

LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

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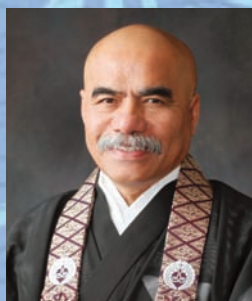
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March-April 2015

RIMBAN'S MESSAGE

THOUGHTS ON RENNYO'S GOBUNSHO



**RIMBAN
WILLIAM BRIONES**

In recent years in particular, when there have been meetings (wherever they have been), everyone has dispersed after nothing more than sake, rice and tea. This is indeed contrary to the fundamental intent of the Buddha-dharma. Although each of those lacking faith (fushin) should by all means raise their doubts and discuss what it is to have faith or be without it, they take their leave without coming to any conclusions.

—Rennyō Shonin: IV-12

On the last Sunday of January, during the Betsuin morning service the newly elected temple president, Kenji Hatakeyama and the new chairpersons from each of the affiliated organizations were installed and congratulated by temple members and friends. Participating on the temple board of directors or any of the affiliated organizations takes a lot of personal time and commitment. I believe it's a responsibility not to be taken lightly.

I've been at the Betsuin now, officially, for 14 years. During that time I've been advisor to every affiliate organization at Betsuin at one time or another ... which means I've attended their meetings as well. I've gone to so many meetings ... board meetings, Nishi Center meetings, fundraiser meetings, Scout meetings, Jr. YBA, and so on. This does not include Southern District meetings, BCA meetings, community meetings, Little Tokyo meetings ... you get the picture.

Most of the time these meetings are long drawn out with reports and redundant discussions, as well as heated arguments and lively debate. But, for the most part, these meetings have been an occasion for meeting friends, making new friends and a time for camaraderie and for others it's an obligation and I'm sure there are some, if they had a choice, they would rather not be there.

The reading I began with is one of the many *Letters* or *Gobunsho* written by Rennyō Shonin, the 8th Abbot of Hongwanji almost 500 years ago. Rennyō lived in a time of civil unrest, famine, religious persecution and he himself suffered many hardships. Yet, he managed, more than anyone else, to bring Jodo Shinshu into the highest ranks of Japanese Buddhism

While it is rather obvious that Rennyō found himself in a unique time in history, his response was always to preserve the original intent of Shinran Shonin's teaching of Amida's Primal Vow. In the same way we should respond within our own unique time in history.

However, as one reads Rennyō's *Gobunsho*, one immediately realizes that we are faced with many of the same problems that Rennyō agonized over almost 500 years ago. I feel that one such "*Letter*" is one in that Rennyō found fault with the state of affairs in the *Ko* (*ko* were reading and discussion groups composed of lay and priests in Buddhist temples). The above reading I began with is entitled "*The Meetings Twice Every Month.*"

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FURUSATO, SPIRITUAL HOME

by Rev. Koho Takata



REV. KOHO TAKATA

This year I will welcome my 45th birthday. I was not yet born when the present Betsuin was built. The commemoration service for the new Betsuin temple at the present site was held on November 16, 1969, officiated by the late former Monshu Kosho Ohtani, with many dedicated members who made tremendous financial sacrifices to engage in their

strong commitment to hand down the essential teaching of Nembutsu to the next generations and spread the Buddha-Dharma to all beings based on the teaching of Honzan or Primal Vow.

We will welcome the 110th birthday of our temple and 46th anniversary of present Betsuin site this year. It was one year before my birth when the temple site was relocated to the present site and the new temple was dedicated so that both I and the present temple altar and the building structure are almost the same age. In the case of myself, I now need to visit my doctors on a more frequent basis for dental, vision, and health care to make sure I don't have any critical problems as I am getting older. In the case of our spiritual home which is our temple altar and its building structure, they also need to be repaired and refurbished to make sure to last next 50 years.

Last June, I had the opportunity to attend the ceremonies on the retirement of former Monshu and also on the succession of Jodo Shinshu tradition of new Monshu with some of Betsuin members at our mother temple, Honzan, in Kyoto. During my visit, I met some of my friends who work at Honzan. When I met with one of them in the Goeido (Founder's Hall), he greeted with me by saying "Okaerinasai!" (Welcome back!) It was a heartwarming greeting. When I heard the phrase "Okaerinasai," I was filled with joy and gratitude that I could come back to my true spiritual home.

Former Monshu Koshin Ohtani delivered his message on the service to commemorate the completion of the Great Restoration of the Founder's Hall on April 2, 2009. Zenmonsama said, *"The Founder's Hall, which houses the image of our founder, Shinran Shonin, is the spiritual home for all of us who live the Jodo Shinshu teaching and the central foundation for our religious organization."* Thus, our mother temple and also the direct branch temple of Honzan which is our Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple is a spiritual home for all of our Sangha. We are all returning to our spiritual home, Pure Land (realm of Infinite Light and Life), which is represented by our temple altar.

The ministers and office staff are always waiting for you to come back to our spiritual home to listen to the Buddha-Dharma. Please feel free to come back to temple at any time.

On March 30, 2014, we observed the Dedication Service for refurbished scrolls and Kick-off Service for the 50th Anniversary of present Betsuin site to express our gratitude and appreciation to succeeding masters and teachers who enabled us to encounter the true teachings. It was also an opportunity for us to express our appreciation to our forefathers for what they have left for us, which is not only existing temple facilities but especially essential teaching of Nembutsu. The refurbished scrolls, Rennyo Shonin was donated by Mr. Eiju Sasajima and Myonyo Shonin and Seven Masters were both donated by Mr. Masami Sasaki. Those scrolls were granted by our mother temple, Hongwanji, in Kyoto, Japan and issued by the late former Monshu Kosho Ohtani on August 12, 1969 just prior to the Dedication Ceremony for the installation of new altar and completion of the construction of the present Betsuin Temple. Those donors' names were written on the back of the scrolls with the name and seal of the late former Monshu who issued the scrolls to our temple. They have already passed away but I strongly believe that their founding spirits of propagation of the Buddha-Dharma are still alive today within our Sangha and present Betsuin Temple to renew our commitment to walk the path of the Nembutsu and also engage in our commitment to maintain and preserve our spiritual home which is represented by our temple altar and the temple facilities as our main commemoration project for the 50th Anniversary of Present Betsuin Location.

