

LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

jihō

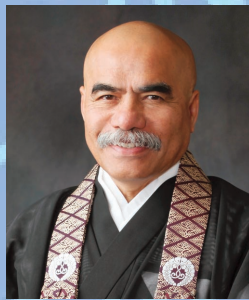
WWW

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March-April 2016

RIMBAN'S MESSAGE

THOUGHTS ON FUNERALS AND MEMORIAL SERVICES



**RIMBAN
WILLIAM BRIONES**

When I was assigned to Betsuin almost 14½ years ago, Betsuin already had four ministers and I remember then we were very busy with funerals and memorial services. Over the years because of the shortage of ministers in the BCA and the decline of our temple membership, Betsuin gradually reduced the number of ministers. However, the number of funerals and memorial services was reduced only slightly. Throughout the years, many of our senior members have past, leaving much of the responsibilities of planning funerals and conducting memorial services to the younger generation, the Sansei. Unfortunately, many of the Sansei are unprepared or unaware of what to do or why we conduct funerals and memorial services. It has become apparent that because of this uncertainty, the way we conduct our services, especially funerals have changed considerably.

To be sure, the economy, a more mobile and chaotic life-style, inter-religious marriages plays a part in this change. More so, as Buddhists, as Jodo Shinshu Buddhists, we should take the time and understand the meaning and importance of why we conduct funerals and memorial services the way we do.

As you already know, Jodo Shinshu Buddhists place a great deal of emphasis on funeral and

memorial services. However, it wasn't always the case. When Shakyamuni Buddha passed away, he asked his disciples not to perform a funeral for him, rather he told them to continue their practices.

During Shakyamuni's time and until the late 600 CE, funerals were simply chanting sutras during the cremation.

Funerals and memorial services that are conducted within our temples today were greatly influenced from Chinese Confucianism. The Confucian ideals of filial piety, also know as ancestral worship, was one of the virtues to be held above all else, even after death. Therefore, family members of the deceased believed by accumulating merit through virtuous deeds such as offering food, drink, flowers and chanting sutras, could then transfer their merit to their loved one.

When Buddhism arrived in Japan, it kept many of the memorial traditions from China. Buddhist devotees continued to hold memorial service for the benefit of the deceased. In Japan, prior to Shinran, Buddhist memorial services were held for the benefit of the deceased in their afterlife. It was thought through conducting services, chanting, making offerings ... money or food it would appease the souls of the deceased and they would more or less protect you from harm (*bachi*) or bring you good fortune. So this was about our relationship with the deceased in the afterlife and our fortune or misfortune.

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DELIVERY SERVICE

by Rev. Koho Takata



REV. KOHO TAKATA

I live nearby shopping mall so that I sometime go to shopping for my clothes or take my daughters there for shopping. When I visit the mall, I usually stop by at my favorite stores. However, I hardly find my size for clothing. I guess there are many Asian people living around the mall so that smaller sizes are quickly running out. After returning from the

mall, I usually go to their websites and purchase my size's clothes via online.

Within a week, they are delivered by FedEx or UPS. It is very convenient. When I was a child, I never thought that I would be shopping with a credit card via online.

I guess many of you know one of famous online stores called Amazon. Amazon sells not only books but also games, toys, appliances, TV, furniture, jewelry, car, etc. We can purchase most of the things from Amazon. They even sell Buddhist family altar.

I was surprised a few month ago by reading an article in Japanese newspapers and magazines about "Obousanbin." *Obousan* means a Buddhist minister and "*bin*" means delivery service. Amazon Japan started selling the "*Obousanbin*" for those who do not have their own temple. If you purchase this, *obousan* or a Buddhist minister will be coming to your home, gravesite, or mortuary to conduct a memorial service.

The basic cost of the *obousanbin* is 35,000 yen (around \$350.00). There are some options such as receiving a Buddhist name or having service twice a day at different locations like gravesite service after a memorial service at home. Of course, they ask you to pay them for additional charges.

There are many different schools in Buddhism so that the company has around 400 ministers of seven major schools in their list from Hokkaido to Okinawa, throughout Japan. According to the news, the company was contacted by 8,000 people who were interested in purchasing this service last year.

The emphasis of this service by the company is the reasonable cost. Everything is inclusive and there is no need to add any other costs such as minister's transportation, *ofuse* for minister, *orei* for temple, etc.

I would like to share my appreciation to the Buddha-Dharma on this interesting service. The expense for a memorial service is not regarded as a cost for the memorial service like a business. The expense for the temple is called "*orei*," a selfless monetary donation to temple to express one's appreciation and gratitude for receiving the precious opportunity for us to observe a memorial or funeral service. The expense for a minister is called "*ofuse*," a selfless monetary gratuity to a minister who delivers or transmits the mind and heart of Amida Buddha by conducting a service.

