

# LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

# jihō

WWW

No. 422 January - February 2014

## NEW YEAR'S GREETING

*Immeasurable Light and Life*



**GOMONSHU KOSHIN OHTANI**


At the beginning of the year, I would like to send you my greetings from Hongwanji in Kyoto.

Upon succeeding the position as Monshu, thirty-six years and nine months have passed. I have come to empathize with Chinese master, Shan-tao, as he writes in Hymns of Birth in the Pure Land, "Caught up in everyday life, the days and nights go left unnoticed, unable to become emancipated and escape the sea of suffering." I shall vow to work diligently until my term comes to an end this June.

For many of us, although the passing of time

seems to speed up with age, in recent years, changes within society have sped up, making things all the more unsettling. Because these rapid transitions are largely the result of developments in scientific technology and economic growth, they sometimes produce discrepancies in individual lifestyles and societal framework. The gap among socio-economic concerns including business corporations and people's lifestyles are widening that both domestic and international efforts have not been successful in dealing with such issues. As a result, there is a sense that neither reflecting on the past nor thinking ahead into the future matters, so long as we are content with the present. However, this mentality will result in repeating past mistakes or passing burdens on to future generations.

Is it not that the role of Buddhism is to provide us who live in this constantly changing world, with an unfaltering spiritual foundation to live the life which we have received to the fullest? In Jodo Shinshu Buddhism, that foundation is the Primal Vow of Amida Tathagata, namely Namo Amida Butsu. Being unconditionally embraced by Amida Tathagata, we are enabled to accept our own inconvenient past and at this very moment, be joyous of this life we have received.

May we all continue to live every day of this year in appreciation of the Nembutsu. 

January 1, 2014

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## RIMBAN'S MESSAGE

## THOUGHTS ON THIS NEW YEAR 2014



**RIMBAN  
WILLIAM BRIONES**

As we begin the New Year, many of us see the New Year as a fresh beginning, an opportunity to start anew, maybe change some old habits, or perhaps to resolve to improve ourselves to become a better person.

But as we begin 2014, rather than making New Years' resolutions, resolutions that are usually broken in a couple of weeks, let us reflect and be mindful of those innumerable causes and conditions that brought us to this

New Year. To recognize and be totally aware of the causes and conditions that surround us will result in experiencing the transforming power of gratitude and appreciation. And here in lies the truth on how we move into the future.

As the new Rimbán, as I reflect on the future of Nishi Betsuin I am reminded of the aspirations of our past leaders and ministers to maintain our temple and spread the nembutsu teachings. With this in mind, the direction I take as rimbán is clear.

#### Maintaining Nishi Betsuin

After 44 years at the present site, we find our temple showing signs of age and deterioration, as well as our *naijin* (altar) that is in much need of repair. If we are to have a facility for our members and friends to come to the temple to hear the Buddha-dharma and be in the company of dharma friends sharing their fellowship, then our temple must provide a safe and conducive environment.

It was out of this concern that during the annual board of directors meeting in October, it was voted unanimously to begin a major fund raiser to repair or replace the outdated or damaged areas of the facility. Also to send the worn and damaged *naijin* to Japan to have refurbished. The fund raiser will be in conjunction with our 50th Year Anniversary of our Betsuin being at the present site since its dedication in 1969 (more information is forthcoming).

#### Spreading the Nembutsu Teachings

To come to a beautiful temple and be in the company of dharma friends and sharing their fellowship is a wonderful experience. And though our fundraising and temple activities are a very important aspect of temple survival, least we not forget the importance of our spiritual growth and understanding of the nembutsu.

As part of the 50th Year Anniversary Fund Raiser, Rev.


Takata, Rev. Nakata and myself have already begun planning for seminars and lectures during this period. Our first lecture will be the Saturday before the Ho-onko. Seminars, study classes, and lectures will continue throughout the fundraising. However, I hope these classes will make for a strong foundation so that we can continue to offer classes, not only to our members but to the community as well, making the Nishi Betsuin a study center in the future.

The future of our Betsuin not only depends on what I or Revs. Takata and Nakata do but it depends on you as well, you must make the Buddhist teachings an essential part of our everyday lives, not just something you compartmentalize on Sunday or at a funeral of a loved one. You must seek to understand the truth of the dharma with your lives, you must try to examine, test, and practice it in everything we do. You have to experience it. You don't have to be a Buddhist scholar, but you should make an effort to appreciate the basic purpose of the dharma.

As the year 2013 comes to a close, Nobuko and I would like to wish you and your family a very meaningful and fulfilling 2014. I would also like to express my sincerest appreciation and gratitude to all for your continued support and friendship. To be able to share the nembutsu teaching with you has been a truly wonderful experience for me.

I'd also like to express my heartfelt welcome to Rev. Koho Takata and his wife, Yuka and his two lovely girls, Kaylee and Shanti. Rev. Takata's expertise that he brings from his many years of experience with the Hawaii Kyodan as Executive Assistant to the Bishop has been such an asset to our temple. Many thanks to Rev. Kaz Nakata for his continued hard work and dedication as well as his positive and optimistic attitude. To Rev. Nakata's lovely family, his wife, Michiko and two children, Kanon and Michilu, many thanks for brightening up our hallways and offices with your laughter.

Many thanks to our office staff, Toshiko Sugiyama, Rie Fujii and Vance Ikkanda for all their hard work to keep the temple running so smoothly. And to all our volunteers ... words cannot express my sincerest gratitude and appreciation to our temple volunteers for their personal time they have unselfishly dedicated to Betsuin.

May gratitude and appreciation enter your life through your understanding of the Nembutsu Teachings. Much joy and happiness in the New Year. 

*Namo Amida Butsu*

## BREATHE

by Rev. Koho Takata



REV. KOHO TAKATA

Happy New Year to you all. Throughout last year, I was supported and guided by the Buddha, dharma, and sangha. I am truly grateful to all of you for your untiring efforts, energies, and devotion in listening to the Buddha-dharma and carrying out the many activities and plans. May we also, together, continue to live with Namu-Amidabutsu as the basis of true and real life in this year 2014.

As we welcome in another brand new year, I would like to share the Buddha-dharma with you by means of a short story.