The refurbished scrolls are now in our temple altar. There are also many other ornaments in the altar representing the working of Amida Buddha's Wisdom and Compassion. They are expressions of the working of Amida Buddha's Primal Vow in a form. Amida Buddha is colorless and formless as well as the Pure Land. For those who cannot see the perfection of true reality by our inner eyes which are always covered with blind passions, Amida Buddha manifests Universal Truth of Oneness in a form of body as the most compassionate, wise, and noble figure and also in a form of space and time, our temple altar, as the realm of Infinite Light and Life.

It is in the plans to replace all of the ceiling panels in the temple altar. The current ceiling panels in our altar are water stained from roof leakage and also damaged from

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GENEROUS LEADERSHIP

by Rev. Kazuaki Nakata



REV. KAZ

The Nembutsu is non-practice and non-good for those who practice it. It is non-practice for us, because it is not the practice which we do out of our own contrivance; and it is non-good because it is not the good which we do out of our own contrivance.

— Yuien “Tannisho”

As a child, I was a bookworm and I am still so now. The only difference between then and now is the genre of my reading selections. Currently, I am heavily into books and articles in the area of *Women in Buddhism*, *Sanskrit* and *Infinite Life Sutra*. These selections are all part of my research and study.

As a second grader, I was into science fiction. It was about the time of the film “*Back to the Future*” was released and the science fiction boom was flourishing. The movie was re-released several times so many of our dharma school students are aware of the story. It was originally released in 1985, and it may be that some of the dharma school or Nishi Center parents may not yet have been born. Science fiction is largely responsible for me becoming a bookworm.

My science fiction obsession lasted for about four years. As I entered middle school, I became fascinated by stories of notable samurai (Japanese warriors who were members of the feudal military aristocracy). There may only be a handful stories of selected samurai that have been translated into English. There are, however, actually more than 400 unique samurai stories written in Japanese. I was, especially, interested their leadership abilities. I would like to share one of the stories.

Yoshimoto Imagawa, a samurai *daimyo* (feudal lord) was born in the Muromachi period of the 16th Century in the Suruga region of Japan as the fifth child of Ujichika and Jukei Imagawa. The Suruga region was located 180 miles west of Kyoto.

When Yoshimoto was three years old, Sessai Taigen was assigned to him as his trainer by his father. Sessai was a Zen monk. Yoshimoto had an older brother to succeed the position of the *daimyo* so his parents decided to send the four year-old Yoshimoto to a temple with Sessai. His father died when he was seven years old and his older brother Ujiteru succeeded his father's *daimyo* position. Yoshimoto received tokudo ordination when he was 11 years old at Kennin-ji temple, Kyoto. He continued his Buddhist studies at three different temples.

In 1536, his older brother died and Yoshimoto was ordered to take over his brother's position as *daimyo*. He had to quit his monastic life. Yoshimoto was upset by the drastic change in his life being only 17 years old and being a monk. There was no way for him to refuse his family's orders because the Imagawa clan in dire need of a *daimyo* to protect and lead the 100,000 people on their land. There were many internal disturbances due to ill feelings towards Yoshimoto.

It took Yoshimoto 16 years for to stabilize his domain. At the age of 34, he declared the Article of 21 Amendments and additions to the regional laws. His father Ujichika originally implemented the 33 regional laws and Yoshimoto added the ideas of fairness and caring to them. For instance, many of other lords made their laws to gain more personal rights and to enrich themselves. Yoshimoto, on the other hand, amended the judicial and inheritance system to create more fairness and added the social welfare system to care for his citizens. To this day, there is no academic research concerning Yoshimoto's article. Because of the circumstances that cut short his monastic life, it is my belief that Yoshimoto added elements of Buddhism to his amendments in the form of fairness and caring. Many of his people appreciated his democratic attempt and received benefits from Yoshimoto's edicts. Before I had read about Yoshimoto, I believed that all samurai and *daimyo* were, stereotypically, all about fighting and their own glory. I've learned through reading about *daimyo* Yoshimoto that leadership can encompass generosity and compassion.

Here at Nishi, there are a number of individuals who support the temple through their leadership of the many organizations. I have witnessed and experienced great leadership in Mr. Lonny Quon from 2012 through 2014 as the Nishi board president. I was assigned to Nishi in 2012, when Lonny

was serving his first year as president. I still remember when I first met him. He said, “We, Nishi members, are a family. Don't hesitate to ask for help”.



Rev Kaz (left) and former Betsuin president, Lonny Quon, now newly self-proclaimed, “Bowling Guru.”

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SPRING OHIGAN SERVICE

by Rev. Koho Takata

The Buddhist communities in Los Angeles are reminded of the coming Higan, a time to reflect on the human condition and examine the options open to us through the Infinite Wisdom and Compassion of Amida Buddha. The members of Los Angeles Hompa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple and their families are invited to attend one of the Six Major Services in the Hongwanji tradition, the Spring Higan Rededication Service which will be held on **Sunday, March 15, 2015** at 10:00AM. The guest speaker for the service will be **Rev. Yukiko Motoyoshi** of the Stockton Buddhist Temple for English Service and **Rev. Ryoso Toshima** of the Hawaii Kyodan Minister Emeritus for Japanese Service.