The term *ofuse* is a translation of Sanskrit term "*Dana*." *Dana* is characterized by three purities which is no giver, no gift, and no receiver. The giver is free of selfish thought, giving ends at the moment of the act. The giver is no longer tied to the objects in-

involved in giving. The giver does not expect any gestures of appreciation from the receiver. The gift is free from all attachments to the value of the amount or gift. The giver sees no receiver in the sense of attachment of any kinds in interrelationship with the giver. Therefore, *Dana* practice is called "*Kisha*." "*Ki*" means joyfulness or gladness and "*sha*" means throwing away attachment or free from attachment.

After Gautama Siddhartha attained enlightenment and became Sakyamuni Buddha, the Buddha started sharing the Dharma to hundreds of thousands 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. This is the origin of *Dana* practice.

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 that even if you miss a meal, I have to pay my dues to the church." This thought has stuck with me ever since. I was really moved by his deep appreciation to Buddha-Dharma and his firm commitment and ownership of his temple. His spirit of *Dana* continues to influence upon our lives.

We are truly grateful that Amida Buddha is always delivering his service. It is the Buddha-Dharma. It is delivered to all beings at all times and in all places without any exceptions. Let us express our deep appreciation and gratitude to Amida Buddha for his delivery service of the Buddha-Dharma and live a Nembutsu life centered by Buddha-Dharma in our daily lives.

*Sakyamuni Buddha and Amida Buddha
are our father and our mother,
Full of love and compassion for us;
Guiding us through various skillful means,
They bring us to awaken the supreme shinjin.*
(CWS P.380, #74)

**DAIJO FEDERAL
CREDIT UNION**

daijofcu@hotmail.com

WHY JODO SHINSHU

by Rev. Kazuaki Nakata



REV. KAZ

Jodo Shinshu is not a religion such as the Abrahamic religions which attempt to persuade individuals with dogmas to bring forth beliefs without question or a philosophy such as the recondite wisdom of a great thinker to generate an impression that our daily lives are trivial. Jodo Shinshu is a tool of human science to keep focusing our daily lives as

the essential core, to analyze the meaning of our existentiality, to improve our communication skills in interdependence, and to manage our stress and complication in our daily environment. This is why I adopted Jodo Shinshu as my Operating System.

Every summer in June for the “*Summer Fuken*,” the ministers of the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) come together for a study session. The *Fuken* is part of their continuing education programs. *Fuken*, (*FUkyo-KENkyukai*) is a Japanese term which means a “study session for research and propagation”. Last year, the chairman of the BCA Ministers’ Association, Rev. Jerry Hirano with the support of Bishop Kodo Umezu, asked the ministers to share why they had chosen Jodo Shinshu as their religion. Subsequently, in the Fall, the ministers published a handout “*Why Jodo Shinshu?*” My response to the question with my statement can be seen at the beginning of this article.

As an organization, Jodo Shinshu was formed in Japan by followers of Shinran Shonin. When we trace the origin of Jodo Shinshu, we need to explore the development of the Pure Land teachings in India and China, where Jodo Shinshu originated. Shinran Shonin’s understanding of the Pure Land teachings came through Honen Shonin. Honen Shonin started as a Tendai Buddhist monk but later left the Tendai monastery in Mt. Hiei and converted to the Chinese Pure Land Buddhism which was taught by Master Shantao. When the Chinese Pure Land Buddhism was exported to Japan, it was understood as a monotheistic faith. During the Heian period (8th-12th centuries), the Pure Land monotheistic practice encompassed the recitation of the Nembutsu as an act of prayer to the merciful Buddha of Amitabha (Amida Buddha) for the accumulation of prayer merits. Such understandings of Pure Land Buddhism prevailed until Jodo Shinshu practices were established.

The late Rev. Kakuei Miyaji Kangaku, who was one of the top scholars in Jodo Shinshu, often emphasized that Buddhism was exported to various countries and translated with their own customs, traditions and cultures after his-

torical Buddha died. When Shinran Shonin encountered Buddhism, Buddhism returned to its original understanding of the historical Buddha. This understanding is Jodo Shinshu.

My initial encounter with Jodo Shinshu took place at Ryukoku University in Kyoto to study Jodo Shinshu Buddhism as an undergraduate student. I simply wanted to study what Shinran Shonin thought and shared. At that time, I had no idea how or why followers understood and shared his teaching. As I continued to study Jodo Shinshu, I realized how Shinran Shonin shared his understanding of Pure Land Buddhism in a scientific way.

