

LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

No. 431

July-August 2015

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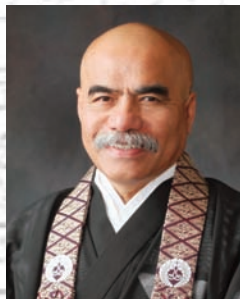
LOS ANGELES HONPA HONGWANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE
FOUNDED 1905



RIMBAN'S MESSAGE

THOUGHTS ON HATSUBON

*Please don't cry before my grave
That's not where I am.
Nor am I sleeping for eternity
See,
I am already part of the breezes
Numbering a thousand.
I am part of the light
That brightens this world,
Like a diamond glittering in the snow,
Like the sun that coaxes seeds to sprout.
And in the fall, I become the gentle rain
That nurtures all...
When you open a window in the morning,
I am the breeze
That causes your hair to flutter,
And at night I am the star
That watches over your sleep.
So please ... don't cry before my grave.
That's not where I am.
I am not dead;
I have been born anew.*



RIMBAN
WILLIAM BRIONES

Since the Obon of 2014, some of you may have experienced a death of a parent, spouse, friend, brother, sister, or a friend. As a result, your life has changed and will never be the same. A feeling of sadness and grief continues to overwhelm your heart and

mind. Unfortunately, there is no set timetable that tells you when to get on with your life or a period of time that your life is no longer sad and empty.

The void in our life is a reminder that things will never be the same. Our loved ones are no longer there to visit, talk to, share laughs or tears. But this doesn't mean that we have been abandoned or left us alone. It only means that we must awaken to the mind and heart that transcends time and space so that we may continue to experience the embrace of our loved ones at this very moment.

It means becoming aware of your loved one's continued influence...they have now become part of the dynamic Oneness that you can appreciate as the caring force or energy that you experience daily in so many ways.

The poem I began with is entitled "A Breeze From Pure Land" (The authorship is uncertain, but the Japanese singer-songwriter, Man Arai, translated the poem into Japanese and composed the song "Sen no Kaze" (A Thousand Winds). Rev. Yuji Nishihara, a Nishi Hongwanji priest, wrote another version and entitled it "Ojodo Kara no Kaze". The poem then underwent another translation from Japanese to English by Rev. George Matsubayashi and entitled it, "A Breeze From Pure Land." The poem subtly expresses how our loved one's

(continued on page 11)

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JULY 11 & 12
Carnival & Hatsubon Service

Detailed information can be found on page 12.

DANA OFFERINGS

by Rev. Koho Takata



REV. KOHO TAKATA

The origin of the bon dance reminds me of the practice of **dana** (selfless giving or generosity) prescribed by Sakyamuni Buddha to Mogallana for helping out his loving mother who was suffering in the realm of the hungry ghosts.

After Gautama Siddhartha attained enlightenment and became Sakyamuni Buddha, the Buddha started sharing the dharma to hundreds of thousands of people for 45 years. Many of his followers abandoned all of their belongings to become monks and nuns. It was not only monks and nuns but also many lay people took refuge in the Buddha, dharma, and sangha as their spiritual foundation. The lay people supported the monks and nuns with their utmost respect and reverence and provided foods, clothing, and shelter. In this way, the monks and nuns provided the dharma and the lay people provided the monks and nuns with material goods as their dana offerings. Thus, they helped each other, kept peace and harmony in the sangha, and brought about spreading the Buddha-Dharma.

This tradition and practice was transmitted to Japan and then USA with the introduction of Buddhism and carried by our forefathers to help each other and flourish the nembutsu teachings.

After the death of Shinran Shonin, a number of his followers gradually declined and Hongwanji was in very poor condition for about 100 years. The 8th Monshu Rennyō Shonin contributed greatly to improve the situation through his propagation efforts. He established a *ko* (small sangha) in each village to offer opportunities to listen to the Buddha-dharma. They read the letter which was simply described about the teachings written by Rennyō Shonin and had discussions of *shinjin* (true entrusting mind from Amida Buddha). The *ko* became very active and the number of letters rapidly increased which necessitated a larger area for the followers to hear the Buddha-dharma. The *ko* eventually developed into a *dojo* as a place for listening to the Buddha-dharma. We sometimes describe our temple as a *monpo dojo* (dharma center: a place for listening to the Buddha-dharma) which originated from the *ko* and *dojo* system. When followers of the nembutsu teaching gathered at the *ko* or *dojo*, they gave their monetary offerings in order to listen to the Buddha-dharma. It was their way of expressing appreciation to the Buddha-dharma and also helping and supporting ministers and

their temples. In this way, ministers practiced generosity by freely sharing the Buddha-dharma and lay members practiced generosity by providing material supports for the activity of sangha. This originated our offertory system at our temples today whenever we gather for listening to the Buddha-dharma such as Sunday service, seminar, memorial, funeral service, etc. to contribute dana donation to the offertory bowl for expressing our gratitude to receive the Buddha-dharma.