Higan is an abbreviation of "To-Higan" which literally meaning "to reach the other shore." In Buddhism, the world of suffering is referred to as "this shore" and the world of Enlightenment is called "other shore."

The term Higan comes from the Sanskrit word Paramita - "gone to other shore," and suggests the Six Paramitas of charity, morality, patience, effort, meditation, and wisdom. Various sutras teach that six paramitas or perfections of practice are the way of reaching the other shore from this shore.

In Jodo Shinshu, the observance of Higan is simply the expressing of our gratitude to Amida Buddha for awakening us to Boundless Compassion and Wisdom. Our part in this observance would be to put into action the Compassion which comes to us vertically from Amida Buddha and to apply it horizontally in our relation with man and other living beings on this earth. This appreciation in our daily life is the Jodo Shinshu way of expressing our gratitude and thanksgiving for the wondrous virtues extended to us unconditionally and equally for all just like the sun's ray which falls on the earth.

In conjunction with Spring Higan Service, we are fortunate to hold a **Spring Higan Seminar** entitled "Life of Awakening: True Teaching" on Saturday, March 14, 2014. The seminar will begin with opening service at 9:00am and end with closing service at 3:00pm. For English speaking attendees, Rev. Yukiko Motoyoshi will be speaking in the morning session and Rev. Ryoso Toshima in the afternoon session. For Japanese speaking attendees, Rev. Ryoso Toshima will be speaking in the morning session and Rev. Yukiko Motoyoshi in the afternoon session. The registration is available at temple office. The deadline will be on March 7, 2015. The registration fee is \$15.00 including lunch and refreshments. We encourage all of you to Listen to the Buddha-Dharma and apply it to our daily lives.

HANAMATSURI SERVICE

by Rev. Koho Takata

The members of Los Angeles Hompa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple and their families are invited to attend the annual Hanamatsuri Service, which is the observance of Sakyamuni Buddha's Birthday Service to be held on **Sunday, April 5, 2015**. The guest speaker for the service will be **Rev. Hoshu Matsubayashi** of BCA Minister Emeritus delivering Dharma messages both in English and in Japanese.



It is a day of joy and a great significant for all Buddhists. We call the observance "Hana-matsuri" which means a "flower festival." Sakyamuni Buddha was born in India on April 8 about 3,000 years ago. At that time, the earth was said to have shaken in six directions (north, south, east, west, up, and down), flowers blossomed everywhere, Devas or gods filled the air with music. Heavenly being scattered flowers from sky. The newborn infant Buddha immediately stood up and then took seven steps to the north. Then he pointed his right hand to the heavens above and pointed his left hand to the earth below and, with the voice of a lion, spoke the following words; "In the heavens above and on earth below, I alone will become the Honored One." With each step that he took, a lotus flower blossomed under his feet. This is why we call this celebration "Hana-matsuri" or a "flower festival".

Many of the rites that are observed during Hanamatsuri are based on the events we are told happened at the time of Prince Siddhartha's birth. The hanamido or miniature floral altar of bright flowers provides the setting of the beautiful Lumbini Garden where he was born. The statue of the baby Buddha with its arm extended illustrates the virtues of Amida Buddha reaching out to all beings and the pouring of sweet tea on the statue represents the gentle rain that fell in Lumbini Garden and bathed the baby Buddha. May we all realize the meaning of his appearance in this world, so that we may humbly accept and understand his teaching as a way of our lives. Let us all gather to celebrate the birth of Sakyamuni Buddha, who guided by Wisdom vitalized by Compassion continue to aspire to develop the person, both ourselves and others, that we may all fulfill the ultimate meaning of life.

This celebration of the Buddha's birth will bring together a diverse group of Buddhists from many rich traditions who share in the single purpose of celebrating the birth of Siddhartha Gautama who became enlightened as

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50TH YEAR COMMEMORATION AT THE FIRST STREET LOCATION

by Ernest Hida, Chairman



Ernest Hida

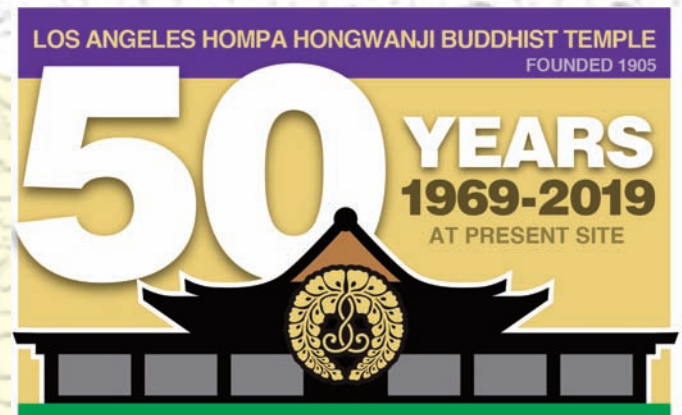
2015 Theme: "Life of Awakening: True Teaching (Kyo-Chapter on True Teaching)".

How appropriate it is to begin 2015 with the opening of the Buddhist Study Center, a 50th Anniversary Commemoration Project, with this theme for 2015. The Buddhist Study Center offers an excellent opportunity to learn more about the teachings of the Buddha-Dharma from esteemed current and retired ministers. The goal of this program is to strengthen Buddhist Education in our daily lives. The classes have begun in January with great attendance. These classes are being taught by Rimban William Briones, Rev. Koho Takata, Rev. Kazuaki Nakata, Rev. Ryuta Furumoto, Rev. Masao Kodani, and Rev. Tetsuo Unno. The next session will begin in April and it is open to anyone interested in Buddhism. Sign-up for these classes can be done at the temple office.