Shinran Shonin understanding of Buddhism refuted idea of Buddhism which was the belief at the time. He introduced the concept of *Ji-Nen Honi*. *Ji-Nen Honi* is described by Shinran Shonin as “naturalness” as its culmination in his *Mattosho*, *Ji-Nen Honi Sho*, and others. *Naturalness* means the spontaneous unfolding of Amida’s vow (natural principals) without human calculation or contrivance. It was also called the “reason of no reason” (*mugi wo motte gi to su or gi naki wo gi tosu*) – which referred to the transcendent rationality of effortlessness, meaninglessness, purposelessness – the reason of non-duality. (Kim and Leighton, 2004)

This concept of Shinran Shonin led me to become a follower of Jodo Shinshu. When I received a request to write a response to Rev. Hirano’s question, I had to envision how a western-thinker with no knowledge or understanding of the Japanese culture, would understand the concept. One unique quality of Buddhism is that when Buddhism is imported into a foreign country, it absorbs the local culture, custom, philosophy and even personal thoughts to be locale, rather than imposing its beliefs upon the people. For example, when Buddhism was exported from India to China, Buddhism was greatly influenced by Daoism and other Chinese philosophies for the translation of Buddhist texts to fit into local Chinese people’s needs and preferences. When Shinran encountered Pure Land Buddhism in Japan, it was absorbed in a way that it fit into needs and preferences of the Japanese. This is why Pure Land Buddhism was widely accepted in various regions in Japan.

When attempting to answer the question, “Why Jodo Shinshu,” I wanted to make a point to differentiate Jodo Shinshu from other faiths such as Abrahamic religions and philosophies. I wanted to make clear that Jodo Shinshu is a teaching of the Universal Truth and it is not dogmatic,

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50TH ANNIVERSARY REPORT

by Ernest Hida, Chairman



Ernest Hida

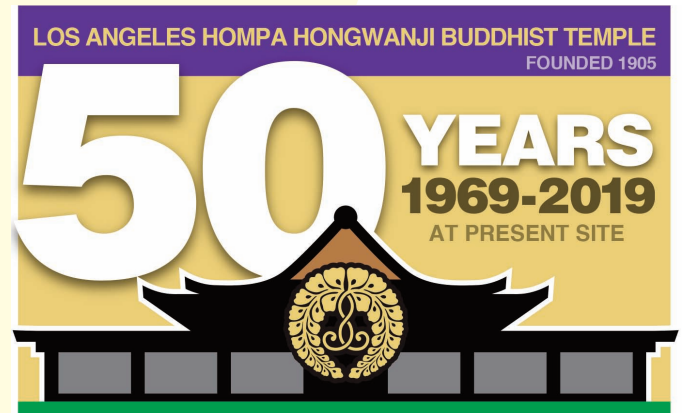
On Sunday, January 24, with many members in attendance, a special service, the *Auspicious Commemoration Service For Transportation Of Amida Buddha Statue And Altar For Restoration in Kyoto (Gosenbutsu Kyosan Hoyo)*, was held for the closing of the *onaijin*. This ceremonial closure of the screens to the *onaijin* preceded the subsequent removal and packing of the main altar and the ornamental fixtures to be sent to Kyoto for restoration. This was an unique, moving, and once in a lifetime experience. Following this service, another brief service was held in the *onaijin* to remove the Amida Buddha statue, which was taken to the Wisteria Chapel for temporary storage before being taken to Kyoto. The statue was carried carefully by Rimban Briones to the Wisteria Chapel accompanied by the rest of the ministers, komons, president, president-elect and the Wakabayashi Company President and his staff. The altar from the Wisteria Chapel was brought to the hondo and is now being used as the temporary main altar. Soon after, the Wakabayashi Company's staff began dismantling the main altar and the ornamental fixtures, and packing it for shipping. The shipping container was packed on January 28 and headed for the Port of Los Angeles.

On January 30, a short service was held to remove the statue of Amida Buddha from the Wisteria Chapel with our Bishop Umezu, our ministers, komons, president and president-elect.

After the restoration is completed, it will be shipped back to Los Angeles in October, and the Re-dedication Service will be held on November 6. We invite everyone to this special serviceto re-dedicate the beautifully restored *onaijin* and to celebrate the 111th Anniversary of the LA Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple and its 85th Anniversary of its Betsuin status.

