, so imagine how big the Goei-Do is. There are huge mural paintings and wood carvings that were made by using the highest technologies during the Edo-era in the Goei-Do. Moreover, thousands of gold leaves are used to cover the najin (hondo altar area) structures to depict the image of Pure-land in the sutras. Major Jodo Shinshu services are held at Goei-Do.

The Amida-Do was rebuilt in 1760 and the size of the structure is 147(W) x 138(D) feet. As a central reverence, a standing posture of Amida Buddha statue is placed in the altar. The structure is much smaller than Goei-Do. However the Amida-Do became a model of all Jodo Shin-



Amida-Do

shu temples' hondo structure.

When the cultural council made the decision, thousands of Hongwanji members celebrated the recognition as the National Treasure. On May 19, the Hongwanji Governor General Bishop Giko Sonoki who visited our Nishi Betsuin last November made a comment to the television and newspaper media regarding the council's decision. He commented, "*We are preparing for our Hongwanji Monshu accession ceremony next month in June. We are so pleased and honored to receive the recognition from the government. Now we have things to celebrate. Goei-Do and Amida-Do are sweet homes for all Nembutsu fellows. As National Treasures, we will maintain these structures with extra cares.*"

There are 60 structures recognized as National Treasures in Kyoto Japan. The Goei-Do and Amida-Do will be two

(continued on page 8)

Takata - continued from page 2)

As we welcome the Obon season, let us realize the true meaning and significance of a memorial service and listen to the voiceless voice of our loved ones in our daily lives. It is to appreciate all that they have done for us and to recognize the continuation of the influence of their deeds upon our lives. Let us together always live with the calling voice of our loved ones, *Namo-Amidabutsu*, as the basis of true and real life throughout Obon season and actualize the "Gathering of Joy."



NISHI CENTER GOTAN-YE



Nishi Center students brought flowers for the Gotan-ye service, chanted and did oshoko.



The sign at the base of the statue reads: "Happy Birthday Shinran Shonin"

Below are drawings of the Shinran Shonin statue by some of the kindergarten students.



Nakata - continued from page 3)

additions to the list. Kyoto City is already recognized as a World Treasure of Historic Monuments of Ancient Kyoto in 1994.

The Nishi Betsuin was founded in 1905 and the centennial was celebrated in 2005. Next year, in 2015, our Betsuin is reaching its 110th year. It is rare that anyone can reach 110 years of life. Is it easy to reach 110 years of its existence? If something loses its value or meaning, it is easily abandoned as with the Chaco Culture although it was later recognized as a World Treasure.

As I quoted from Larger Sutra of Infinite Life, "when individuals become so grateful and feel joyful by hearing the meaning of Amida Buddha, and if these individuals recite Nembutsu by knowing the meaning, they will live the life of Nembutsu within the great calmness, which is a huge benefit for everyone".

Ever since our Nishi Betsuin was established, thousands have been involved in our Betsuin activities through the Jodo Shinshu tradition and heritage. They have supported and helped our Betsuin tradition because they have enjoyed the life in the Nembutsu community. I sincerely ask each of you will continue to enjoy and support our Nishi Betsuin as a Jodo Shinshu heritage.

Gassho



IN MEMORIAM

The *Nishi Betsuin* extends its deepest condolences to the families of the following members who have recently passed away. May the family members find solace and comfort in the *Nembutsu*.

--*Namo Amida Butsu*

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| April, 2014 | 23 Masatsuki Yamamoto |
| 4 Frank Yoshiharu | 27 Fred Katsuichi Tamashiro |
| Yoshikawa | 29 Chiyoko Aoki |
| 5 Shizuko Ito | |
| 5 Toyo Tanikawa | May, 2014 |
| 7 Noboru Yanagitani | 2 Tomiko Tomita |
| 14 Akira Sasano | 11 Herbert Tsugio Inouye |
| 17 Mabel Chiyono Ige | 16 Ken Miyamoto |
| 19 Kenji Yamamoto | 27 Mikako Fukuuchi Gary |
| 20 Ralph Masato Sasaki | 30 Fusako Imada |
| 20 Mitsuo Ralph Kawamoto | |

BETSUIN PHOTOS



2014 HATSUMAIRI PARTICIPANTS AND FAMILIES

Left: Russell & America Saisho with daughter, Lorelai; William & Christina Safranek with son, Liam; Steve & Kristen Gani with Son Ryder Tokyo and big sister, Khloe ; Rimban William Briones.