Around the end of last year, our Nishi Bookstore started the sales of the books on Buddhism and Jodo Shinshu with a free market style. They are located across the bookstore on new wing. There are many books both in Japanese and in English donated by ministers and members. It was originally free to give out to membership. But someone suggested to place a donation box. Although there was a donation box on the table, even now the sign says free to take the book. However, many of our members and non-members generously contribute their dana offering to the Buddha-dharma which is in a form of book. They see the immeasurable value on the Buddha-dharma through books. I believe it is their way of expressing their appreciation to the Buddha-dharma. Those dana offerings became a big amount and it will be donated to the Dharma Center from bookstore for supporting the dharma activities of sangha.

Considering our bookstore run by the free market style, I believe our *dana* (*ofuse* or *orei*) envelopes at memorial or funeral service stand on the same practice. Reflecting upon my ministry, I am often asked about the amount of donation or *orei* (gratuity) to minister and temple for memorial and funeral service. Although temple has set amount as a suggestion, it is basically up to each individual to determine the amount based on the teaching of *dana*. Also, individuals have varying resources as ability to offer. Some may be able to afford offering more than suggested amounts whereas others may not be able to do so. I recall an interview of a Nisei woman who was interviewed about the history of establishment of temple by a Harvard University Research Group. Her statement was, "I still remember my father saying, even if you miss a meal, I have to pay my dues for the church." This thought has stuck with me ever since. I was really moved by her deep appreciation of the Buddha-dharma and her firm commitment and ownership of her temple. Her spirit of *dana* continues to influence upon our lives. Let us try to live a nembutsu life centered by Buddha-dharma and apply the precious teachings to our daily lives.

SHINRAN SHONIN'S WISH THROUGH THE ONDOBO SOCIETY

by Rev. Kazuaki Nakata



REV. KAZ

If people feel uneasiness on their enlightenment in Jodo Shinshu Teachings, I suggest them to be mindful to envisage their own enlightenment and to live their life in Nenbutsu. If people are convinced their own enlightenment, I suggest them to conjecture the debt of gratitude by Amida Tathagata and to recompense the gratitude with sincere Nenbutsu. Also

I suggest them to desire the world should be filled with the sense of tranquility, and to desire the Pure Land Buddhism should be spread through the world. Please test my suggestions and investigate what else you can suggest. I think there is no other suggestion to consider.

— *The letters of Shinran Shonin "Go Shosoku 25"*

January 16, 2012, the 750th Special Memorial Service for Shinran Shonin was conducted at the Kyoto Nishi Hongwanji. There were many who attended 750th Memorial services held at various locations and temples. In April of 2012 at Nishi Hongwanji, there was a discussion on how the teaching of the nembutsu can be effectively transmitted by the Shinran Shonin's 800th Memorial. After the discussion, 'the movement of aiming for the Ondobo Society' was set forth as a goal for next 50 years.

This movement was not presented as a new idea, but to advance the current movements. The origins of the movement were the following: (1) The movement of the *Dobo* gathering. It was established in 1950 with the association of the *Dobo* gathering. (2) The movement of Jodo Shinshu members' gathering. The movement was based on the letter of Shonyo Shonin (23rd Monshu) when he conducted the 700th Special Memorial Service for Shinran Shonin in 1971.

The movement of the Dobo gathering was formed by Jodo Shinshu ministers and members who were suffering from social and local discriminations to make a discrimination free world. There are social and domestic discriminations throughout the world. Because these discriminations exist in many regions and countries it does not mean they should be allowed to exist. The movement served as a local activity until 1957. Shonyo Shonin declared the letter on the Dobo movement seven years after the establishment of the Dobo gathering. With this letter, the movement of the Dobo gathering was propagated through the entire Jodo Shinshu organization.