During the commemoration service on January 24, two presentations were made to the 50th Anniversary Committee. President Pamela Tabata of the Buddhist Women's Association presented a check for \$7,000.00 as a donation to the 50th Anniversary Fundraising Campaign. The BWA will be celebrating its 100th Year Centennial Anniversary in 2018 and for their Centennial Project, they will cover the cost of restoring the scroll of Prince Shotoku Taishi, the First Great Patron of Buddhism in Japan in the

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**Donation from Hollywood
Buddhist Church**

l-r: Rimban Briones, Judy Izumo (HBC president), Ernest Hida (50th Anniversary Chairperson), & Kenji Hatakeyama (Betsuin president).



Donation from BWA

l-r: Rimban Briones, Pam Tabata (BWA president), Ernest Hida, & Kenji Hatakeyama.

ONAIJIN CEILING PANEL DONOR NAME INSCRIPTIONS



Shoichi Sayano

I sincerely hope that this notice finds you in good health and in the joy of the *O-Nembutsu, Namo-Amidabutsu*.

In the year 2019, our present Betsuin building and *onaijin* (temple altar) will be 50 years old. In conjunction with the **50th Year Anniversary Celebration**, we are refurbishing the entire *onaijin* (generally taking place every 50 years). All of the *onaijin* articles was sent back to Japan for refurbishing, which will take approximately 9-10 months. Meanwhile, we are planning to repair the roof above the *onaijin* and repair and replace the water-damaged walls and ceiling tiles.

The ceiling tiles will be replaced by new panels with beautiful images of flowers related to Hongwanji and its teachings as shown in the attached picture. On the reverse sides of these panels, plans are to inscribe the names of the 50th Anniversary donors. Because the donors' names will need to be inscribed before being shipped here, the deadline for the donors' names to be inscribed on the panels will be **July 31, 2016**. Those wishing to have names inscribed on the ceiling panels, must submit donations or pledges by this date. Thank you for your cooperation and support.



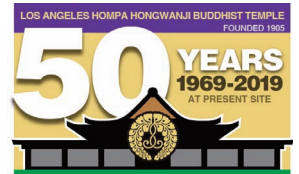
In Gassho,
Shoichi Sayano, Chairperson
50th Anniversary Projects Committee



Wakabayashi Co. staffer disassembling items in the onaijin.

(50 Anniversary Report - continued from page 4)

7th Century and of purchasing an incense table to be placed in front of the scroll.



President Judy Izumo of the Hollywood Buddhist Church presented a check for \$25,000.00 as a donation to the Fundraising Campaign and in appreciation to the Betsuin for their annual support of their church. HBC celebrated its 100th Year Centennial Anniversary last year and made their donation from their Centennial fundraising efforts.

Other 50th Anniversary fundraising programs include the Dharma School students with their on-going plastic recycling project that raised around \$1,000.00 so far, and the Dharma School Teachers annual Paso Almonds sale which raised around \$15,000.00.

A big thank you to organizations for their fundraising efforts for the 50th Anniversary and individual donors for their generosity. We thank you very much for your past support and we sincerely look forward to your continued dedicated support. Let us put our hearts and minds together and work together for a wonderful and meaningful 50th Anniversary celebration of the temple in 2019 to honor our Issei pioneers and past members for the legacy they left for us and to continue this legacy for our future generations.

Gassho,
Ernest Hida, 50th Anniversary Chairman



Betsuin members help to carry onaijin article out of the hondo.

(Additional photos on page 9)

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 Homba 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 20, 2016** at 10:00AM. The guest speaker for the service will be Rev. Tetsuo Unno of the former minister of Buddhist Churches of America and one of faculties of our Nishi Dharma Center for English Service and Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara of Co-Director of Center for Buddhist Education of the Buddhist Churches of America 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: Namo-Amidabutsu" on **Saturday, March 19, 2016**. The seminar will begin with opening service at 9:00am and end with closing service at 3:00pm. For English speaking attendees, **Rev. Tetsuo Unno** will be speaking in the morning session and **Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara** in the afternoon session. For Japanese speaking attendees, Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara will be speaking in the morning session and Rev. Tetsuo Unno in the afternoon session. The

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HANAMATSURI SERVICE

by Rev. Koho Takata

The members of Los Angeles Homba 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 3, 2016**. The guest speaker for the service will be **Rev. Tesshi Aoyama** 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 Sakyamuni

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DID YOU KNOW?

by Eiko Masuyama



How fortunate that the Los Angeles Betsuin BWA was able to travel south from Calgary, after a memorable 15th World Buddhist Womens' Conference, May 29-30-31, to Lethbridge (Alberta), and the Buddhist Temple of Southern Alberta.