A Buddhist teacher once asked a question to his disciples, *"What is the most important thing in your life?"* One of disciples replied to the teacher, *"It is food. Without food we cannot live."* The next disciple replied, *"It is my job. Without a job, I cannot earn money for food to eat."* The last disciple replied, *"It is a mind for seeking the truth."*

How about you? What is the most important thing in your life? Some of you may say that it is money, love, family, fame, pride, health, children, and so forth. In our daily lives, we are attached and dependent on so many of those external things. We believe that as long as we have those, we can enjoy our lives forever. No matter how much we rely upon those things, however, when we die, we cannot take anything at all and they do not help at all.

Going back to the story, when the teacher heard his disciples' replies, he gave a signal to one of disciples to step forward. There was a big pot full of water next to the teacher. The teacher then grabbed the disciple's neck and pulled his head into the water. At that moment, all the disciples were enlightened as to what was most important in their lives. Are **you** now enlightened? Do you now know what is most important in your life? The answer is – to be able to breathe – to inhale and to exhale.

Life begins with a single breath. The moment we are born and leave the our mother's womb, we begin the life-long process of inhaling and exhaling that continue until the moment we die. The historical Sakyamuni Buddha stated that there will be a day when we will stop breathing.

As a minister in Hawaii, I was able to enjoy surfing. One evening, I went to the north shore, Hanalei, on Kauai. Unfortunately, it was raining heavily. I watched the waves from my car. Despite the horrible conditions, I saw that there were some who were surfing in the downpour. After watching for awhile, I returned home. That night, I received a call from a doctor at Wilcox Hospital-Emergency since I also served as a hospital chaplain. He asked me to conduct a bedside service for his friend. I went to the hospital. Before the service, I asked the doctor about the cause of his friend's death. The doctor told me that he was surfing in the north shore and had drowned. It was the exact location where I was watching that evening. Because of the big waves and heavy rain, the lifeguards were not able to see him. I thought to myself, "If I was surfing that evening, I might have drowned as did this person." I recalled a couple experiences of nearby drownings due to big waves. I was reminded of the importance of breathing and appreciation of this life.

We can live days without food, years without a job, or a lifetime without truth. However, we cannot live minutes without a breath. We take it for granted. It is really a wonderful thing to breathe in and out. For that, we should be truly grateful. To breathe, we need air. Without the elements of nature such as water, sunshine, rain, etc., the air does not exist. Our lives are sustained by many things and beings.

We are alive, but actually we are not living by ourselves. We are enabled to live because of many beings and factors. We are living in the interdependence and interconnected world. Most importantly, we are made to live in Amida Buddha's timeless wisdom and limitless compassion, infinite light and life. This is why we should be truly grateful. From this gratefulness and thankfulness, we recite Amida Buddha's name *"Namu-Amidabutsu"* with a single breath as the basis of true and real life.

Year 2013 has ended with your single breath and a new year, 2014, has begun with a single breath. Each year, day, and moment begins and ends with your single breath. Let us all realize what the most important thing in our lives is and fill our lives with joy of the Buddha-dharma by listening to and practicing the Buddha-dharma in our daily lives.



## WHY DO WE CALL OURSELVES JODO SHINSHU—WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

by Rev. Kazuaki Nakata



REV. "Kaz"

I would like to wish the Nishi Betsuin Jiho readers a "Happy New Year, 2014!" I have now been in Los Angeles for a year and half and this is my second New Year at the Betsuin. During the past year of 2013, many of you have supported the many temple activities and have also helped me, personally. I sincerely appreciate each of your show

of generosity to the temple and I ask for your continued support to the Betsuin during the year of 2014.

To those who have read the December issue of the *Wheel of Dharma*, the BCA monthly newsletter, you may have noticed the reference to the Governor General (Socho) Sonoki of Nishi Hongwanji, Kyoto having visited the Nishi Betsuin in November. There is a group picture of Socho Sonoki and his entourage along with the Nishi Center children in the *hondo* in this Jiho issue. (see page 3) The visitors had joined our morning chanting (*O-Asaji*).

Our temple status is categorized as a "*Betsuin*," which is a head temple of a district. All *betsuin* temples are under the direct control of Nishi Hongwanji *monshu*. The *monshu* is the head minister of our mother temple (*Honzan*), Nishi Hongwanji Buddhist Temple in Kyoto.

At a regular local temple a "resident minister" (*jushoku*) is also considered to be an "assigned minister." For instance, Rev. Ron Kobata is the resident minister of the Buddhist Church of San Francisco and is also an assigned minister. On the other hand, the resident minister of a *betsuin* temple is the *monshu*. So, technically, the current *monshu*, Koshin Ohtani, is the resident minister of the Nishi Betsuin.

Presently, there are more than 50 *Betsuin* temples worldwide. The top priority for the *Monshu* Koshin Ohtani is to serve the *Honzan* and then to all the *Betsuin* temples. Because the *Monshu* cannot physically serve all these *Betsuin* temples as a resident minister a "deputy" to administrate the *betsuin* operation, on behalf of *Monshu* is assigned. This deputy position is known as the "*Rimban*." Reverend Briones, therefore, is not only *Rimban* Briones, but he also serves his *Rimban* post as the deputy *monshu*. Some individuals add honorific "*Go*" as a prefix to "*Rimban*," and thus address him as "*Go-Rimban*" to show their respect.

The basic purpose of a *betsuin* is to perform as the hub

temple of a local district. An example is, the Seattle Betsuin serves as the hub temple of the North Western District. The Los Angeles Betsuin perform as a law model for all the southern California temples.

The purpose of the recent visitation of Socho Sonoki was to deepen the relationship with the Los Angeles Betsuin ministerial staff and to observe our temple facilities. The Betsuin was established in 1905 and the Betsuin had functioned to spread the *nembutsu* teachings for last 108 years. With the Socho's visit, I have been inspired to increase my efforts to promote the teachings here at the Betsuin.

I would, now, like to explain how the term, "Jodo Shinshu" came about ...Why we call ourselves Jodo Shinshu Buddhists.

