

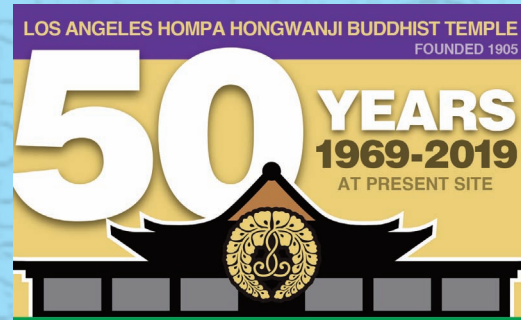
LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

No. 436

May-June 2016

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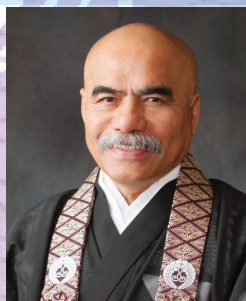
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RIMBAN'S MESSAGE

JODO SHINSHU AND PRAYER

"As Jodo Shinshu Buddhist, we shall seek to be mindful of our words and deeds, be responsible citizens of our society and share with others the truth and reality of Jodo Shinshu. Understanding fully the principle of causality, we shall not practice petitionary prayer or magic, nor shall we rely upon astrology or other superstitions."



**RIMBAN
WILLIAM BRIONES**

passed away.

I remember one of my first visits, when I was called by the chaplaincy office. There was a Vietnamese family at the hospital that just lost their father and they requested a Buddhist priest to offer prayers to their loved one. I told the chaplain on duty that I was a Jodo Shinshu minister which is a Japanese Buddhist tradition, but he said they had tried several Buddhist temples and no one was willing or able to go. Hearing of the chaplain's predicament, I agreed to meet with the family.

As I drove to the hospital I thought, "What am I

going to do? I don't pray." When I met the family at the hospital, I expressed my condolences and we talked about their father. I then told them that I was a Jodo Shinshu Buddhist priest and explained that within our tradition we chant with the understanding that we are expressing our appreciation and gratitude to our loved one. However, I told them to please offer a prayer within their own tradition while I chant. After I chanted a sutra, I remained with the family in silence as they wept. As I departed I was touched by their expression of appreciation that I had come to chant a sutra for their father.

Among all Buddhist, Jodo Shinshu Buddhist are the only Buddhist who do not practice prayers nor do we teach that there can be benefits in this world through petitionary prayer. For most Buddhists, prayer is central in their practice.

The reading I began with is an excerpt from "The Essentials of Jodo Shinshu" (Kyosho). It can be found in the front page of any Jodo Shinshu service book, under *Tradition*: "Understanding fully the principle of causality, we shall not practice petitionary prayer or magic, nor shall we rely upon astrology or other superstitions." In one sentence, Jodo Shinshu radically differentiates us from all other Buddhist traditions.

Most major religions involve prayer in one way or another. Prayer is probably the oldest form

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NAMES

by Rev. Koho Takata



REV. KOHO TAKATA

Members sometime ask me the meaning of their Japanese names. Each Japanese character has a unique meaning such as *Tokuko* - valuable child, *Kunio* - country boy, *Yoshiko* - good girl, *Hanako* - beautiful girl like a flower, etc.

My wife and I had two opportunities to select names for our expected babies. However, we did not know whether they would be boys or a girls. So, we thought names for both a boy and a girl.

As with my daughters, when babies are born, they are not able to select their own names. Most names will be given by parents, relatives, or others. The names given often reflect hopes and aim in life.

Shinran Shonin is the founder of Jodo Shinshu. He has had several names throughout his lifetime. Significant circumstances during his life effected his name changes. **Matsuwakamaro** was his first name, given by his parents. His parents' best wishes are reflected on this name, meaning, "A young boy grows as a pine tree."

Upon entering monkhood at the age of nine, the name **Hannen** was given to Shinran by the master Jichin. The first character "*Han*" was adopted from his father's name, Arinori Hino. "Nori" is also pronounced as "Han".

After descending from Mt. Hiei and becoming a disciple of Honen Shonin, the name **Shakku** was given to Shinran by the master. "*Shaku*" was adopted from the 4th master of Jodo Shinshu, Do-Shaku (Tao-ch'o), and "*Ku*" was from the 7th master, Gen-Ku (Honen Shonin). The name was later changed to **Zenshin** which was conferred upon him by the vision of Prince Shotoku, consisting of *Zen-Do* (Shan-tao) of the 5th master and *Gen-Shin* of the 6th master.