The group was led by Rimban William Briones and his wife, Rev Nobuko Miyoshi. Also attending were, BWA president, Pam Tabata, and former BWA presidents, Setsuko Nakahara, Jean Kondo (Roy), Amy Miyakawa, and Tsuruko Iwihara. Also, attending the conference were former temple presidents, Shoichi and wife, Nobuko, Sayano, Fujiyoshi and wife, Chieko Yamamoto, and Ernest Hida. Completing the Betsuin group were Susan and Roy Tanaka, Annette and Roger Kakita, Suzette Kawaguchi, Kayo Uno, and Eiko Masuyama.

The trip extension was arranged by Ernest Hida of American Holiday Travel. The Betsuin entourage was greeted warmly by Rev. Yasuo Izumi, Professor Ichikawa (son of former Rimban Tatsuya Ichikawa of Seattle), and an informative video presentation, followed by a wonderful luncheon prepared by the Toban Groups, where all forms of "connections" were made. Mrs. Kay (Ikuta) Oda, wife of Rev. Harold Oda, was unable to attend conference, but her younger sister, Noriko Ikuta Sugimoto of Toronto, greeted and joined us for lunch, as did her niece, Brenda Ikuta of Lethbridge and many of the BWA ladies. Retired Professor and Mrs. Akira Ichikawa graciously guided and dined with our group. Professor Ichikawa connected with Beverly Yahata and Hannah Nishimoto of W.L.A., who shared information about the family of Rev. Gikan Nishinaga (at WLA 1950-1957, at Betsuin 1949); Professor Ichikawa is also, brother of Nori Kurashige (Venice) and met Mrs. Iwihara, mother of Rev. John Iwihara, who he had previously met at the Venice Hongwanji Temple.

The Buddhist Temple of Southern Alberta (BTSA in Canada) was incorporated officially in 2007, with former separate Jodo Shinshu temples: Lethbridge Buddhist Temple, est. in 1948 (including Picture Butte Buddhist Temple, est. 1943, dissolved in 1992), Raymond Buddhist Temple (est. 1929), Lethbridge Honpa Buddhist Temple (est. 1967), Rosemary Buddhist Temple (est. 1952), and Coaldale Buddhist Temple (est. 1943). These seven temples were within a 70 mile radius and shared ministers for most of the latter part of the 20th century. Of the group, the Raymond Buddhist Temple was the oldest, having been established in 1929, in a center populated by Japanese-Canadian from the late 19th century.

The reason the largest center in the area, Lethbridge, did

not establish a temple until 1948 is that Japanese-Canadians, until then, were not allowed to reside within the city and were allowed entry only with a permit issued by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. It was not until 1949 that Japanese-Canadians were allowed to vote in Canadian elections!

Thank you to Professor Akira Ichikawa for information about Buddhist Temple of Southern Alberta and other details of visit.

* * * * *

Donations to Nishi Archives and Library

By Masako Mary Shingu: Polo shirt with *sagari fuji* (wisteria) embroidered in gold.

Framed panorama photo in commemoration of Ohtani, Kosho (Monshu) Visitation and Memorial Services for Past Members and those who died in World War II, at Hompa Hongwanji Rafu Betsuin, November 15, 1951, donated by Garrett Okita.

In the photo are: Rimban Kow, Rev Kiriya (from Japan), Reverends Kumata, Yamamoto, Nagafuji, Haya-jima, Kuwatsuki, E. Unno, T. Unno, Nishinaga; Chigo participants: Bruce Shinohara, Akemi Shinohara, Gerri Nii (mother of Garrett Okita); Boy Scouts: Sadao Kimura, Morio Takahashi; Jack Iwata, Yutaka Shinohara, Eizo Masuyama, Ben Nakamura, Shigemi Aratani, and Sadao Sadamoto.

Thank you all (named and unnamed) very much.

2016 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Valid from January 1 through December 31, 2016

**\$250 PER EACH MEMBER OF A HOUSEHOLD
\$150 FOR ADDITIONAL FAMILY MEMBERS**

(SAME ADDRESS UP TO AGE 21 YEARS OLD)

CHECKS ARE PAYABLE TO:
L.A. HONPA HONGWANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE

Payments may be made in full or by installments
throughout the year of **2016**

EITAIKYO MONTHLY MEMORIAL SERVICE

(EITAIKYO SHOTSUKI HOYO)

by Rimban William Briones

Eitaikyo literally means the “perpetual chanting of sutras.”

This is because for as long as our temples are in existence, memorial service are held for our loved ones who have passed. It is a time for those who are living to acknowledge and express our gratitude to our past members and loved ones. For it is through their dedication that our temple continues. And, most importantly, it is through their transmission of the teachings, that we are able to hear the Dharma today.