The idea of the movement of a Jodo Shinshu members' gathering was expressed in the letter of Shonyo

Shonin. In the letter, Shonyo Shonin expressed the impending crisis of a mere shell of Jodo Shinshu organization. Shonyo Shonin also encouraged all ministers and members to unite to expand the nembutsu teachings. He suggested that all Jodo Shinshu followers (both ministers and members) become listeners of the Buddha-dharma and to propagate the teachings.

When both movements were formed, they each acted separately. There was a discussion to combine the two movements into one in order to share resources to make the activity more powerful. In 1980, Ohtani Koshin Zenmon (24th Monshu) addressed the combined movement as 'the core movement' (*Kikan Undo*). After the discussion on the movement for several years, Kyoto Nishi Hongwanji announced the explanation of the core movement which has five main activities. (1) Learn about Shinran Shonin who lived his life with the Primal vow as the ultimate dependence. (2) Jodo Shinshu followers should be listeners of dharma and transmitting the dharma. (3) Change the constitution of ourselves and the Jodo Shinshu Order. (4) Deal with social issues such as discrimination. (5) Aim for the Ondobo Society. When the announcement was made, *Sharing the voice of nembutsu throughout the Wworld, and for children and grandchildren* was presented as the slogan for the movement.

The movement of the Dobo gathering and the movement of Jodo Shinshu members' gathering were combined and became the core movement. With the 750th Special Memorial Service for Shinran Shonin, the core movement was advanced and renamed as the movement of aiming for the *Ondobo Society*.

The movement of the Ondobo Society is also known as the practical movement. Kyoto Hongwanji describes that the movement is designed for the actualization of the society which provides the richness of emotion to both oneself and others.

The term Ondobo (on-doh-boh) is often used in the Jodo Shinshu context. It appears in Shinran Shonin's letter series "*Matto Sho*," Yuien's "*Tannisho*" and others.

Ondobo contains three kanji characters. *On* is an honorific prefix, *do* means "same" or "together," and "*bo*" means "friends who live in the life of nembutsu." Shinran Shonin always used his signature *Gutoku Shaku Shinran* on his letters. *Gu* means "foolish" or "someone who is not well educated." *Toku* means "bald" or "someone who is ordained in a Buddhist order." *Shaku* means "the disciple of Shakyamuni Buddha." Why did Shinran call himself
(continued on page 11)

CELEBRATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HOLLYWOOD BUDDHIST CHURCH

It was 100 years ago that Japanese-American seasonal workers in the Hollywood area established a Japanese language school and a Buddhist church to educate their American-born children. This humble beginning in the small rented courthouse at the corner of Hollywood Boulevard and Vine Street planted the seeds of Dharma for many families in the area for generations to follow.

In 1915, WWI was about to start and the Hollywood entertainment business was beginning to establish its roots. However, new immigrants and new American-born children were worlds apart from rest of American society. In an atmosphere of uncertainty and discrimination that existed 100 years ago, the Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Church provided comfort, relief, and healing to many local families. When the back ached from fieldwork, when faced with financial difficulties, and when struggles at home were tested, the teaching of the Buddha defined the path to compassion and gratitude.

Among the local businesses that became the core founders of Hollywood Buddhist Church were Imai Grocery, Hara's Barber Shop, and Toribuchi Laundry and Market. Some of the early reverends from Los Angeles Hongwanji Temple who made the long trip (in those days) were Reverends Ohno, Fuji, Kyogoku, Kurokawa and Fujimoto. Many of their American-born offspring wanted to join the other larger group at Yamato Hall Sunday School on Central Avenue in Japanese Town, so the station wagon brigade of the 15-mile trip for 20 students began.

In 1923, members decided to keep the families closer together and rented a small building on Cahuenga Boulevard for adults and Sunday school. In 1928, Hollywood Gakuen and the Buddhist Church joined together to rent a facility on Ivar Street, a block east of Cahuenga Boulevard, to create a forerunner of a community center. By 1936, land prices were rising and rent became unaffordable. For the following 80 years, Hollywood Buddhist Church became a tenant of Hollywood Japanese Culture Institute (formerly Hollywood Gakuen and others combined) at 3929 Middlebury Street, one block east of Vermont Avenue.