In addition to the Buddhist Study Center, special seminars are included in the Commemoration Project. On February 7, in conjunction with Southern District Buddhist Education Committee, a special seminar was held at Los Angeles Betsuin with a lecture by Rev. Tomoyasu Naito with translation by Rev. Mutsumi Wondra. Rev. Naito is a *kangaku*, the highest authority on Jodo Shinshu doctrine recognized by Honzan and is a special adviser to Gomonsu. He is also a Professor Emeritus of Jodo Shinshu studies at Ryukoku University and a resident minister of Kaujoji Temple in Fukui, Japan. This is his second visit to the LA Betsuin to share the Buddha-Dharma with us. This was a great opportunity for all of you to hear the words of this great scholar. He also spoke at other Southern District temples.

Can you imagine that your temple celebrated its 100th Centennial Anniversary just ten years ago. How time flies. That means that this year marks the 110th Anniversary of your temple. In addition, the Muryokujo-do (nokotsudo) and the new Wisteria Chapel will be its 10th year since it was built in 2005 as the Centennial Project.

Another important and historical milestone this year will be the observance of the 100th Centennial Anniversary of the Hollywood Buddhist Temple, our branch temple. They began only 10 years after the establishment of the LA Betsuin and have had a long history affiliated with the Betsuin. Their long history is due to the dedication, devotion and determination of their pioneer members and each succeeding generations to provide a place to learn about the



Buddha-Dharma. We offer our congratulations to them on reaching their historical milestone.

As we continue our journey to the 50th Year Commemoration of the Betsuin at its current location in 2019, the 50th Year Commemoration Fundraising Campaign is ongoing and we continue to ask for your support of your temple for its various Commemoration Projects to repair and maintain the Betsuin so that we leave the temple in good condition for the future generations as the past generations have left it for us. Any amount will be sincerely appreciated. For any donation, you will forever be present in the onaijin as your name will be inscribed on the new ceiling floral panel above the onaijin. Let us continue to put our hearts and minds together for the benefit of the Betsuin and the future generations.

Gassho

2015 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Valid from January 1 through December 31, 2015

**\$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 2015

BUDDHIST STUDY CENTER

SPRING 2015 (APRIL - JUNE) COURSES

Origin and Establishment of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism Historical Background

**Monday, 6:30-7:30PM (class) followed by Annon Café
(Q & A, fellowships)**

April 6, 20, May 4, 18, June 1 (5 week class: \$50)

Rev. Koho Takata

In the long history of the Buddha-Dharma, Jodo Shinshu Buddhism has been a unique tradition lasting from ancient to modern times. The Buddha-Dharma (teaching of the Buddha) never change even though time changes. We will learn about how the history and the teachings were coped with in order to spread and maintain the Buddha-Dharma.

Tannisho - A Record in Lament of Divergences

Tuesday, 7:00-8:30PM

Rev. Ryuta Furumoto

April 7, 21, 28, May 5, 19 (5 week class: \$50)

"Tannisho (A Record in Lament of Divergences)" is a Jodo Shinshu classic. This record of Shinran Shonin's words and teachings is easy to read, and each chapter is not long, so it is often read as an introduction to Jodo Shinshu teaching. To deepen the understanding of Shinran Shonin's thought, several translations and the texts will be used at the class, such as "Collected Works of Shinran," Dr. Rev. Taitetsu Unno's translation, and Japanese original text.

Contemporary Issues and Jodo Shinshu Perspective (Discussion)

Wednesday, 7:00-8:30PM

Rimban William Briones

April 22, 29, May 6, 13, 20 (5 week class: \$50)

Issues like same sex marriage, immigration, global warming were not an issue during Shinran's life, on the other hand there was war, sexism, and poverty during his time. What is our understanding of these contemporary issues living a life of Nembutsu? These five lectures will discuss current events and issues that effect our way of life and how Jodo Shinshu Buddhism influences our view point.

Buddhist and Jodo Shinshu Vocabulary from the Japanese

Thursday, 7:00-8:30PM

Rev. Masao Kodani

April 2, 16, 30, May 7, 21 (5 week class: \$50)

This class will help you to understand that we, as English-speaking Buddhists, are woefully inadequate in a vocabulary which is unique to our religion.

Jodo Shinshu Buddhism taught in Japanese

Every Friday, 10:00-11:00AM (\$5 per week)

Rev. Kazuaki Nakata

Life of Shinran Shonin and his Teachings taught in Japanese

Saturday, 9:30-11:00AM

Rev. George Matsubayashi

April 11, 25, May 9, 23, June 6, 20 (6 week class: \$60)

Focusing on and Being Guided by the Transcendently Profound Religious Experiences of Great Shin Bud- dhists and also, of Great Zennists

Saturday, 10:00-11:30AM

Rev. Tetsuo Unno

April 25, May 2, 9, 23, 30, June 20 (6 week class: \$60)

These six lectures will focus on those accounts that describe how great Shin Buddhists and Zennists strove and eventually broke through, respectively, to "Shinjin" (Entrustment) and "Satori" (Enlightenment). Attention will then turn to the content and nature of what had been attained and finally, to how that attainment manifests itself, ethically speaking, in their everyday lives.

Introduction to Buddhism/Jodo Shinshu Buddhism

Every Sunday, 11:00-11:30AM (free)

Rimban William Briones

This class will be held right after the Sunday service. There will be Q & A for Dharma message from Sunday service. It will help you to understand the basic teachings of Buddhism and Jodo Shinshu Buddhism.

Applied Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Studies for Teens (Age 11 and up)

Rev. Kazuaki Nakata

May 3, 10, 17, 31, June 7, 14, 28

This course fully covers "Sangha Award" and "Padma Award for Cadettes and Senior" requisites. Main Purpose of this course is to cultivate the ability of the critical problem-solving, the sense of the mindfulness, the skill to reduce/manage one's stress, the character of gentleness and the mind to make one's life more appreciative through the teaching of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism.