In 1931 the Eitaikyo Fund was established to provide the Betsuin with financial security for the long term. Donors who make contributions to the fund on behalf of their loved ones, are recognized and their loved ones name is placed into the Betsuin’s Eitaikyo Memorial Book that is placed in the altar. In doing so a sutra is chanted in memory of your loved one on the month and day of their passing for as long as Betsuin is in existence.

However, beginning March 2016, we will begin conducting **Eitaikyo Monthly Memorial Services (Eitaikyo Shotsuki Hoyo.)** Services will be held on the second Sunday at 1:00 PM of each month for all those individuals listed in the Eitaikyo Memorial Book on their memorial month. Letters will be sent out a month in advance as a reminder to attend your loved ones Eitaikyo Monthly Memorial Service. We hope you will take this opportunity to show your appreciation to your loved ones and to listen to the Buddha-Dharma.

OBON MEMORIAL LANTERNS

The Obon Memorial Lanterns will be displayed during our Obon Festival. The tassel of each lantern will be personalized with the name of the departed loved one along with his/her Buddhist name (if desired). Donation for each lantern is \$25.00.

Applications are available at the Betsuin office from May 1, 2016.



BUDDHIST STUDIES FOR TEENS

February of 2015, Rev. Kaz Nakata started offering the course of intensive Buddhist studies to teens that belong to Boy Scout and Girl Scout at Nishi Betsuin. During the 2015, they learned the essential teachings of Buddhism in English, Chinese, Japanese and Indian Sanskrit. From this issue of the temple newsletter, they would like to share what they have learned in the course and each student wrote the article of the particular topic in Buddhism. We hope you will enjoy how they enjoy learning Buddhism at Nishi.

Buddha

by Cara Tao

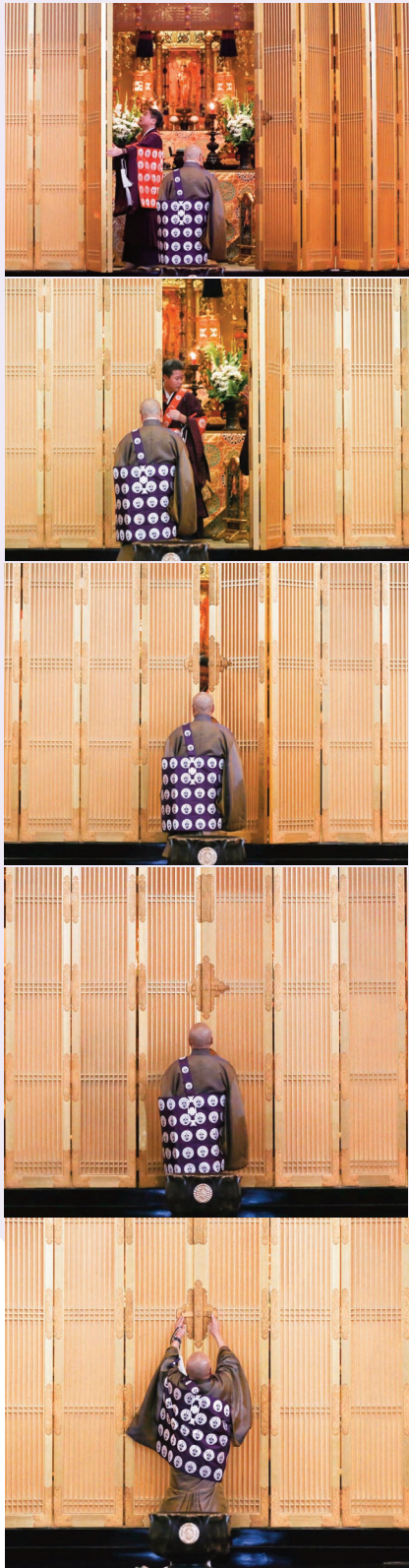
Siddhartha Gautama was a prince born in India. He had high expectations to become a great king. Siddhartha’s father, King Suddhodana, did not want his son to see that life was suffering, so he hid all of life’s imperfections as well as he could. Siddhartha’s father also shielded him from religion. While Siddhartha grew up, he was very happy and unaware of the suffering outside of the palace.

At the age of 29, on his first trip, he went through the Eastern Gate with his servants to meet his subjects. During this trip, he saw an old man. One of his servants explained to him that growing old happens to everyone at one point. This sparked interest in Prince Siddhartha. He then took another trip through the Southern Gate to see his people. On this trip he saw a sick man. On his trip through the Western Gate, he saw a funeral for a dead man. His servant explained to him that death was the fate of everyone. On his last trip, he left through the Northern Gate in which he saw a monk. All of these sights encouraged Siddhartha want to overcome aging, sickness, and death.