Our Nishi Betsuin belongs to the sect (*sangha* group) of Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha. Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha is currently our official name, but the usage of the name was approved by the Japanese government only 100 some years ago during the Meiji-era (1868-1912). During the Edo period (1603-1868), Japan was governed by the Tokugawa shogunate. This shogunate had the power to control and modify the names of temples. The shogunate belonged to the Zojo-ji temple of the Jodo-Shu (not Jodo-Shinshu) sect in Tokyo for many generations. The Hongwanji submitted a petition to the Tokugawa administration to use the name "Jodo Shinshu" as their official name. The Shogun rejected the request having been influenced by the Jodo-Shu school's opposition to the petition.

Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha is commonly known as Nishi Hongwanji or just simply as "Nishi." Jodo Shinshu was founded by Shinran Shonin who lived during the 12th-13th century. The root of the name "Jodo Shinshu" was mentioned by Shinran Shonin in his writings, but it was not his intention to form his own *sangha* group or sect. Where the term "Jodo Shinshu" appears is in Shinran's main writings, the "*Kyogyoshinsho*." In the introduction of the *Kyogoshinsho* "*Joshu*," he wrote:

In the English translation, it is not known where he wrote the term "*Jodo Shinshu*," but in Japanese, he did write "*Shinshu*" as the true essence or the true teaching in this quote.

In the first chapter of the *True Teaching of Kyogoshinsho*, Shinran stated: Both passages use the same

(continued on page 8)

## BETSUIN BOARD PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Lonny Quon



**LONNY QUON**

As we have concluded the year 2013, I would like to express my deepest appreciations for your support to our Betsuin this past year. Moving forward to 2014, I sincerely ask for your continued help to build and strengthen our temple for the future. I want to thank our ministerial staff, former Rimban Hiroshi Abiko, Rimban William Briones, Rev.

Koho Takata, and Rev. Kazuaki Nakata for dedicating their time and devotion to our members and community. We look forward to the future of the LA Betsuin under the new guidance of Rimban Briones and a very supportive ministerial staff.

I also want to thank our *komon*, members of the board of directors, and our board of trustees for their support and guidance. Special thanks to our office staff and the many volunteers for their assistance in meeting the daily administrative tasks and routines of our temple.

Finally, I want to thank our branch temples, affiliated organizations, maintenance, Kouhaku, and special committees for their support and help with the temple programs, events, fund raisers and facility maintenance. This past year's Kouhaku, Surf and Turf, and Obon Festival, once again, were all very successful. Please continue to help us improve and expand these events in 2014.

As I complete my second year as board president, I am truly grateful to all the mentors I had helping me with the programs and events at the temple. I appreciate everyone's patience with my mistakes and lack of knowledge on many temple routines and religious traditions. I ask for your continued advice and guidance in 2014. With your help, the LA Betsuin will continue to be a special place for our members and the community. *Doumo arigatou.*



In *gassho*,

Lonny Quon, Board President



## OFFICIALS FROM HONZAN VISIT LA BETSUIN

One, two, three,...counted the children...four, five, six. Six!

The Nishi Center children counted six ministers during a Monday morning service in November. Every week day at 9:00 AM the children of the Nishi Hongwanji Child Development Center joins one or two of our ministers for the regular morning service.

On November 25th, however, not only did Rimban Briones, Rev. Takata and Rev. Nakata conduct service, but three very special officials from our mother temple (*Honzan*) in Kyoto joined our morning service.

The visiting officials from Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha were: the Governor General, Bishop Giko Sonoki; the Executive Administrator, Rev. Shiho Nakao; and from Temple Affairs, Rev. Itaru Nozaki. They spent two days visiting the Los Angeles area.

During their stay they had an opportunity to visit and tour our the LA Betsuin for the first time and meet with temple president, Lonny Quon, and our newly elected president-elect, Kenji Hatakeyama as well as our *komon* (senior advisors), Shoichi Sayano and Ernest Hida.

Rimban Briones, with the aide of Rev. Takata's translation, spoke to Bishop Sonoki about plans for a 50th Year Anniversary for our Betsuin existing at the present site since 1969. Rimban explained how almost after 45 years our temple is showing major signs of "wear and tear" and that a major fund raiser had been approved by the board to start the much

(continued on page 8)



Officials from *Honzan* pose with Nishi Center students and staff after the morning service.

## HO-ONKO, SHINRAN SHONIN'S MEMORIAL SERVICE

by Rev. Koho Takata

The members of the Los Angeles Honpa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple and their families are invited to attend the Ho-onko, the Memorial Service for Shinran Shonin which is the most important tradition in the Pure Land Shin Buddhism to be held on Sunday, January 19, 2013. The guest speaker for the service will be **Reverend Katsuya Kusunoki** of the Buddhist Church of Lodi for English Service and **Reverend Orai Fujikawa** of Salinas Buddhist Temple for Japanese Service.

Hoonko is a time to express our gratitude to Shinran Shonin, the founder, on the day of his death, January 16, 1262. Literally, the Japanese characters "Ho-On" means "return of gratitude" and "Ko" means "to clarify the meaning of."

Ho-onko is the most important for the Jodo Shin Buddhists because it is a day to pay our respects to the founder of the sect, Shinran Shonin. We commemorate the anniversary of his death. On this occasion, we assemble together to pay our homage to his memory and to Amida Buddha for having awakened us to the existence of life's supreme debt of gratitude.

Shinran Shonin lived in the Kamakura Era of Japan. In a time of disunity and violence, Shinran Shonin sought a way for all beings to attain perfect peace equally. Shinran Shonin interpreted Buddhism on the level of the common people. During that period in Japan, to become a Buddhist meant having to leave one's home and family to enter a life of strict practices and the intellectual study of Buddhism. Shinran Shonin, however, lived the life of an ordinary person – the same as that of the farmers and fishermen. Shinran Shonin had a wife and children. He ate meat and fish. Shinran Shonin lived a nenbutsu life with his family and opened up the path to Buddhism to the common people. If Shinran Shonin had not clarified the teachings of the Primal Vow, our temple and sangha would not be in existence today. For this, we praise the virtues of our founder Shinran Shonin, express our sincere appreciation for having encountered his teachings, and reconfirm our true entrusting minds to listen and live his teachings each day.

In conjunction with Hoonko Service, we are fortunate to have a **Hoonko Seminar** entitled "*Sharing our life stories as Buddhists*" on Saturday, January 18, 2014. This is the same theme as the 2014 So District Buddhist Conference to be held in October.