DID YOU KNOW?

by Eiko Masuyama



Eiko Masuyama

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

by Vance Ikkanda

There is a small group (10) of volunteers that maintain our temple. The youngest is fifty-something and the oldest is 96 years old.

Every weekend someone is at the temple doing gardening as well as replacing the burnt light bulbs within the temple. On the third Saturdays of the month, the maintenance committee comes to perform other maintenance work, like checking the sump pump, cleaning drains, changing air filters, or executing a special project. The maintenance committee's "to do" list is getting longer and we are looking for people that want to learn or know how to repair things. If you have knowledge of electrical, plumbing, or mechanical repairs, or have skills such as welding and construction, we can use your help.

So, if you have time, come down on the third Saturday of each month by 9 am, to help this group of volunteers maintain our temple.

For more details, contact Vance Ikkanda via email at mcomm@nishihongwanji-la.org or call the temple office (213)680-9130, Monday through Friday, 9 am to 5 pm.

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"In Memory of Yehan Numata"

by Kaoru Inouye, Betsuin JIHO, September 1, 1994

Mr. Yehan Numata came to the Los Angeles Betsuin around 1972 and asked Rimban Masuoka to accept a large bell from him. I happened to be present when he visited the temple. I was introduced to him and during the course of the conversation he mentioned that he graduated from the University of California in 1928. Since I graduated from the same university some years later and since he wanted to learn more about life at the university after his time, this led to the start of our close friendship.

The matter of the bell was presented to the temple board of trustees which declined the offer since a large debt remained from the recent move to the new building. On his next visit, Mr. Numata insisted that we accept the offer as his gratitude for all the temple had done for him during his high school days. He had come to the U.S. with a scholarship from Hongwanji after graduating from a middle school in Hiroshima. He went to Hawaii to study English for two years and then came to California in 1918. He did domestic work in a Hollywood home in exchange for room and board while attending Hollywood High School. On

Sundays, he would walk all the way from Hollywood to the temple, then located in the Yamato Hall on Jackson Street, in order to save the five cent street car fare. He told me that he used to enjoy the miso shiru at the temple. He had a difficult time learning the English language. After graduating from high school, he majored in math at UC Berkeley. In those days, anti-Japanese sentiments were widespread. Mr. Numata was instrumental in building of the Japanese students' dormitory and in the publishing of Pacific World to promote mutual understanding between the U.S. and Japan. After receiving his M.A. he traveled to Chicago, Boston, and London.

Upon his return to Japan in 1930, he first worked as a civil servant but decided to go into manufacturing, in order to finance the propagation of Buddhism. At that time, the Japanese government was purchasing large numbers of handheld micrometers from foreign companies. He realized that this was an item which could be produced without a large capital outlay. In 1936, he established Mitsutoyo Seisakusho which went on to become the world's largest measuring instrument company.

The Los Angeles Betsuin belatedly agreed to accept the donation of a bronze bell weighing about 3,000 pounds from Mr. Numata. The bell arrived upon completion of the kaikan and it was on display on the front porch for several years, as construction of a bell tower was not yet feasible. When Mr. Numata visited and saw the bell still on the porch, he donated \$10,000 toward construction of a tower. Plans obtained from Japan did not meet L.A. construction codes. Tom Makino, an architect, revised the Japanese drawing in a way that met local construction standards and also matched the existing structures. Collins & McPherson, contractors for the main building, agreed to construct the bell tower.

Upon completion of the bell tower, Mr. Numata attended the dedication ceremony in October, 1979. At the reception which followed, Mr. Numata met several of his old friends, including Mr. Eizo Masuyama and Mr. Keiichiro Sayano.... Mr. Numata was happy that we accepted the bell since he was helped by the temple during his days of hardship as a schoolboy.

I was fortunate in receiving an invitation and visiting Mr. Numata at his Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai building in Tokyo, in 1980, when it was newly built. Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai was organized in 1965 to propagate Buddhism throughout the world, with a copy of Teaching of Buddha to be placed in every hotel room in the world in the native language of the

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BWA NEWS

With the onset of the new year, the BWA (Buddhist Women's Association) hit the ground running (A visual that may be hard to imagine of the BWA).

On New Year's Day from about 7:00 am, some of the BWA members helped the ministers' wives in preparing and serving ozouni along with other New Year's dishes.

Days later, the BWA held its first meeting of the year under the leadership of the new president, Pam Tabata. Pam has taken over the helm following Setsuko Nakahara's tenure as BWA president.

During the following weekend, the Betsuin held a Hoonko seminar and Hoonko service where the BWA ladies prepared the chirashi otoki.

On the following Sunday, the Betsuin held its Installation and New Member Introduction, followed by the New Year lunch. It was at this time where Pam was officially installed along with the other leaders of the Betsuin's other organizations. The BWA members provided some of the dishes that was served at the lunch.

The next Sunday was the BWA sponsored Kisaragi-ki/Takeko Kujo Memorial and Members Memorial Service. During the month of February, Buddhist women throughout the Jodo Shinshu world commemorate the life of Lady



**BWA President,
Pam Tabata**

Takeko Kujo for her exemplary dedication and her inspiration as the founder of Buddhist women's activities. During the service, there was acknowledgement of the BWA members who have passed during the previous year. These names were Masae Miyamoto, Agnes Nakamura, Barbara Oda, Takeko Sadamoto, and Shizue Sera. Also recognized were Atsuko Baba for her being 88 years old and Masue

Tanaka who is now 100 years old. There was also acknowledgement of the new members who have joined the organization. The service was followed by a New Year's party/lunch where everyone enjoyed themselves with food and fun.