In the early 1960s, membership consisted of about 90 families and many activities, such as flower viewing trips to Solvang, outdoor services and picnics at Griffith Park, and weekend trips to Camp Val Creek were held. Currently, there are a dozen or so active families involved but annual Oseibo Taikai, New Year Party, Mother's and Father's Day Luncheon and services such as Hanamatsuri and Ohigan draw a large gathering of parents, former Sun-



day school students, and grandchildren to reminisce the good old days. Yes, the spirit of Dharma is felt everywhere on these days.

When a certain segment of society is divided by the "haves and the have-nots,"

when distrust is rampant amongst different ethnic sectors, and when core human decencies are frequently stomped over, that is when more community-oriented support groups are needed to foster understanding, bring compassion to the under served, and shed light onto the core value of life. Jodo Shinshu taught us without being preached, gave us without being requested, and disciplined us without realization.

100 years have passed since our dedicated founders and past members sacrificed so much to give us this foundation when they had so little. It is our time to give whole heartily without reservation to build a bridge for the next 100 years. Let the echo of Dharma be heard everywhere.

HANAMATSURI



The statue of the Amida Buddha looking over at the statue of the baby Shakyamuni Buddha

WORLD BWA CONVENTION CALGARY, CANADA

by Pam Tabata



The World Buddhist Women's Convention takes place every four years. It is the only women's convention that has participants from around the world and I was lucky enough to be able to attend in Calgary, Canada. Our group had 22 attendees. In our group were two members from the WLA Buddhist Temple, Rev Watanabe from the Oxnard Buddhist Temple as well as Rimban Briones and Rev. Miyoshi from Higashi Honganji.

There were nearly 2000 attendees. The majority of the attendees were from Japan, but there were also members from South America and Hawaii along with the Canadians and BCA. Because **Lady Ohtani** is expecting their second child, **Gomonshu Kojun Ohtani** attended as the proxy.

Rev. Nana Yanase, from Japan, was the first keynote speaker. She is a sixth generation minister at a temple in the Nara prefecture and is also a singer and songwriter. She spoke and also sang some of the songs that she wrote as well as some Japanese favorites. She had everyone laughing and crying. Translations on wireless headsets in English, Japanese and Portuguese were available so that everyone was able to understand.

I wondered how **Rev. Patti Usuki** would top that as the keynote speaker in English. Rev. Patti didn't sing but her dharma message was just as meaningful. Both ministers were given 1-1/2 hours to speak. The time flew by and I wanted more. Rev. Patti's message made me reflect upon the many women in my life that have influenced me. It is all those causes and conditions that have enabled me to hear the dharma at this convention. As each day of the convention ended, I could not have been more grateful for the opportunity, and gift, that was presented to me.

At the banquet, I sat with one member from Seattle and six others from Nara. I have no Japanese language skills, but we were able to somehow communicate. The women were excited to try and speak with me and I was just as nervous and hoped we could have some sort of conversation. They were surprised that I knew Japanese food and that I enjoyed it. I wish I had photos of the our temple to share with them. Because they are so naïve about how Americans live, I think it would have surprised them at how Japanese our temple looks.

The next World Convention will take place in San Francisco in 2019. I encourage everyone to attend — men as well as women. It will be a geographically close convention and a wonderful opportunity to be a participant, enjoy the camaraderie and to listen to the dharma.

2015 HATSUMAIRI - INFANT PRESENTATION CEREMONY

Nine infants were presented before the Buddha and the sangha witnessed by their parents and extended family



DID YOU KNOW?

by Eiko Masuyama



REVEALING THE WAY,

by Rev. Greg Gibbs, Betsuin JIHO,
September 1, 1995

During the Northridge Earthquake, the framed motto fell from above the *Naijin*. The *gaku* (frame) broke and the enclosed writing was damaged.

Early in July, it was returned from Japan, fully repaired and in a frame with a safer plastic enclosure rather than glass.

This beautifully scripted saying was drawn by the **Gomonshu's** (Chief Abbot Kosho) grandfather, **Sonyu Ohtani**. The fine calligraphy by Sonyu Ohtani reads, "**Ken Ji Dai Do**." If we translate word by word, this would be, "reveal" (*ken*), "show" (*ji*), "great" (*dai*), "way" (*do*).