In 1207, exiled by the government, Shinran was stripped of his monkhood and given a secular name. At that time, the followers of the Nembutsu increased so rapidly that the scholars of Mt. Hiei and Nara became jealous of Honen Shonin. They feared that the center of Buddhism was gradually moving towards the Nembutsu teachings. The jealous monks approached the imperial court and claimed that the way of the Nembutsu teachings was not according to the teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha. They denounced Honen Shonin and the Nembutsu teachings. As the result, the imperial court could not drop the matter and was forced to take action against Honen Shonin and

his disciples.

An order was issued to Honen Shonin and seven of his disciples including Shinran Shonin. They were given secular names, because the imperial court could not punish monks by laws of the time. Shinran Shonin's secular name was **Yoshizane Fujii**. However, he chose his last name as **Toku** for himself. By adopting the name "*Toku*", he declared he was neither a monk nor a layman. "*Gu*" which means ignorant usually preceded the name "*Toku*". Thus, the name **Gutoku** was created.

While still in Echigo, Shinran added the name **Shinran**, composed of *Ten-Jin* (Vasubandhu) of the 2nd master ("*Shin*" is another pronunciation of the character "*Jin*".) and Don-Ran (T'an-luan) of the 3rd master. He used **Gutoku Shinran** as his full name for the remainder of his life.

In looking at all of Shinran's different names, I feel his names were expressions of his gratitude to the Nembutsu teachings. He was especially thankful to those Pure Land masters for the wonderful gift of Amida Buddha. Let us express our gratitude to Shinran Shonin who transmitted the Nembutsu teachings from Pure Land masters and clarified the teachings for us.



Judy Izumo, Hollywood Buddhist Church president, presents Rimban Briones and Betsuin president, Kenji Hatakeyama, a donation from the Hollywood Buddhist Church for the Betsuin's 50th Anniversary Fund.

MEMORIES BEYOND LIFE

by Rev. Kazuaki Nakata



REV. KAZ

The columbarium is called the *nokotsudo* in Japan-ese American Buddhism and by Japanese Americans. *Nokotsu* means placement of an individual's ashes or bones. *Do* means a building with rooms inside.

Within the Shin Buddhist tradition in Japan, many temples have a *nokotsudo* as part of the temple or in out-

side locations. Our mother temple Hongwanji in Kyoto, has its own *nokotsudo* which is known as the Otani-Honbyo in the eastern Kyoto area.

The Otani-Honbyo was originally established in 1272. That was nine years after our founder Shinran Shonin's death. Subsequently, 200 years later, our ancestors encountered the first Jodo Shinshu persecution in 1465. After the tragedy of the persecution, Otani-Honbyo had to be relocated several times. Finally, in 1603, the current location was found and named the location "Otani". A new Buddha Hall (*Daibutsu Den*) was built in Otani. Later, the Buddha Hall and its complex was reformed and renamed to Otani-Honbyo.

The *nokotsudo* at the L.A. Betsuin was newly constructed in 2005 as a part of our Nishi centennial special occasion. The *nokotsudo* is able to house thousands of urns. Over 10 years later there are hundreds of urns have been placed.

In the last 15 years of my ministry, I have had many unique requests regarding the urns. Some families wished to put their loved one's ashes or bones into a pendant so that they could carry with them. Another family initially wanted to have their family member in an urn. They, subsequently decided to scatter the ashes in the ocean.

There have been times where I have had to open an urn. When opening an urn, there is a clear plastic bag with an attached tag with a serial number. When I opened an urn for the first time, it was unsettling. I placed the urn on the front table of the altar and chanted. In my head I knew that there was no magical miracles or ghosts in Shin Buddhism. As a human being, however, I was not comfortable with this situation. I would like to share a story that took place over ten years ago.

One day, a family brought two urns to my office and asked me,

"Rev. Kaz, our family would like to put my mom and dad's ashes together. Can you do that?"

By then I was comfortable in opening an urn. I told the family, *"Sure, I am happy to take care of it."*

I held the two urns in both my hands and went to the hondo. I first placed a sheet of aluminum foil on a table, if any of the ashes were to leak out of the plastic bag, I could easily place it back into the urn. I unscrewed the wife's urn and took out the plastic bag containing her ashes. The husband's urn was bigger so the family wished to put both set of ashes into the husband's urn.

I unscrewed a husband's urn and I attempted to put her ashes into the's urn. Her plastic bag, however, was slightly larger than the free space in the urn. I made several attempts but I couldn't get it to fit. The family had been waiting at the temple office so I went to explain the problem. I suggested tha, *"If we mix both of their ashes into one plastic bag, it will fit."* The family agreed with my idea. So, I walked back to the hondo and I opened their plastic bags. I slowly poured her ashes into the husband's plastic bag.