## BOOK CENTER NEWS

### New Nenju

Now available – unique & special O-Nenju for teens and children. There are vibrant colors to choose from: purple, rose, red-rose, cobalt blue, turquoise, and many more. There are also alphabet beads that can be added for a personalized touch. You may select your own color and 3-7 letters. Young children will enjoy having their personalized *nenju*.

There are also wrist *nenju* with bumblebees, ladybugs, basketballs or baseballs. Children will enjoy these, as well.

### New Books

#### *Embraced by the Buddha*

#### – *From Christian to Buddhist*

By Toshiko Kawamura,

Printed By The Nenbutsu Press


The author, Toshiko Kawamura, passed away in January 2013 in Yamaguchi, Japan, at age 92. She had come from a Christian family and had graduated from a university in Tokyo. Soon after her marriage, she had to move from Tokyo to her husband's hometown of Hagi in Yamaguchi during the war to escape the bombings in Tokyo. This book is her story of how she converted from Christianity to Buddhism. In her writings, Kawamura praises her mother-in-law who devotedly took refuge in the teachings of Amida-Buddha.

This book (English Version) was first printed by the Nenbutsu Press in Los Angeles. Later, it was reprinted by Rev. Bert Sumikawa for the Kapolei Buddhist Sangha and now is in its third printing by Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii Headquarters.

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#### *A Simple Act of Gratitude*

(continued on page 11)

The seminar will begin at 9:00am and end at 4:00pm. The guest speaker will be Reverend Katsuya Kusunoki who specializes in altar ornaments and rituals. He will focus on the meaning of each ornament in the altar in the morning session and also the meaning and proper way of basic etiquettes and rituals in the afternoon session through sharing his life story. We encourage all of you to hear the teaching of Shinran Shonin. 

(see ad on page 9)

## DID YOU KNOW?...

by Eiko Masuyama



EIKO MASUYAMA

Interviewed May 1, 2013

The following is an interview of Shizue Sera and Alice Ibaraki. The answers to the interview questions are interspersed between the two ladies.

Shizue Ogimachi Sera graduated from Roosevelt High School, went to a beauty school and received her beautician license in 1942. She is currently living in Culver City with her daughter, Barbara Miyamoto.

Alice Kimoto Ibaraki graduated from Heart Mountain High School in 1943 and is currently living with her husband, Albert Ibaraki, in Montebello.

### Memories, "Growing up at Nishi"

**Q:** What is your earliest recollection of attending Nishi?

**Sera:** I feel like I've always been going to Nishi. However, I was told that my sister, Hayami—12 years my senior—and her friend, Toshiye Nagata, who were babysitting me, took me to Sunday School with them. I must have been a toddler, because they took turns holding my diaper bag. This was when the temple was located at Yamato Hall, on the second floor, so I must have been around one to two years old.

**Q:** What do you remember of Sunday School? Who were teachers you recall?

**A:** Fumiko Kito Iijima and Haruko Fujita Nakayama. Fellow choir members and friends were: Mieko Kito Masada, Alice Nagasaki Hatago, Kajiko Takenouchi, Yoshimi Hayashi Ishitani, Sumi Nakashima Hayamizu, Mieko Azeka Kubota, Kimi Terama Ishii, May Shiota Nishimoto, and Ritsu Uyeno Nabeta

**Q:** Who were the reverends?

**A:** Rev. Yukawa was easy to speak to. He used to, jokingly, say that members always invited his wife to come visit, but not him...

Rev Okita was Fuku (Assistant) Rimban

Rev. Kuwatsuki taught Obon odori

Rev. Maehara used to take a carload of us to other Obons and their practices. We liked to go with him because he would buy treats.

Rev. Tsuruyama and Rev. Kow

After Sunday School, we would often run downstairs [Central Avenue temple] to the basement to the ping pong room, but the older guys would always beat us and turn us away. Some of the guys in the Nishi RAMS would shoo us away and say, "We are the Nishi Royal American Men's Society, the Nishi RAMS, so go away!" Some of the members of the RAMS were Joe and Tom Nakashima, Hisao Masuyama, Arthur Takemoto, and Sanford Sato.

After Sunday School, sometimes, we would not take the bus directly home. The bus was yellow and old and more like a van, with seating for around 10 people. It would take different routes – downtown and Boyle Heights.

We would tell the bus driver, Eizo-san (Masuyama) that we were going to walk home, and he would always admonish us, "Did you tell your mother?" to which we always answered, "Yes!" We would then part with, "Cheerio!" We would walk over the bridge to Boyle Avenue and then sit on the benches in the plaza and rest and talk. That area was called *The Flats*, I think, Russian town. Sometimes, we would walk further to Hollenbeck Park and ride the boats.

**Q:** What temple activities do you recall?

**A:** Obon. For *bon odori*, most participants wore kimonos...very formal. *Oshosan Kiyomura* (?) taught the other teachers, like Michiko Sato, who then taught us various *odori*. We danced on Central Avenue, in front of the temple, from East First Street, all the way to Jackson Street, dancing past Koyasan Buddhist Temple (located just north of Nishi), and ending up near Yamato Hall, which was located on Jackson Street. It was one long block.

The carnival used to be held downstairs in the basement. The kitchen was on one end (south), where the cooking took place, until it got too crowded and the booths had to be moved above ground. The carnival was organized by the YBA, I think, with leaders like Carl and Sanford Sato and Noboru Ishitani. There were food booths (hot dogs, popcorn, sushi, shaved ice) and some game booths.

Picnics were held at Arroyo Seco Park and Elysian Park.

Jr YBA had beach party socials.

(continued on page 9)



Alice Ibaraki (left) and Shizue Sera

## STRIKE! LET'S GO BOWLING!

by Joanne Nakamura

On Saturday November 9, 2013 ABA organizations from Gardena, OCBC, and the LA Betsuin temples enjoyed bowling and a delicious BBQ dinner. The "Fun, Food And Friendship" event was held at XLanes in Little Tokyo.

Thirty two bowlers participated in a memorable evening of laughter and friendship. Following the games, 60 friends and families met at the Betsuin and shared a tasty BBQ meal catered by "Jonny's Texas BBQ".

Honored was the *Alley Cats* team for the highest scoring team: Karen Escano (Nishi), Barbara Okita ( Nishi) , Gilbert Morita ( OCBC), and Pat Umeno (OCBC).