Show and reveal may seem redundant in English, but they are slightly different in Chinese. Rev. Fujii pointed out to me that "reveal" (*ken*) has the implication that what is revealed had been hidden. Indeed, the **Great Way** of the Buddha-dharma had become progressively more hidden in the development of abstruse Buddhist philosophies and rigorous meditative disciplines. Pure Land Buddhist tradition had gradually emerged from a complexity which reached its peak with the Indian patriarch **Vasubandhu**. The Chinese and Japanese masters gradually emerged from a complexity which reached its peak with the Indian patriarch Vasubandhu. The Chinese and Japanese masters gradually clarified the teaching to the point that it could be powerfully revealed in the teaching of Shinran.

Once fully revealed through the work of Shinran, the Way of Onembutsu still had to be explained or shown (*ji*). This was accomplished through a stream of Chief Abbots (*Monshu*) and philosophers of whom the most notable is **Rennyō**. Rennyō's innovations were not its content. The context of the Nembutsu teaching was fully revealed (*ken*) by Shinran. Yet Shinran's writings are still too complex for many people. Rennyō was probably the key figure in showing (*ji*) what the meaning of the teaching really is.

The Great Way (*dai do*) is distinguished from the small way, not in terms of high and low. The smaller way of philosophical and meditative discernment is every bit as worthy as the way of Onembutsu. Enlightenment on the Pure Land path is in no way superior to Enlightenment by the gate of Zen or the way of Shingon Buddhism. But the Great Way is more inclusive. It is greater by way of accommodating more people... If you want to attain the freedom and happiness of Enlightenment soon and you hope to go along with many of your friends, I recommend the path Onembutsu. The path of saying or thinking upon the

Name of Amida Buddha is indeed the Great Way which has been revealed and shown by the masters of our tradition.

* * * * *

Rev. Nakagaki Weds Local Girl in Impressive Buddhist Ceremony,

Betsuin JIHO, November 10, 1958

Rev. Nakagaki, the erstwhile thin man of the Betsuin, recently returned from his studies at University of Michigan and was assigned to the Pasadena Buddhist Church. No sooner had he gone to Pasadena, his bachelor life was cut short by pronouncing, I DO, with a petite little girl who has been a long standing Sunday school teacher at the Nishi Hongwanji Sunday School. With over 550 guests in attendance, Rev. Masami Nakagaki exchanged vows with Miss Sachiko Gotanda of this city, with Rimban Daitetsu Hayashima officiating. Holding up the faltering groom were Rev. Shoki Mohri and Rev. Yugen Kikuchi, who served as best man and usher. Assisting with the marriage ceremonies were: Rev. Tetsuro Teramoto and Rev. Ernest Ohseki, both members of the bachelors' club.

Rimban and Mrs. Hayashima acted as parents on behalf of the Nakagaki family. Miss Gotanda, the only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Rokuichi Gotanda, was given away by her father.

Immediately following the ceremonies, guests were escorted to the Los Angeles Police Academy for the wedding reception, under the chairmanship of Dr. Ken Yamaguchi.

* * * * *

Focus on Betsuin Lay Members: Brian Morita,

Betsuin JIHO, September 1, 1995

Brian Minoru Morita is currently president of the Jr. YBA and also helps out, part-time, in the Betsuin office. He was recently interviewed by Rev. Gibbs.

JIHO: Do you have any goals for that office?[currently president of Jr YBA and running for president of Southern District Jr. YBA]

Brian: I think we can have more interesting seminars. The standard routines are repeated too often. Our temple's seminar with the mock funeral and pretend wedding was more interesting than most Jr.Y seminars have been in the past. I also would like to see more programs developed to facilitate the transition from Jr. YBA to Sr. YBA. It seems the temples lose a lot of people at that stage.

JIHO: Is there anything that you wish Buddhism taught but that it doesn't seem to be?

Brian: In the big picture, I think it's doing just what it's

(continued on page 9)

NISHI ABA VISITS HSI LAI TEMPLE

by Joanne Nakamura

On Saturday April 28, Nishi ABA members and friends visited the beautiful Hsi Lai Temple. The temple sits a top 15 acres of land in Hacienda Heights. The group was graciously greeted by a temple volunteer Ms Li-Hua.

Hsi Lai Temple's court yard, gardens and statuary reflects the style of ancient Chinese monasteries. For the past 25 years, since its establishment, Hsi Lai Temple has strive to spread the teachings of the Buddha in the West. It serves as a spiritual and information center for Buddhism.

The ABA group was introduced to "Vernable Man Kuang", who gave a presentation on the temple's history, impressive accomplishments and future aspirations.