Rimban Briones presents Liam with a nenju (ojuzu) while parents look on.



The baby Buddha within the hanamido is sitting upon the white elephant's back surrounded by flowers representing Lumbini Garden.



L-R: Ministers stand before the hanamido and the white elephant during the Hanamatsuri Service.



Dharma School teachers distributing handmade cymbidium corsages to the mothers attending service on Mothers' Day. (L-R): Reiko Kondo, Gail Matsuura, Mrs. Yuka Takata, Kuni Odama, and June Kondo



Rev. Tesshi Aoyama (left) and Rev. Julie Hanada served as guest speakers at the Gotan-ye/Hatsumairi Service.



Boy Scouts showing off a super-sized pancake at the annual Pancake Breakfast



OBON

JULY 12 & 13

SATURDAY

HATSUBON SERVICE 2⁰⁰
 CARNIVAL 3⁰⁰ - 10⁰⁰
 BON ODORI 7⁰⁰ - 9⁰⁰
 BINGO 5⁰⁰ - 10⁰⁰
 DEMONSTRATIONS
 Tea 2⁰⁰ - 4⁰⁰
 Judo 4⁰⁰ - 4³⁰
 Cultural Displays 3⁰⁰ - 8⁰⁰

STAGE PERFORMANCES
 MC: Derek Escano
 Beginning @ 3⁰⁰
 Nishi Center Children
 Ho'Aloha Polynesian Dancers
 Special Guests
 LA Matsuri Daiko
 Music by Kokoro (9⁰⁰ - 10⁰⁰)

SUNDAY

HATSUBON SERVICE 2⁰⁰
 CARNIVAL 3⁰⁰ - 9⁰⁰
 BON ODORI 6³⁰ - 8³⁰
 BINGO 4⁰⁰ - 9⁰⁰
 DEMONSTRATIONS
 Tea 3⁰⁰ - 5⁰⁰
 Cultural Displays 3⁰⁰ - 7⁰⁰

STAGE PERFORMANCES
 MC: Derek Escano
 Beginning @ 2³⁰
 Nishi Center Children
 Matsutoyo Kai
 Kotobuki No Kai
 LA Matsuri Taiko
 Amy Singer & Mark Sanwo

OBON DANCE

PRACTICE DATES



Where: Northwest Parking Lot
 Time: 7:00 - 8:30 pm
 Days: Tuesdays & Thursdays

July 1, 3, & 8, @ Keiro Retirement Home
 from 6:00 pm



SO. DISTRICT OBON ODORI SCHEDULE

July 5
 Senshin 7:00

JULY 12 & 13
L.A. BETSUIN 7:00 / 6:30

July 12
 Oxnard 6:00 (Saturday only)

July 19 & 20
 Pasadena 6:30
 Orange County 7:00
 Santa Barbara 4:00 (Saturday only)

Venice 6:30

July 26 & 27
 Guadalupe 3:00 (Sunday only)
 WLA 6:30
 Vista 6:30
 Higashi 6:30 not BCA

August 2 & 3
 Gardena 6:00
 San Diego 6:30 (Saturday only)
 San Luis Obispo 6:30 (Saturday only)

August 9
 Las Vegas 12:45 - not BCA (Saturday)

JULY 2014

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
		Bon Odori practice 7-8:30 pm		Bon Odori practice 7-8:30 pm	Independence Day Betsuin closed	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Regular Service 10:00 am		Bon Odori practice @ Keiro Retirement Home 6-7:00pm		Board Meeting 7:30 pm		OBON Hatsubon 2:00 pm Carnival 3:00 pm Bon Odori 7:00 pm
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
OBON Hatsubon 2:00 pm Carnival 3:00 pm Bon Odori 6:30 pm			Go-Meinichi-ko 1:30 pm			
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Obon Service 10:00 am						
27	28	29	30	31		
Regular Service 10:00 am						

AUGUST 2014

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3 Atomic Bomb Memorial Service 10:00 am	4	5	6	7	8	9
10 Family Service 10:00 am	11	12	13	14	15	16 Go-Meinichi-ko 1:30 pm
17 Family Service 10:00 am	18	19	20	21	22	23
24 Family Service 10:00 am	25	26	27	28	29	30
31 Family Service 10:00 am						