Then, something fell out of the wife's bag onto the aluminum foil. It was a ring. I assumed that the ring was on her during the cremation process because it was cracked. I then wondered if the husband's ashes might contain something. So, I squeezed the bag with my fingers and found something. I used a pair of metal chopsticks and managed to retrieve what was his wedding band which had the same design as his wife's ring.

I then had the idea to join the two rings. Her ring was cracked so I was able to link the two rings.

Before I opened the urns, their had children shared with me that their mom and dad had shared their love and life for over 55 years. They always helped each other. For this reason the children had requested to put their ashes together into one urn, though they did not expect to have their ash mixed together.

After I poured all her ashes with his ashes, I placed their joined rings on top of their ashes. I whispered, *"Now both of you really really are together."* Unexpectedly, I began tearing up.

Do you visit your family grave or *nokotsudo*? There are many stories within those urns. When we see their name on their urn, gravestone or name plate, we remember the loving memories and their smiling face. We can then realize those memories beyond life. In our Shin Buddhist tradition in the BCA, we especially encourage all to visit your

(continued on page 4)

“50 YEARS” UPDATE REPORT

by Ernest Hida, 50th Anniversary Chairman

As we continue with the planning of the 50th Anniversary of the Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple at its current location, I cannot help but reflect upon its beginnings. The current structure was dedicated on November 16, 1969 with the attendance of the **Monshu Kosho Ohtani and Lady Ohtani**.

The temple was re-located from the First Street and Central Avenue location due to the planned redevelopment of the northside of First Street of Little Tokyo by the City of Los Angeles and the temple was not included in that plan. It began with the difficult decision to re-locate and the tireless planning by the ministers and the temple leaders. Once the decision was made to re-locate, finding and acquiring property had to take place. From there, construction of the temple and financing this project were of the utmost priority.

Building a temple from the ground up was no simple task. It required the absolute dedication and devotion of the ministers and temple leaders on top of maintaining the operations of the current temple. They faced the responsibilities of every aspect of the design of the temple building, the construction process and the final arrangement and setup of the *hondo* and *onaijin*, which was the main responsibilities of the ministers.

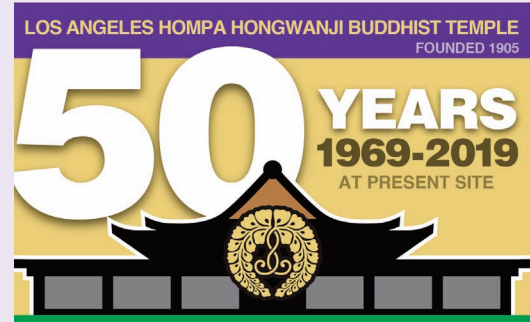
While construction was taking place, the ministers and leaders were also involved in a large fundraising campaign to finance this new temple structure. It was an immense struggle which required great efforts and sacrifices by the ministers, leaders and members to successfully raise the funds to complete the new temple. What an amazing legacy that has been left for all of us.

Today, we must not forget what was accomplished for all of us and continue this beautiful and meaningful legacy for the future generations.

(Nakata - continued from page 3)

family's grave during the Memorial Day weekend and during Obon. We do think of Obon as a joyous time with the dancing, food, and drink, but we need to remember that Obon is a time to remember and visit our family's grave and nokotsudo. During the Memorial Day weekend, we will conduct special services at various cemeteries and at the nokotsudo. You are encouraged to attend these services.

Gassho



The Dharma School students are continuing their 50th Anniversary fundraising project by still collecting recyclable plastics. Please support the students by bringing your recyclable plastics to the temple to support the students' great fundraising efforts. A big thank you to these students for their youthful dedication. Also, a thank you to other organizations for their fundraising efforts for the 50th Anniversary and individual donors for their generosity.

A reminder to all if you are interested in having your name included on the floral tile that will be installed in the ceiling of the onaijin. The deadline for your initial donation is July 31, 2016. The list of the donors' names will be sent to the Wakabayashi Butsugu Mfg Company in Kyoto to inscribe the names on the tiles. If you have already made a donation, your name will automatically be included.

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 our temple in 2019 to honor our *Issei* pioneers and past members for the legacy they left for us.

Gassho, Ernest Hida



Betsuin New Members

GOTAN-E DHARMA SERVICE THE BIRTH OF SHINRAN SHONIN

by Rev. Koho Takata

The members of Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple and their families are invited to attend the annual Gotan-e Service, which is one of the Six Major Services in the Hongwanji tradition to be held on Sunday, **May 22, 2016**. The guest speaker for the service will be **Rev. Yushi Mukojima** of the resident minister of the Mountain View Buddhist Temple for English Service and **Rev. Seikan Fukuma** of the BCA Minister Emeritus and former Rimban of our temple for Japanese Service.