The ABA organization is committed to family fun, extending and expanding friendship through social events and activities, serving and supporting our temple and its members. New members are always welcomed. Come and join this great and dedicated organization, you'll be glad you did. 🍀



L-R: Gilbert Morita, Pat Umeno, Barbara Okita, and Karen Escano

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### (Officials From Honzan - continued from page 5)

needed repair of our temple, as well as a complete restoration of our *naijin* (altar). Rimban also expressed his desire for *Honzan* to participate in the upcoming commemoration.

Though their stay was brief, Rimban Briones and Rev. Takata were able to take them to the Japanese-American National Museum for a tour of the Historical Nishi Betsuin and the BCA Archives. We hope their trip was productive as well as enjoyable. 🍀

### (Rev. Nakata - continued from page 4)

phrase, "the true essence" in English. In Japanese, however, Shinran wrote "*Shinshu*" in the first passage and "*Jodo Shinshu*" in the second one. In reading the original text in Japanese one would realize that the English translation does not accurately interpret the essence of Shinran's writings. In the second passage, Shonin used the term "*Jodo Shinshu*" to express "*the true understanding of Pure Land Buddhism.*" Why is it that he used the term "*Jodo Shinshu*?"

Shinran's teacher, Honen Shonin, had a keen understanding of Indian Pure Land Buddhism and Chinese Pure Land Buddhism. Honen was able to simplify the teachings and made them accessible to the illiterate farmers of the 12th-13th century Japan. It was Shinran's intention to share Honen's teachings of "**Pure Land Buddhism**" as "*True understanding of Pure Land Buddhism*"— *Jodo Shinshu*.

Those who followed Honen formed *Jodo-shu*. Shinran followed Honen. With that, why are we not *Jodo-shu* followers?

The answer is simple. As I stated, "Those who followed Honen formed *Jodo-shu*." Those who followed Shinran who followed Honen formed *Jodo Shinshu*.

It was Shinran's endeavor to share his understanding of Honen's teaching which he did until he was 90 years old. Many came to seek out Shinran to listen to what he said about the *Jodo Shinshu* teachings. These people are our *Jodo Shinshu* ancestors. The first generation of Japanese Americans in 1890s were descendants of these *Jodo Shinshu* ancestors. These descendants raised enough funds to build *Jodo Shinshu* temples throughout the country, particularly in California. In 1905 the Nishi Betsuin was established as one of these temples.

Each year, we welcome the New Year at the Nishi Betsuin. If, however, there was no one who had any interest in *Jodo Shinshu*, the Nishi Betsuin would not exist here in downtown Los Angeles. Because we do have your support, we can continue to welcome the New Year every January 1st at the Betsuin. With all the help and support of so many individuals, I remind myself that I should not take for granted that all these generous people are part of the Nishi Betsuin. 🍀

*Gassho*



*(Did You Know? - continued from page 7)*

### Chigo

**Ibaraki:** I recall my brother, Hayato, participating in a *Chigo* parade in the 1930s. We have a photo of him in a *Chigo* costume.

### Memories, Heart Mountain Relocation Center, 1942 – 1945

Sera worked as beautician, being paid \$16 per week. Ibaraki, graduated from Heart Mountain High School in 1943, then worked as an aide in the elementary school.

**Ibaraki:** My parents, Kinzuchi and Kayo Ibaraki, brother, Hayato, and I arrived in Heart Mountain with leaders, Rev. Reichi Mohri and Mr. Yutaka Shinohara, as Hongwanji Family #18390 via Santa Anita Assembly Center. Masao and Masako Tasaki, cousins, with their children Tsuneo and Yoshio were also a part of this group, which included most of the wives and children of the ministers at Nishi Hongwanji. The ministers, except for Rev. Mohri, Rev. Ishiura, and Rev. Goldwater, were picked up [Eight ministers: Abiko, Hayashima, Kow, Kuwatsuki, Maehara, Okita, Ono, Yamamoto] by the FBI immediately after the Pearl Harbor attack and incarcerated in various locations.

**Q:** What are your memories of Heart Mountain Buddhist Church?

**A:** Block 17 – Buddhist Federation (Bukkyo Dan), included Nishi and Higashi Hongwanji, Jodoshu, Nichiren

Nishi Hongwanji minister: Rev. Tsuruyama;

Higashi Hongwanji ministers: Revs. Izuhara, Yoshikami, Ashikaga, Kubose;

Nichiren minister: Rev. Nozaki; and a Jodoshu minister.

Services: A.M.: Sunday School and Adult in English; P.M.: in Japanese

Jr. YBA group activities

Butsudan built by Okashima (?) sent to Chicago Buddhist Church after the war

Smaller butsudan built by Okashima (?) given to Kimoto family, now in the home of Alice and Albert Kimoto Ibaraki

Block 30 – Nishi Hongwanji Buddhist Church dedicated April 18, 1943

Minister: Rev. R. Mohri, later to be joined by Rev. Kow and Rev. Hayashima

[Sunday School Superintendent: Mr. Yutaka Shinohara]

\* \* \*

*Betsuin Archives* looking for photos of past ministers: Rev. Ryuun Asayoshi (1905), Rev. E'un Miyamoto (1910), Rev. Joshin Haraguchi (1914-1919), Rev. Teishin Kawakami (1912-1919), Rev. Keiryu Akasaka (1922), Rev. Jushin'in Shindo (1922), Rev. Gyosho Noda (1928-1931), Rev. Jitsuyo Okabe (1938-1940) 

## NOKOTSUDO INFORMATION

As reported in the November-December 2013 issue of the *Betsuin Jiho*, the *Nokotsudo Committee* had checked their records and found that some individuals had reserved a niche space in the Muryokoju Do (columbarium) and have not completed the process by paying for the right to use and signing the contract.

These individuals were notified. The reservations for niche spaces that have not yet been contracted and/or paid for of as of December 31st 2013 have been duly cancelled.

If there are any questions, contact the Betsuin office (213-680-9130) and a nokotsudo committee member will be in contact. Committee members are available at the temple on Sundays from 10:00 am to 12 noon.

To be noted: The committee is examining the need to raise the cost of purchasing a niche during the year 2014.