Many of the BWA ladies meet regularly on selected Sundays to create craft items to be sold at the Obon carnival. These craft gatherings are not limited to just BWA members. All are welcomed to join to learn and share.

For the future, the Betsuin's BWA will begin planning for the celebration of its centennial in 2018.



New BWA Members

(L-R) Teresa Hirahara, Rimban Briones, Marilyn Okano, Elsie Inouye, Susan Omokawa, Jean Kawakami, Suzette Kawaguchi, Judy Ida, Harumi Hatakeyama, Lucy Matsuura, Sherry Watanabe, Pam Tabata. Missing: Aki Hamanaka, Gail Matsuura, Junie Obi, and Marian Yoshida



Atsuko Baba (left) and Masue Tanaka, the big cash winners for the BWA New Year Party.

NISHI CENTER NEWS

As with most schools, the official school year for Nishi Center began in September. The school year began with three full classes—the Sunshine Room, the three year-olds; the Rainbow Room, the four year-olds, and the Kindergarten Room which includes some pre-kindergartners. There is currently a long waiting list.

The first annual field trip took the children to the KidSpace Museum where the children enjoyed many hands-on activities.

The next activity the children participated in was the St. Jude's Children's Hospital Trike-a-Thon. The children and their supporters were able to raise \$2,600.00 for this worthy cause.

The end of October came the much-awaited Halloween party. The children dressed in their costumes and "trick-or-treated" from door-to-door within the temple facilities. It was necessary for the children to carry large grocery-sized bags to collect all their treats. By the end, many of the smaller children ended up dragging their heavy bags. It should be noted that there was a large number of little

girls dressed as "Elsa" from the animated film, "Frozen."

It is a tradition at Nishi Center to have a Stone Soup Day. The children listen to the folk tale, *Stone Soup*. In each of the three classrooms, the children bring their contribution to the class stone soup. The children then get busy chopping and dumping soup ingredients into their classroom pot along with the all-important stone. Then, lunch for everyone is stone soup. This is always a healthy, satisfying event.

The end of the year brings the Gift Exchange Day. Each child brings a gift to exchange with an unknown classmate. All the children gather in the kaikan to open their gifts and play.

Also in December, many of the children participate in the temple's Oseibo Program with dancing and singing.

In January, Nishi Center held its annual Family Pot Luck Dinner to celebrate the new year and to share a meal with the Nishi Center families.

Nishi Center has many more activities planned for the upcoming months.



KidSpace Creek



Trike-A-Thon



Gift Exchange



Family Pot Luck



Halloween

(Rimban Briones - continued from page 1)

These are harsh words coming from Rennyō. He must have been very upset at the members who just came to meetings to eat, drink, laugh it up with the boys and then go home.

Rennyō took these meetings very seriously. It was an opportunity for people from outlying villages to meet with a priest or someone who was knowledgeable of the teachings, to share and clarify each other's faith. For Rennyō, these meetings were an opportunity for lay people to hear Shinran's teaching in order to attain the entrusting heart for their birth in the land of bliss. No wonder Rennyō was so upset with his members who just came for food and drink.

Does this sound familiar? Fast forward 500 years.... Little has changed. How often have we come to board meetings, BWA, ABA, or YBA meetings to discuss the "issue of entrusting hearts", as Rennyō says in his letter?

Yet, Rennyō never abandoned the *ko*, knowing full well the importance of the religious faith of a few could have wide influence. Rennyō understood that the success of Shinshu depended more on one person's gaining faith than a mass of people. Rennyō recognized that ordinary people could benefit from the *ko* discussion group, even if it were only a few. Rennyō is quoted from the *Gyōjitsu* saying, *"For every three dull people there is one clever one, so if discussion groups are made, there will always be something of interest."*

I think, however, we can cut ourselves some slack. To come to the temple and be in the company of dharma friends and sharing their fellowship is a wonderful experience. We, however, shouldn't forget the importance of our spiritual growth and understanding of the Nembutsu. And though our fundraising for the 50th Anniversary, Surf and Turf, Obon, and of course meetings are a very important aspect of temple survival, we shouldn't forget the most important aspect of our life ... an intrusting heart in the Nembutsu.

Namo Amida Butsu

(Hanamatsuri - continued from page 4)

Sakyamuni Buddha. Hanamatsuri Service, sponsored by the Los Angeles Buddhist Temples Federation, will be also held on Sunday, April 12 at 1:00PM at Koyasan Buddhist Temple.

(Takata - continued from page 2)

46 years of service. Each panel of our new ceiling will be designed with an image of flower such as wisteria, peony, lotus, and so forth which reflects teachings of the Buddha described in the various sutra and scriptures. To those who make a pledge or donation toward the commemoration project for the 50th Anniversary of Present Bestuin Site by July 31, 2016, names of the donors or the name of a loved one "in memory" of the constant working as all buddhas will be written on the back of the panels. These names will be one of ornaments of our altar, spiritual home.

We received a precious opportunity to encounter the Buddha-Dharma from our parents and grandparents. Thus, because of their tremendous support and selfless contributions, we now have a beautiful temple to listen to the Buddha-Dharma at the present site. It is now our turn to contribute our appreciation and gratitude to the Buddha-Dharma. It is customary that every 50 years, major repairs to the temple altar and building are to take place. Fifty years from now, our children and grandchildren will be able to acknowledge your spirit Dana to the Buddha-Dharma by seeing our names on the back of the ceiling panels. Our legacy and Nembutsu teaching will be succeeded by your children and grandchildren as we have received them from our parents and grandparents.