Soon after, Siddhartha decided to leave his life as a future king and become a monk. He left the palace on his favorite white horse, Kanthaka. Kanthaka was a very skilled and strong horse who was very attached to Siddhartha. He sought for answers to all of the suffering. In an attempt to find answers, Siddhartha joined a group of five ascetics. He limited himself to the bare minimum of one grain of rice a day, with the exception of no food at all for a day. Siddhartha often blacked out and collapsed. After six years of the practice, he finally came to the conclusion that asceticism was not the path that would help him succeed at his quest. He then came down the mountain and washed himself in the Niranjana River. The daughter of the village elder, Sujata, offered Siddhartha milk porridge. He happily accepted. After reclaiming his health Siddhartha sat down under a large Bodhi tree and vowed not to leave until he

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The ceremonial closing of the onaijin screen panels and being locked by Rimban.



BETSUIN PHOTOS



Onaijin pieces placed in the hallways before being packed and shipped.



Onaijin pieces being packed into a container truck



2015 Oseibo Program



Dharma School mochitsuki



*New Year's Eve 2015
Roy Tanaka strikes the bonsho as Rev Kaz looks on.*



ABA men (l-r: Roy Tanaka, Glenn Saita, Richard Odagawa, & Lonny Quon) offer sausage and eggs at the BEC Breakfast



BWA ladies preparing chirashizushi

(Rimban Briones - continued from page 1)

Of course Shinran Shonin rejected this believe. Unfortunately, many Jodo Shinshu Buddhists still have this misconception of why we do memorial services. You can imagine if we're unclear about memorial services and the afterlife, just imagine what our non-Buddhist friends think about these issues.

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

Our chanting, burning incense, bringing flowers and *os-onae* is nothing more than an acknowledgement to the fact that we are able to enjoy the benefits of the lives of those who have passed before us. To truly acknowledge this fact and express our gratitude is a true manifestation of the memorial service.

So as we conduct funerals or memorial service, it is an opportunity for us to reflect upon the Truth of our existence. To realize the countless causes and conditions that enabled us to be who we are and the numerous lives that are responsible for our existence. To truly understand this, we are able to inwardly realize the wisdom and compassion of Amida Buddha and outwardly live with gratitude for the life made possible for us by loved ones. The realization of this truth moves us forward to the future knowing that the thoughts, words, deeds of our loved ones continue to embrace us.

With this in mind, I hope you have a better understanding of why we conduct funeral and memorial services.

(Spring Ohigan - continued from page 6)

registration is available at temple office. The deadline will be on March 12, 2016. 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 - continued from page 6)

Buddha. Hanamatsuri Service, sponsored by the Los Angeles Buddhist Temples Federation, will be also held on **Sunday, April 3 at 1:00PM** at the JACCC.

(Rev. Nakata - continued from page 3)

mystical or a teaching of creationism.

On a side note: My family recently welcomed our third child, Akika on January 15th. Akika is a baby girl. You will have a chance to meet her at our Nishi Sunday services

Gassho

(Buddhist Teens - continued from page 8)

found his the truth and the answers he was seeking.

A little while after, Siddhartha suddenly became free of the unawareness of suffering that causes old age, illness, and death. He had become awakened, which means he became enlightened. At the age of 35, Siddhartha Gautama became the Buddha, or "Enlightened One"

After obtaining enlightenment, Buddha decided to teach his teachings with the five monks whom he studied with first. At first they looked at him with doubt, but they couldn't resist his new inner strength and confidence. They also noticed that he had reached the goal they had sought. These five men were then became Buddha's disciples. The three treasures were then obtained as the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sanga.

Buddha completely ignored the caste system in India and considered everyone as equals. He then spread the Dharma throughout India and influenced the many people he came in contact with. The people who looked up to him were spread out over the social hierarchy. They also crossed many kingdoms which soon spread to many other countries including Vietnam, China, and Japan.

Still spreading his ideas, he reached his last destination at a place called Vaisali. He was ill. At the age of 80 years old, Sakyamuni Buddha died. His last Dharma talk, he told his followers to follow the Dharma and reminded them that everything is impermanent.