## HO-ONKO SEMINAR

Saturday, January 18<sup>th</sup>  
Nishi Betsuin  
9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Guest Speaker:  
Rev. Katsuya Kusunoki  
"Altar Ornaments and  
Basic Etiquette & Rituals"

Registration Fee: \$15  
Deadline: January 12<sup>th</sup>

Tel: 213-680-9130



## TETSUJIRO “TEX” NAKAMURA POST-WAR YEARS

*The following is an article that was published in the Rafu Shimpo in March of 2013.*

**Tetsujiro “Tex” Nakamura**, was the Betsuin president during 1978-79. He also served as the temple’s legal advisor. In the 1960s, he was instrumental in the negotiations with the City of Los Angeles for the current temple site and was involved with the building of the Betsuin building on the current site.

### SENIOR MOMENTS:

#### Our Visit with Tex Nakamura

by Phil Shigekuni

In one of my columns about Tule Lake, I mentioned Tex Nakamura in connection with Wayne Collins and the work Collins did to restore citizenship to those who had renounced their citizenship during WWII. I was not aware of Tex, who worked closely with Wayne Collins, and said I would like to meet him.

A few days later I got an email from his daughter, Irene Yoshioka, saying that her father would like to meet me. We had our meeting at Tex’s home in Hacienda Heights last Saturday. I invited Martha Nakagawa, a writer for The Rafu who interviewed Tex eight years ago, former Tule Lake inmate Yukio Kawaratani, and videographer John Esaki from the Japanese American National Museum.

Tex is recovering from influenza and has one full-time caregiver and one part-time assistant. He sat in a recliner couch with the three of us gathered around him. Considering his 95 years, he looks very good. When we spoke to him, we spoke into an audio device connected to his hearing aid.

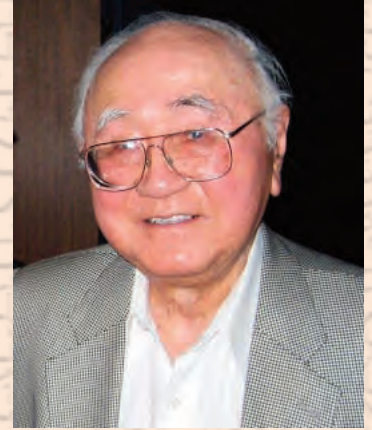
Irene is fourth-born and the only girl in his family of five children. She lives a block away and is able to frequently look in on her dad. Having two girls of my own, Tex and I agreed how great it is to have girls who tend to be so nurturing.

Tex and Yukio chatted about the work they did with CRA (Community Redevelopment Agency Los Angeles), which was responsible for planning the development of downtown L.A. Yukio was the senior planner working on the Bunker Hill project and provided the staff work to start the Little Tokyo Redevelopment Project. In the 1970s, Tex was appointed to be one of seven city-wide commissioners on the CRA/LA Board of Directors.

Before going to Tex’s home I read the interview that Martha had done with him, so I had a good idea what he accomplished, particularly after the war.

Here he was, a recent UC Berkeley graduate who

chose to remain interned in Tule Lake to help his fellow JAs who sorely needed him. Against his advice, thousands had renounced their citizenship and were in danger of being deported to Japan. In 1945, he went to San Francisco and enlisted the support of Wayne Collins, a civil rights attorney activist. Tex provided critical legal help to the Japanese-speaking Issei and Kibei.



Tetsujiro “Tex” Nakamura

In 1957, Tex went to Japan and was successful in restoring even more of the citizenships of the Nisei and Kibei, allowing many to return to the U.S. Their work together was to last until 1968 — 23 years! Between the two of them, they were successful in restoring the citizenship of nearly all of the 5,600 renunciants.

Tex Nakamura during an interview at his home in Hacienda Heights. (John Esaki/JANM)

Much of Tex’s time was spent organizing the renunciants and raising sufficient funds to defend them in a mass action suit filed by Collins and the Tule Lake Defense Committee. Tex says this experience was also helpful when he was called upon to help raise funds and acquire the property to relocate and build the present Nishi Hongwangi Temple in Little Tokyo on First and Vignes.

Because of my involvement with JACL, I asked Tex whether he thought we in the community should ask JACL to apologize for its lack of support of the renunciants. Many saw this lack of support as criticizing and even condemning the renunciants.

Knowing Wayne Collins’ anger towards the JACL, I was surprised at Tex’s response: He said he had written a letter to JACL’s national president, Saburo Kido, who was incarcerated in Poston, asking for his support for the renunciants. Kido wrote back saying he was unable to give support to the renunciants due to the strong objections from the Seattle, New York, and Southern California JACL chapters.

In Tex’s own words, “This is the reason why I was asked by Masami Sasaki to leave camp and get help from the Northern California ACLU and stop the deportation of

*(continued on page 11)*

*(Tetsujiro Nakamura - continued from page 10)*

the renunciants. In San Francisco I met Mr. (Ernest) Besig, chairman of the San Francisco ACLU, and he referred me to Mr. Wayne Collins. Mr. Collins had expressed to Mr. Besig the unconstitutionality of the renunciation and deportation.

“The next day we left for Tule Lake. Mr. Collins spoke to them of their constitutional rights as citizens and how they were forced to make decisions without the protection of the government and under duress. The renunciants helped raise the beginning funds to create the Tule Lake Defense Committee and the beginning of their freedom of citizenship.

“After the war, Mr. Collins filed a mass habeas corpus action to prevent the deportation to Japan, and at the same time filed the equity suit to set aside the renunciation of citizenship under the grounds of governmental duress. In the San Francisco U.S. District Court we won the case against deportation on Nov. 13, 1945, but the government soon appealed the case and it then went to the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, D.C.

“Due to interference by the Southern California ACLU, who was representing the individual renunciant, (Yoshio) Murakami, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that a mass class action suit for 10,000 renunciants could not continue, and we were then referred back to the San Francisco U.S. District Court.

“Each renunciant had to be filed individually and tried individually. It took 10 years to restore all of the renunciants’ citizenships, but it was done!”

Rather than an apology, Tex said he would like to know the reasons why the JACL did not support the renunciants at that time of crisis. This, he would say, is the extent of

what needs to be done.