Our temple altar represents the constant working of Amida Buddha who represents all buddhas (our ancestors) reminding us to listen to the teachings and live in the teachings daily. Although some of our parents and grandparents have passed away, they, as buddhas, are still working hard for us to listen to their Dharma messages. As we commit ourselves to refurbish our spiritual home which is our temple altar as our main commemoration project for the 50th Anniversary of present Betsuin site, let us reflect on the legacy our forefathers left for us and further take on their Buddhist heritage as we move forth positively into a new history of the LA Hompa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple.

I look forward to working with you for the future of our temple and Jodo Shinshu in the spirit of Oneness on the Nembutsu Teachings.

*Such is the benevolence of
Amida Buddha's Great Compassion,
That we must strive to return it,
even to the breaking of our bodies;
Such is the benevolence of the
masters and true teachers,
That we must endeavour to repay it,
even to our bones becoming dust.*

(CWS P.412, #59, Hymns of the
Dharma-Ages, Ondoku-san)

(Rev. Nakata - continued from page 3)

Whenever Lonny would oversee his meetings, he would always provide refreshments. I soon learned that his great leadership came from his generous treatment of others. When I think about Lonny's term of presidency, I recall a phrase from the Tannisho which I shared in the beginning of this article.

The Nembutsu is non-practice and non-good for those who practice it. It is non-practice for us, because it is not the practice which we do out of our own contrivance; and it is non-good because it is not the good which we do out of our own contrivance.

Lonny's generous leadership comes from his heart. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Lonny Quon and his leadership.

Lastly, though Lonny has stepped down from the position of Nishi board president, his ambition for Nishi has not ended. His goal is to make everyone part of the temple family. At a recent Sunday service, he announced, "Now I have a new title. I am now the Bowling Guru!" He has created a series of bowling events where everyone is invited to join in. Two bowling gatherings have already taken place where there were unique bowlers from age six years old on through to over 80 years old. All who participated enjoyed themselves. This is all due to Lonny Quon's generous leadership.

Gassho

KOHAKU UTAGASSEN 2015

The White Team Won!



SPRING OHIGAN SEMINAR

LIFE OF AWAKENING

Saturday, March 14, 2015

9:00 am- 3:00 pm

GUEST SPEAKERS:

ENG

**Rev. Yukiko
Motoyoshi**

Stockton Buddhist Temple

JPN

**Rev. Ryoso
Toshima**

Hawaii Kyodan Minister Emeritus

Registration Fee: \$15 Includes Obento Lunch
To reserve a seat and to order a bento lunch,
please send in your name &
check payable to:

LA Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple

**Mail to: LA Betsuin Ohigan Seminar 815 E. 1st St.
Los Angeles, CA 90012**

Deadline March 7th

**This seminar has been made possible by the
LA Betsuin Buddhist Education Committee**

HATSUMAIRI

INFANT PRESENTATION

Hatsumairi is translated as the "First Visitation" and is often referred to as the *Infant Presentation Service*. During this ceremony, parents bring their child before the Amida Buddha and the *sangha* to pledge a commitment to raising the child with the *nembutsu*. The *sangha* community's presence is to witness the ceremony and to support the parents' endeavor.

The LA Betsuin will conduct its annual *Hatsumairi* Service on **Sunday, May 17th** in conjunction with the *Gotan-ye* Service which is the observance of the birth of the *Jodo Shinshu* founder, Shinran Shonin.

The ministers and the *dharma* school teachers will be conducting the *Hatsumairi* Service for any infant up to one (1) year of age. Participating families will receive certificates including the infants' footprints and and photographs. To those who are interested in participating in the *Hatsumairi*, please submit the registration form below by May 3th, 2015.



See REGISTRATION FORM on page 14

BETSUIN ACTIVITIES PHOTOS



Following the New Year's Eve service (Joya-e), the service attendees had the opportunity to toll the bonsho (large bell).



The Betsuin Buddhist Women's Association (BWA) celebrated Masue Tanaka's (center left) 100 years and Atsuko Baba's 88 years. They are flanked by Rimban William Briones on the left and BWA president, Pam Tabata on the right.



Newly Installed Officers of the Betsuin's Organizations



New Betsuin Members



Rev. Akio Miyaji (left) and Rev. Koshin Ogui served as guest speakers at the Ho-onko Seminar and Service.



Rev. Doei Fujii spoke at the BWA Kisaragi-ki Service.



New Betsuin president, Kenji Hatakeyama

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*

December, 2013

- 2 Eugene Hachiro Inagaki
- 3 Barbara Shizuko Oda
- 4 Roy Hidekazu Mayeda
- 6 Sachiko Tsuchii
- 9 Hiroshi Kunitake
- 20 Clifford Sueo Kurakazu
- 22 Shizuye Sera
- 25 Jimmy Teruo Iwamoto
- 25 Kensaku Ito
- 27 Alice Harue Murakami
- 30 Thomas Tadashi Misawa

January, 2014

- 1 Hideyo Sakaniwa
- 3 Takeshi Ted Sakaguchi
- 5 Yoshiko Kimura
- 7 Fumiko Okinaka
- 7 Toyoko Yamagata
- 9 Chizu Obatake
- 11 Jimmie Masamitsu
Takeda
- 14 Akitaka Yonemitsu
- 15 Nobuko Grace Kukita
- 16 Ben Tsutomu Hanamoto
- 17 Kazuko Matsumoto
- 19 Sam Sadao Nakamura
- 21 Shigeko Oye
- 25 Yasumi Alice Higashi
- 31 Johnnie Noboru Uyeki

(Did You Know? - continued from page 7)

area. He later contributed toward establishing professional chairs at various universities all over the world and established translation centers for Buddhist literature in English. I was shown the new building with a sound stage in the second basement for recording of Buddhist materials, a large auditorium on the eighth floor with a built-in Butsudan and a meeting room on the seventh floor, both American style and Japanese tatami rooms...