At noon, a delicious vegetarian lunch was provided. What a meal! It included egg rolls, seaweed salad, shitake mushroom in ginger sauce, sweet and sour tofu with pineapples, teriyaki marinated tofu, chow mein noodles with napa and vegetables, sea weed soup, rice and tea. For dessert a fruit platter. The public is welcome to enjoy this vegetarian lunch for \$7 from 11:30-1:30 daily.

Dr. Nancy Cowarden was the group docent. The tour began at the temple's front gateway. We proceeded to enter the Bodhisattava Hall, walked to the Arhat Garden and Avalokitesvara Garden. The group continued to the vast court yard and the Main Shrine. This shrine is dedicated to Sakyamuni Buddha. The tour concluded at the

temple's museum/ art gallery. The gallery houses a rich collection of Buddhist artifacts from around the world . It also displayed works of various contemporary artists.

Dr. Cowarden's knowledge and dedication to Buddhism was most informative and inspiring.

ABA members walked away with a warm feeling of hope. A sense that mutual goals of different cultures, together can successfully fuse the teaching of Buddhism throughout the world .



ABA members pose on the steps of the Hsi Lai Temple

OBON DHARMA SERVICE

by Rev. Koho Takata

The annual Hatsubon (First Obon) Service for those who passed away from last Obon until today is scheduled for Saturday, June 13 and Sunday, July 14, 2015 at 2:00PM in conjunction with Obon Dance which will be from 7:00PM to 9:00PM on Saturday, July 13 and 6:30PM to 9:00PM on Sunday, July 14, 2015.

The annual Obon service is scheduled for Sunday, July 19, 2014, with guest speaker, the **Reverend Masanori Watanabe** of Oxnard Buddhist Temple for English and Japanese Service, guiding us through this reflective time.

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

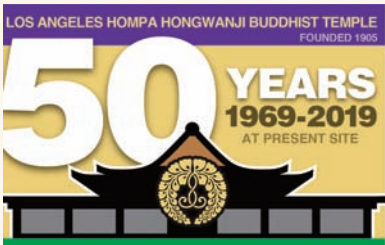
Even as we reflect on the sorrowful consequence of basic human defilement, we, as Jodo Shinshu Bud-dhists,

joyfully reflect on the Primal Vow Power of Amida Buddha which has been fulfilled, thus enabling us to live in gratitude. The Bon Service is called the "*Gathering of Joy*" in Jodo Shinshu tradition, instead of being merely called a "Memorial Service."

The donation envelope for Obon Service is attached to the Jiho, temple newsletter. The amount of donation is not set. It is up to your decision how much you wish to contribute toward receiving the dharma. Your sincere and mindful donation of any amounts is truly appreciated to offset the expenses of the major service. This enables all of us, as a sangha, to listen to the dharma on this special occasion. We sincerely ask for your understanding and cooperation as we devote ourselves to listen to and share the teachings of the nembutsu through the embrace of Amida Buddha's Wisdom and Compassion, never to be abandoned.

50TH ANNIVERSARY BENEFIT DANCE IS A SMASH HIT!

by Jean Kawakami



What a night to remember! The new generation is picking up where our Issei and Nissei left off! Dancing to the soulful, funk, and disco tunes of the nine member band, *Kokoro*, over 300 friends rocked the kaikan, dancing their cares away while exchanging memorable stories and hugs.

From *Love Shack*, *Chain of Fools*, and *Hot Stuff* to Bruno Mar's *Uptown Funk*, the **LA Homba Hongwanji's 50th Anniversary Benefit Dance** on April 18th, 2015, celebrated in the Betsuin's commitment to renovate the Little Tokyo landmark for another generation to enjoy.

The idea of a dance started as a spark between Kenji Hatakeyama and Rimban Briones. The idea was shared with others and a decision was made to make the dance a fundraiser for the 50 Anniversary. Through intense planning, time, and effort a successful fundraising dance came to fruition. A total of \$40,000 was raised for the 50th Anniversary Campaign.

A very special thank you to the loyal community, members, and friends, who year after year, have generously and tirelessly donated to the success of the Betsuin. We could not have done it without you.

The Los Angeles Hongwanji Buddhist Temple is dedicated to carrying on the wishes of our pioneers for all to hear the Buddha dharma. In our quest to preserve the integrity of our distinctive landmark and our rich legacy, this very spe-

(Know? - continued from page 7)

supposed to do, but in the nitty-gritty, we need more facts. It seem that when we want to know what is right, Buddhism asks us what we think. This does allow us to discover for ourselves what is right and wrong, but sometimes it seems that there's not enough direction.