In thinking about Tex’s even-handed reply, it makes sense: JACL stands for Japanese American Citizens League with the emphasis on “citizen.” From its inception, JACL divided eligible members who were citizens from their ineligible Issei parents. Although this requirement persists today, I doubt whether it is enforced.

For whatever reason, during WWII, for anyone choosing to renounce their citizenship, the JACL, putting such a premium on citizenship, could hardly support that person. Supporting efforts to help regain lost citizenship would have been heroic, but was not to be, even after the war.

The pilgrimages to Tule Lake have greatly helped to shed light on the plight of all incarcerated there, including the renunciants. Helpful, as well, are books such as Barbara Takei’s “Tule Lake Revisited.”

The Southern California JA Historical Society’s panels in 2010 and 2012 were enlightening, allowing the community to hear first-hand from the former Tule Lake inmates.

It was a privilege to be a part of this gathering to interview Tetsujiro “Tex” Nakamura. He has stood in the shadow of Wayne Collins and needs to be recognized as a real Japanese American hero.

Time is running out to hear from people such as Tex and Yukio. Instead of being stigmatized, former Tule Lake inmates deserve to be understood and acknowledged for the special travails they and their families went through during and long after the war. 

*Phil Shigekuni writes from San Fernando Valley and can be contacted at pshig2000@verizon.net. The opinions expressed are not necessarily those of The Rafu Shimpō.*

*Book Center News - continued from page 6)*

**– How learning To Say Thank You Changed My Life**

By John Kralik

"In late 2007, I felt that everything in my life was going wrong. My business was struggling and I feared losing the most important relationships in my life...". A Simple Act of Gratitude is John Kralik's story which reminds us of all those in our lives who deserve our thanks. Though his journey was remarkably personal, it has the power to connect to each one of us.

\* \* \*

**Japanese Foods That Heal**

By John and Jan Belleme

Using traditional ingredients to promote health, longevity and well-being.

\* \* \*

**Children’s Books**

**A Little Thank You**

By Kerry Lee

**You Make the World Better**

By Kelly Lee



**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*

**October, 2013**

- 1 Tomoko Ogasawara
- 4 Yoshito Tozaki
- 4 Yukiko Oseki
- 9 Suzuko Tsuji
- 9 Mitsugi Uyeki
- 11 Toshiko Kusumoto
- 19 Toshio Kato
- 26 Bob Kazumi Yoneyama
- 27 Helen Isa
- 28 Nofuko Yokomi
- 28 Miyoko Okamoto
- 29 Shigeiko Kunitake
- 30 Sugie Okamoto

**November, 2013**

- 2 Yoshiye Doi
- 2 Arlene Ching
- 4 Hanako Matsuno
- 9 Fred Takiguchi
- 15 Tom Sakata
- 20 Leslie Goshi
- 22 Masashi Kawasaki
- 24 Takashi Higa
- 28 Kiyooki Hamamoto

**MEMORIAL SERVICES FOR 2014**

The following years are the dates of special services for the deceased. The temple will send out notices to the next of kin. In the event that a notice is not sent, please notify the *Betsuin* office for an appointment at 213-680-9130 during the business hours of 9 A.M. to 6 P.M.

<b>Memorial Observance</b>	<b>Year of Death</b>
1st memorial	2013
3rd memorial	2012
7th memorial	2008
13th memorial	2002
17th memorial	1998
23rd memorial	1992
25th memorial	1990
33rd memorial	1982
50th memorial	1965



**“WHITE ASHES”**

**HAKKOTSU NO GOBUNSHO**

*This letter by Rennyō Shōnin is usually read by the minister at Jōdo Shinshū funeral services.*

When I deeply contemplate the transient nature of human life, I realize that, from beginning to end, life is impermanent like an illusion. We have not yet heard of anyone who lived ten thousand years. How fleeting is a lifetime!

Who in this world today can maintain a human form for even a hundred years? There is no knowing whether I will die first or others, whether death will occur today or tomorrow. We depart one after another more quickly than the dewdrops on the roots or the tips of the blades of grasses. So it is said. Hence, we may have radiant faces in the morning, but by evening we may turn into white ashes.

Once the winds of impermanence have blown, our eyes are instantly closed and our breath stops forever. Then, our radiant face changes its color, and the attractive countenance like peach and plum blossoms is lost. Family and relatives will gather and grieve, but all to no avail?

Since there is nothing else that can be done, they carry the deceased out to the fields, and then what is left after the body has been cremated and has turned into the midnight smoke is just white ashes. Words fail to describe the sadness of it all.

Thus the ephemeral nature of human existence is such that death comes to young and old alike without discrimination. So we should all quickly take to heart the matter of the greatest importance of the afterlife, entrust ourselves deeply to Amida Buddha, and recite the *nembutsu*. Humbly and respectfully.

– translated by Hisao Inagaki et al

**DAIJO FEDERAL CREDIT UNION**

daijofcu@hotmail.com

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

**Tuesday, January 21, 2014 @ 12 noon  
LA Betsuin**

PHOTOS



Jr YBA cabinet installation conducted by Rev. Kaz Nakata



Sun Valley Temple members cleaning the *onaijin* during the Temple Clean-Up Day.



The Dharma School Halloween Costumes



The sculptor of the various Halloween veggies, Seibi Okita and daughter, Lina.



A Kodak Moment



Baachan, Pam Tabata (in costume) with Bradford Hirahara.



Rimban Briones and his alter ego, Rev. Jack-O-Pumpkinhead



**43RD ANNUAL  
KOHAKU UTAGASSEN**

**SUNDAY  
JANUARY 5, 2014 @ 1:00 PM**

**NISHI HONGWANJI  
BUDDHIST TEMPLE**

**TICKETS: \$20**

***SURF AND TURF DINNER***

7th ANNUAL



**MARCH 8, 2013**

**\$15.00 per plate**

**Dinner 4:00 PM – 7:00 PM**

**Bingo 4:30 PM – 8:00 PM**

**PRESALE ONLY**

**MENU: TERIYAKI STEAK and SALMON • GREEN SALAD •  
GOMAE GREEN BEANS • RICE**

Meals will be packed as "TAKE OUT"  
DINE IN and enjoy your meals with family and friends along  
with a game of BINGO, raffle, and silent auction.

The number of meals to be sold will be limited.  
Unclaimed dinners will be donated after 7:00 pm

**NO MEALS WILL BE SOLD AT THE DOOR**

All proceeds will go to the Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple.