I met Mr. Numata on most occasions of his visits to Los Angeles and to the BCA National Council Meetings. His friendship has given me the strength to live long with faith in the *Nembutsu*. On my visit to Japan this year, I learned that he had passed away at the age of 97, on May fifth. I again visited Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai and offered my condolences to his family. Mr. Numata realized his dream of propagating Buddhism worldwide through his long and strenuous efforts.

Gassho



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

NISHI BOY SCOUT TROOP 738

PANCAKE BREAKFAST

Sunday,
April 12, 2015
7 AM - 10 AM
Donation: \$6
Betsuin Kaikan



Betsuin Jiho

Editor-in-Chief: Rimban William Briones

English Editor: Elaine Fukumoto

Photos: Koichi Sayano and Glen Tao

HATSUMAIRI

REGISTRATION FORM

NAME OF CHILD: _____

BOY _____ **GIRL** _____ **BIRTHDATE:** _____

NAME IN KANJI	
--------------------------	--

PARENTS' NAME: _____

EMAIL: _____

TEL: _____

ADDRESS: _____

_____ **ZIP:** _____

PLEASE SUBMIT THIS FORM TO THE BETSUIN OFFICE BY:
MAY 4, 2014

LA Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple
815 E. 1st St.
Los Angeles, CA 90012
Tel: 213-680-9130

Email: info@nishihongwanji-la.org
FAX: 213-680-2210

MARCH 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Bon Odori Exercise 8:30 pm Regular Service 10:00 am	2 Understanding Shinran Shonin Rev Takata 7:00-8:30 pm	3 Jodo Shinshu Buddhism Guide Rev. Furumoto 7:00-8:30 pm	4 Life of Sakyamuni Buddha Rimban Briones 7:00-8:30 pm	5 Historical Perspectives of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism in the JA Communities & Beyond Rev. Kodani 7:00-8:30 pm	6 Jodo Shinshu Buddhism (in Japanese) Rev. Nakata 10:00-11:00 am	7 Surf & Turf Dinner 4:00 - 9:00 pm
8 Regular Service 10:00 am	9	10 Bon Odori Exercise 6:30 pm	11 Life of Sakyamuni Buddha Rimban Briones 7:00-8:30 pm	12 Board Meeting 7:30 pm	13	14 Spring Ohigan Seminar Rev. Motoyoshi Rev. Toshima 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
15 Bon Odori Exercise 8:30 pm Ohigan Service Rev. Motoyoshi Rev. Toshima 10:00 am	16 Go-Meinichi-ko 1:30 pm Study Class Rev Takata 6:30-7:30 pm Annon Cafe 7:30-8:30 pm	17	18 Life of Sakyamuni Buddha Rimban Briones 7:00-8:30 pm	19 Historical Perspectives of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism in the JA Communities & Beyond Rev. Kodani 7:00-8:30 pm	20	21 Jodo Shinshu Buddhism from Traditional & Western Perspectives Rev. Unno 10:00-11:30 am
22 Regular Service 10:00 am	23	24 Bon Odori Exercise 6:30 pm Beginning Buddhism Rimban Briones Study Class for 30s & 40s 7:00 pm	25 Life of Sakyamuni Buddha Rimban Briones 7:00-8:30 pm	26	27	28 Jodo Shinshu Buddhism from Traditional & Western Perspectives Rev. Unno 10:00-11:30 am
29	30					

APRIL 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
				Buddhist & Jodo Shinshu Vocabulary from the Japanese Rev. Kodani 7:00-8:30 pm	Jodo Shinshu Buddhism (Japanese) Rev. Nakata 10:00-11:00 am	
Bon Odori Exercise 8:30 am 5 Hanamatsuri Service 10:00 am	6 Origin & Establishment of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism- Historical Background Rev Takata 6:30-7:30 pm Annon Cafe	7 Tannisho-A Record in Lament of Divergences Rev Furumoto 7:00-8:30 pm	8	9 Board Meeting 7:30 pm	10 Jodo Shinshu Buddhism (Japanese) Rev. Nakata 10:00-11:00 am	11 Life of Shinran Shonin & His Teachings (Japanese) Rev. Matsubayashi 9:30-11:00 am
Boy Scout Pancake Breakfast 7:00-10:00 pm 12 Regular Service 10:00 am Butsuren Hanamatsuri Service 1:00 pm	13	14 Bon Odori Exercise 6:30 pm	15	Go-Meinichi-ko 1:30 pm 16 Buddhist & Jodo Shinshu Vocabulary from the Japanese Rev. Kodani 7:00-8:30 pm	17 Jodo Shinshu Buddhism (Japanese) Rev. Nakata 10:00-11:00 am	18
Bon Odori Exercise 8:30 am 19 Regular Service 10:00 am	20 Origin & Establishment of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism- Historical Background Rev Takata 6:30-7:30 pm Annon Cafe	21 Tannisho-A Record in Lament of Divergences Rev Furumoto 7:00-8:30 pm	22 Contemporary Issues & Jodo Shinshu Perspective Rimban Briones 7:00-8:30 pm	23	24 Jodo Shinshu Buddhism (Japanese) Rev. Nakata 10:00-11:00 am	Life of Shinran Shonin &... (Japanese) 25 Rev. Matsubayashi 9:30-11:00 am ...Profound Religious Experience.... Rev. Unno 10:00-11:30 am
26 Regular Service 10:00 am	27	28 Bon Odori Exercise 6:30 pm Tannisho-A Record in Lament of Divergences Rev Furumoto 7:00-8:30 pm	29 Contemporary Issues & Jodo Shinshu Perspective Rimban Briones 7:00-8:30 pm	30 Buddhist & Jodo Shinshu Vocabulary from the Japanese Rev. Kodani 7:00-8:30 pm		