Betsuin Jiho

Editor-in-Chief: Rimban William Briones

English Editor: Elaine Fukumoto

Photos: Koichi Sayano and Glen Tao

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*

November, 2015

- 20 Yoriko Machikawa
- 25 Koki Nozawa Yawata
- 29 Shizue Kasukabe
- 30 Clara Chiyoko Funatsu

January, 2016

- 1 Sam Isamu Nakagawa
- 2 Toshiko Kiuchi
- 12 Mike Minoru Takimoto
- 12 Susumu Shimabuku
- 12 Shiro Nishida

December, 2015

- 8 Lillian Kinuko Nakamaru
- 18 Tetsuo Shoji
- 26 Teddy Shoichi Matsui
- 27 Iwao Hagiwara
- 28 Hatsue Hitomi



NISHI BOY SCOUT TROOP 738

**PANCAKE
BREAKFAST**

**Sunday,
April 10, 2016
7 AM - 10 AM
Donation: \$6
Betsuin Kaikan**



KOHAKU UTAGASSEN 2016

The Red Team Won!



SPRING OHIGAN SEMINAR

**LIFE OF
AWAKENING
Namo Amida Butsu**

**Saturday, March 19, 2016
9:00 am- 3:00 pm**

GUEST SPEAKERS:

**Rev. Tetsuo
Unno**

**Rev. Kiyonobu
Kuwahara**

**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 12th

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

HATSUMAIRI

INFANT PRESENTATION SERVICE

Hatsumairi is translated as the "First Visitation" and is often referred to as the *Infant Presentation Service*.



The LA *Betsuin* will hold its annual *Hatsumairi Service* on **Sunday, May 22nd** in conjunction with the *Gotanye 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.

To those who are interested in participating in the *Hatsumairi*, the application form is on the next page. If there are questions, please contact the Betsuin office.

SURF AND TURF DINNER

8th ANNUAL



MARCH 12, 2016

\$20.00 per plate

PRESALE ONLY

Dinner 4:00 PM – 7:00 PM

BINGO 4:30 PM – 8:00 PM

**MENU: TERIYAKI STEAK and SALMON •
GREEN SALAD • 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.

HATSUMAIRI

May 22, 2016

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 8, 2016**

**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 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
					Jodo Shinshu Buddhism (Japanese) Rev. Nakata 10:00-11:00 am	Seeking a Final Solution to Life, Guided by Shinran and... Rev. Unno 10:00-1130 am
			BCA Ministers Meeting @ Visalia		BCA National Council Meeting @ Visalia	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Regular Service 10:00 am				Board Meeting 7:30 pm	Jodo Shinshu Buddhism (Japanese) Rev. Nakata 10:00-11:00 am	Surf and Turf Fundraising Dinner 4-9 pm
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Girl Scout Sunday 10:00 am Jodo Shinshu for Teens Rev Nakata 11:30-12:15		Tannisho-A Record in Lament of Divergences Rev Furumoto 7:00-8:30 pm	Go-Meinichi-ko 1:30 pm		Jodo Shinshu Buddhism (Japanese) Rev. Nakata 10:00-11:00 am	Ohigan Seminar 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Ohigan Service 10:00 am Jodo Shinshu for Teens Rev Nakata 11:30-12:15					Jodo Shinshu Buddhism (Japanese) Rev. Nakata 10:00-11:00 am	
27	28	29	30	31		
Regular Service 10:00 am						

APRIL 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3 Hanamatsuri Service 10:00 am Butsuren Hanamatsuri Service 1:00 pm	4	5	6 Contemporary Issues & Jodo Shinshu Perspective Rimban Briones 7:00-8:30 pm	7 Traditions of Nishi Hongwanji Rev. Kodani 7:00-8:30 pm	8	9
10 Regular Service 10:00 am	11	12	13 Contemporary Issues & Jodo Shinshu Perspective Rimban Briones 7:00-8:30 pm	14 Board Meeting 7:30 pm	15 Jodo Shinshu Rtual on Death and Dying (JPN) Rev Takata 10:00 - 11:00 am	16 Go-Meinichi-ko 1:30 pm
17 Regular Service 10:00 am	18 Shoshin Nembutsu-ge (Shoshinge) Rev Takata 6:30-7:30 pm	19 Intro to the Three Pure Land Sutras Rev Furumoto 7:00-8:30 pm	20 Contemporary Issues & Jodo Shinshu Perspective Rimban Briones 7:00-8:30 pm	21 Traditions of Nishi Hongwanji Rev. Kodani 7:00-8:30 pm	22	23
24 Regular Service 10:00 am	25 Shoshin Nembutsu-ge (Shoshinge) Rev Takata 6:30-7:30 pm	26 Intro to the Three Pure Land Sutras Rev Furumoto 7:00-8:30 pm	27 Contemporary Issues & Jodo Shinshu Perspective Rimban Briones 7:00-8:30 pm	28 Traditions of Nishi Hongwanji Rev. Kodani 7:00-8:30 pm	29 Jodo Shinshu Rtual on Death and Dying (JPN) Rev Takata 10:00 - 11:00 am	30 FDSTL Conference @ Sacramento