JIHO: Any final comment?

Brian: I'd like to encourage young people to join Jr.YBA, and to thank all the parents for their support of Jr. Y and Mr. Odagawa for all the help he gives us. Everyone has been very nice to me.

Currently, *Brian Morita and his wife, Mary, and two children, Midori, age 8, and Hiro, age 6, are regular attendees at Sunday services.*

cial event on April 18th rekindled the hearts, the memories, and the essence of Nishi to ALL. This resurgence was evident as the guests departed with cries of "One more time!" So let's "Do it again Nishi" in 2016 to promote a new tradition for this generation!



Let's Dance!



Learning a new dance...



The Kokoro Band provided the music

BETSUIN PHOTOS



Nishi Center children observe Shinran Shonin's birthday by presenting flowers and singing Happy Birthday.



At the FDSTL Conference, Bishop (Socho) Kodo Umezu presents Denise Nakamura a certificate for her 10 years of service as a dharma school teacher.



Rev. Nakata at the FDSTL Conference serves as the So. District Dharma School Teachers League advisor



With Rimban Briones presiding, the Tomita family (left) and the Tabata family present their children before the Buddha and the sangha at the Hatsumairi Service.



Paul and Joyce Tomita pour tea and offer flowers at the Hanamatsuri Service.



Reverends Hoshu Matsubayashi (left), Tetsuo Unno, and Seikan Fukuma served as guest speakers at the Hanamatsuri and Gotanye services.

(Rimban - continued from page 1)

existence continues to move dynamically within our lives, like being with family and friends on special occasions, watching our children grow up, a special song, the changing of the seasons, hot cocoa on a cold morning.

Your loved one is now part of the unseen embracing Oneness (Dharma or Life or truth or Reality) that makes such events and experience possible at all. So your loved one is not as far away as you might think.

As Jodo Shinshu Buddhists, hatsubon and other family memorial services are a time to reflect upon our lives and how we are continually being influenced by our loved ones.

“*Hatsu bon*” literally means “first obon.” It is the first anniversary since the last obon. Hatsubon then is an opportunity for family and friends to come together and reflect on how are their love’s existence continues to embrace us through their thought, words and deeds. For the hatsubon family and friends, or for that matter all of us, because death has touched each and every one us, the realization of impermanence of the physical body leads us to a better

understanding that your loved one’s life is continuing to work and influence you. As you reflect on the pain of the lose of your loved one, you come to the realization that we should live each day and savor every moment for we don’t know what tomorrow or the next moment will hold. The pain of your loss will always remain in your hearts but too, all the good times and fond memories of your loved one will continue to be part of you.

As we part take of the obon festivities, we should also reflect upon the Truth of our existence, the Truth that our loved ones are continuing to influence and take effect upon our present lives. Obon is a time to express our gratitude for being given those conditions to live this life. Hatsubon is an expression of the pureness of heart that arises when we embrace the Truth of those causes and conditions of your life. And this is why, in our tradition of Jodo Shinshu, we call obon, *Kangi-e*, or *Gathering of Joy*. For it is an act of joy and gratitude that is the source for dancing during obon. This is obon and this is why we dance.

Namo Amida Butsu

(Nakata - continued from page 4)

Gutoku? Although he was an ordained priest at Mt. Hiei under the Tendai Buddhist order, he realized that he was not able to stay away from any human desires and he identified himself as *akunin* who is “a person who cannot be enlightened by himself or self-practice.” Shinran Shonin deeply sensed that there should not be any distinction between priests and members in Jodo Shinshu teachings of Amida Buddha. As such, his understanding of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism led him to believe in true equalization. In fact, later in his life, he commented that he does not have any disciple because he is simply a follower of the nembutsu teachings. We understand that he used the term *ondobo* to indicate members of the nembutsu gathering in his letter. We, however, need to understand that “members” does not necessarily mean “temple members” in his writings or maybe we should not understand “members” as “temple members” in his writings. In his understanding, *ondobo* in Jodo Shinshu was a key word to transcend “the typical homage relationship between priest and member in an organization” to “everyone is helping each other for enlightenment to all in Jodo Shinshu”. This was a very unique concept which was introduced by Shinran Shonin. There are many religious readers who talk about equality and there being no distinction between religious leaders and their followers. In most of cases, however, these lead-

ers do no behave like as an ordinary member in the group. Therefore, the followers regard the leader as a special entity though the leader is supposedly teaching such concepts as the oneness of God.