***BON ODORI  
EXERCISE CLASS***

**BETSUIN**

Lotus Room

**2nd & 4th Tuesdays of the month  
6:30 - 8:00 PM**

**1st & 3rd Sundays of the month  
8:30 - 10:00 AM**

For further information, leave a message for  
Eiko Masuyama at the Betsuin office: 213-680-9130

**TUNE IN TO  
KTYM AM 1460  
Sunday 12:50 PM Dharma Message**

**2014 MEMBERSHIP  
DRIVE**

Valid from January 1 through December 31, 2014

**\$250 PER HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD  
\$150 FOR ADDITIONAL FAMILY MEMBERS**

(SAME ADDRESS OVER 21 YEARS OLD)

CHECKS ARE PAYABLE TO:  
**L.A. HOMPA HONGWANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE**

Payments may be made in full or by installments  
throughout the year of 2014

**Betsuin Jiho**

**Editor-in-Chief: Rimban William Briones  
English Editor: Elaine Fukumoto  
Photos: Koichi Sayano and Glen Tao**

# BETSUIN 2014 CALENDAR

## JANUARY

- 1 New Year's Day Service (*Shusho-e*)  
 2 *Betsuin* Closed  
 5 Dharma School First Service  
 42nd Annual *Kohaku Utagassen*  
 18 Ho-onko Seminar  
 19 Ho-onko Service  
 26 Installation, New Member Welcoming  
 & New Year's Party

## FEBRUARY

- 2 BWA *Kisaragi-ki*, Lady Kujo's &  
 Late Members' Memorial Service  
 Nirvana Day Service  
 9 Boy Scout Sunday  
 16 New Year's Luncheon  
 23 IBS/CBE Winter Pacific Seminar  
 @ LA *Betsuin*  
 27-28 BCA Ministers' Meeting  
 Northwest @ Bellevue, WA

## MARCH

- 1 BCA National Council Meeting  
 Northwest @ Bellevue, WA  
 8 Surf 'n Turf Fundraiser  
 15 Spring *Ohigan* Seminar  
 17 Spring *Ohigan* and *Rimban-ki*  
 Memorial Service

## APRIL

- 6 *Betsuin Hanamatsuri*  
*Butsuren Hanamatsuri*  
 25-27 FDSTL Conference @ Mountain View

## MAY

- 1 Mother's Day Service  
 18 *Gotan-e* & Infant Presentation  
 (*Hatsumairi*) Services  
 25 Memorial Day Sunday Service  
 26 Memorial Day *Hakamairi* Services

## JUNE

- 10-11 So. Dist Ministers Summer *Fuken*  
 15 Fathers' Day Service / Family Fun Day  
 29 Graduation & Attendance Award Service

## JULY

- 2-3 BCA Summer *Fuken* @ Asilomar  
 4 Independence Day (*Betsuin* closed)  
 12-13 *Betsuin Hatsubon* Services &  
*Obon* Carnival & *Odori*  
 20 *Betsuin Obon* & *Hakamairi* Services

## AUGUST

- 3 Atomic Bomb Memorial Service  
 30-31 So. Dist. JR YBA Conference

## SEPTEMBER

- 1 So. Dist. JR YBA Conference  
 Labor Day (*Betsuin* closed)  
 7 *Dharma* School Registration  
 20 Fall *Ohigan* Seminar  
 21 Fall *Ohigan* Service

## OCTOBER

- 5 Eshinni/Kakushinni Memorial Service  
 10-12 BCA FBWA/So Dist BWA/FDSTL  
 Conference @ Irvine, CA

## NOVEMBER

- 9 *Betsuin* General *Sokai* Meeting  
 15-16 *Betsuin Eitaikyo* Services  
 27 Thanksgiving Day (*Betsuin* closed)

## DECEMBER

- 7 General Temple Clean-up  
 14 Bodhi Day Service (*Jodo-e*)  
 21 *Oseibo Taikai Kansha*  
 (Appreciation) Service  
 25 Holiday (*Betsuin* closed)  
 31 *Joya-e*, Year End Service

*Dates are subject to change*

# JANUARY 2014

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
				Beginning Buddhism Rimban Briones Study Class 6:00 pm		
Bon Odori Exercise 8:30 am 5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Regular Service 10:00 am Kouhaku Uttagassen 1:00 pm	Study Class Rev Takata 6:30-7:30 pm Annon Cafe 7:30-8:30 pm			Board Meeting 7:30 pm		
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Regular Service 10:00 am Dharma School restarts		Bon Odori Exercise 6:30 pm		Go-Meinichi-ko 1:30 pm  Beginning Buddhism Rimban Briones Study Class 6:00 pm		Ho-onko Seminar 9:00 am - 4:00 pm
Bon Odori Exercise 8:30 am 19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Ho-onko Service 10:00 am	Study Class Rev Takata 6:30-7:30 pm Annon Cafe 7:30-8:30 pm	Beginning Buddhism Rimban Briones Study Class for 30s & 40s 7:00 pm				
26	27	28	29	30	31	
Service, Joint Installation, New Member Welcome 10:00 am New Year Luncheon 11:30 am		Bon Odori Exercise 6:30 pm				



# FEBRUARY 2014

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 Bon Odori Exercise 8:30 am Kisaragiki: Lady Kujo & BWA Memorial Service 10:00 am	3 Study Class Rev Takata 6:30-7:30 pm Annon Cafe 7:30-8:30 pm	4	5	6 Beginning Buddhism Rimban Briones Study Class 6:00 pm	7	8
9 Boy Scout Sunday Service 10:00 am	10	11 Bon Odori Exercise 6:30 pm	12	13 Board Meeting 7:30 pm	14	15
16 Bon Odori Exercise 8:30 am Nirvana Day Service 10:00 am Board New Year Luncheon	17 Study Class Rev Takata 6:30-7:30 pm Annon Cafe 7:30-8:30 pm	18 Beginning Buddhism Rimban Briones Study Class for 30s & 40s 7:00 pm	19	20 Beginning Buddhism Rimban Briones Study Class 6:00 pm	21	22
23 Regular Service 10:00 am	24	25 Bon Odori Exercise 6:30 pm	26	27	28	