Ohtani Kosho Zenmon published the *Buddha’s Wish for the World* several years ago. If there were to be a book, *Shinran Shonin’s Wish for the World*, what would he say? The quote at the beginning of this article is from one of Shinran’s letters from the *Goshosoku*. *Goshosoku* is a letter which is written by the Gomonshu.

Through this quote, we can understand that aiming for the Ondobo Society in his context means that there are no distinctions between priests and members in this world which is filled with the nembutsu teachings. We can all be enlightened equally. We cannot be enlightened by reading book and listening to the dharma in Jodo Shinshu, we need to execute the applied (practical) Jodo Shinshu, then we truly live in the life of o-nembutsu. *Gassho*



SO. DISTRICT OBON ODORI SCHEDULE

July 11 & 12

L.A. BETSUIN 7:00 / 6:30

Oxnard 6:00 (Saturday only)

July 18 & 19

Pasadena 6:30
 Orange County 7:00
 Santa Barbara 4:00 (Saturday only)
 Venice 6:30



July 25 & 26

Guadalupe 3:00 (Sunday only)
 WLA 6:30
 Vista 6:30
 Higashi 6:30- not BCA

August 1 & 2

Gardena 6:00
 San Diego 6:30 (Saturday only)
 San Luis Obispo 6:30 (Saturday only)

August 8

Las Vegas 12:45 - not BCA (Saturday only)

OBON PROGRAM SCHEDULE

SATURDAY

HATSUBON SERVICE 2⁰⁰
 RELIGIOUS Q&A 3³⁰ - 4³⁰
 CARNIVAL 3⁰⁰ - 10⁰⁰
 BON ODORI 7⁰⁰ - 9⁰⁰
 BINGO 5⁰⁰ - 10⁰⁰
 DEMONSTRATIONS
 Tea 2⁰⁰ - 4⁰⁰
 Judo 4⁰⁰ - 4³⁰

STAGE PERFORMANCES

Nishi Center @ 3⁰⁵
 Matsutoyo Kai @ 4⁰⁰
 Ho' Aloha Polynesian @ 4⁴⁵
 Dancers
 LA Matsuri Taiko @ 5⁵⁰
 Kokoro @ 9⁰⁰ - 10⁰⁰

RAFFLE DRAWING @ 9⁰⁰

SUNDAY

HATSUBON SERVICE 2⁰⁰
 RELIGIOUS Q&A 3³⁰ - 4³⁰
 CARNIVAL 3⁰⁰ - 9⁰⁰
 BON ODORI 6³⁰ - 8³⁰
 BINGO 4⁰⁰ - 9⁰⁰
 DEMONSTRATIONS
 Tea 2⁰⁰ - 4⁰⁰

STAGE PERFORMANCES

Nishi Center @ 2³⁵
 Kotobuki No Kai @ 3²⁰
 Bluesettes Quintet @ 4⁰⁰
 LA Matsuri Taiko @ 4⁴⁵
 Amy Singer & Friends @ 5³⁵

RAFFLE DRAWING @ 8³⁰



IN MEMORIAM

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

--*Namo Amida Butsu*

April, 2015

- 1 Himi Nakamura
- 2 Kazuo Joe Hamai
- 3 Ayame Takeshima
- 13 Helen Hatsumi Adler
- 16 Takayo Kurachi
- 17 Masakiyo Watanabe
- 20 Tomoe Nii Yamashita
- 27 Tomiye Mori
- 29 Kikue Suzuki
- 30 Edward Akira Kuwada
- 30 Miyoko Shibata

May, 2015

- 1 Kimiye Kishi
- 2 Haruki Yamagata
- 7 John Masao Nakao
- 8 Haruo "Bobby" Nitta
- 8 Yukiko Noreen Yuge
- 9 Joe Tsuyoshi Horito
- 17 Toyomi Lorraine Harrington
- 21 Gary Minoru Matsuno
- 22 Mihoko Nagasawa
- 27 Ichiro Miyamoto

OBON DANCE PRACTICE DATES



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

July 2 & 7 @ temple
 9 @ Keiro Retirement Home @ 6:00 pm

Betsuin Jiho

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

JULY 2015

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

AUGUST 2015

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