Gotan-E celebrates the birth of our founder Shinran Shonin who was born on May 21, 1173. Reviewing Shinran Shonin's life, he did not live a fortunate life filled with happiness. Both his parents were gone at an early age and he encountered many hardships throughout his life. But his spiritual experiences which evolved under many trying conditions and in many places, have given the many followers of the Buddha's Teachings an answer to the purpose of life in this world.

Shinran Shonin spent his simple and modest life of 90 years with no thought of making himself spectacularly prominent and impressive among the people. But millions of Nembutsu followers are rejoicing over his way of life through the guidance of Amida Buddha and his Teachings. Let us see the true aspect of Shinran Shonin's *shinjin* and live the life of Oneness with the strength and conviction

through the Teachings of the Nembutsu.

INFANT PRESENTATION CEREMONY

The Infant Presentation Ceremony (*Hatsumairi*) will be held in conjunction with the Gotan-e (birth of Shinran Shonin) Service on **May 22, 2016**. Application form is available on page 13 of this issue.

The "*Infant Presentation Ceremony*" is an observance where parents formally present their child to the Buddha and the sangha for the first time. It will be a precious opportunity for the child, parents, and the sangha to rededicate themselves to walk together in the footsteps of Shinran Shonin and become aware that we are always in Oneness with Amida Buddha at all times and in all places in the Infinite Light and Life.



We strongly encourage the observance of the *Hatsumairi* in order to nurture individuals to rejoice in the Nembutsu. Children are nurtured by parents and parents, in turn, are fostered by children, and by living in Amida Buddha's Heart we are able to build a Nembutsu life actualized by Shinran Shonin.

EITAIKYO MONTHLY MEMORIAL SERVICE

by Rev. Koho Takata

The Eitaikyo Monthly Memorial Service for those who passed away in the month of May and June is scheduled for **Sunday, May 8** and **Sunday, June 12, 2016** at 1:00PM.

The Eitaikyo Monthly Memorial Services is held for deceased family members who have contributed to the Eitaikyo fund and received *Ingo* which is a posthumous title that was presented at the funeral service to an individual who has shown extraordinary leadership and exhibited a deep commitment and contribution to our temple. This Eitaikyo Monthly Memorial Service is a solemn occasion for all of us to express our appreciation and gratitude to one's dedication to the Buddha, dharma, and sangha.

The term Eitaikyo means the perpetual chanting of the sutra in memory of the deceased, signifying that all those

who have passed away lived in the teachings of the Buddha. Sutra chanting, rituals, and donations done by deceased family members in the service are symbolic expressions of our dedication and appreciation to our loved ones.

This observance gives each of us a chance to affirm our own understanding of Buddhism through our loved ones. Such affirmation gives us the precious opportunity for all of us to see how the teaching of the Buddha has helped and enriched our lives and to recognize the continuation of the influence of their deeds upon our lives. Acknowledging our dharma connection to our loved ones empowers us to further pursue the path of the Buddha, dharma, and sangha, which our loved ones truly valued and appreciated. This is an opportunity to show our appreciation to our loved ones and to listen to the Buddha-dharma.

DID YOU KNOW?

by Eiko Masuyama



**EIKO
MASUYAMA**

A smaller Buddhist altar (*obutsudan*) containing a scroll, with an image of Amida Buddha, was placed in the main hall (*hondo*) on January 24th, following the *Auspicious Commemoration Service for Transporting Amida Buddha Statue and Altar* for restoration.

From where did this smaller altar come?

It is thought that this *obutsudan* was acquired between 1905 and 1917. It was installed on Dec. 9, 1917, at the first permanent location on the second floor of Yamato Hall, located on Central and Jackson Streets.

When the membership built a new temple in 1925 at 119 North Central Avenue (now part of the Japanese American National Museum), a new *obutsudan* was installed. The Yamato Hall altar was placed in a small chapel in the basement. The basement also had the main kitchen, columbarium (*nokotsudo*), library, printing room, and classrooms.

In 1969, the temple moved to our current First Street location, and the Yamato Hall altar was placed in the original Wisteria Chapel. In 2005, the *obutsudan* was restored for the centennial celebration and placed in the new Wisteria Chapel in the new building addition.

The *obutsudan* you now see in the *hondo*, is our connection to the Issei and Nisei who established Los Angeles Hompa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple. Our nembutsu resonates with their nembutsu, and our gratitude for their sacrifices is unending,

-- **Ondokusan**

f anyone has information about the history of the small obutsudan, 1905 -1917, or photos or stories of that era, please share. Thank you to Bruce Hatakeyama for assisting in writing above article.

* * * * *

Kaoru Inouye

Betsuin photographer (1970s – 1999)

Betsuin president (1982-1983)

by Marvin Inouye

Kaoru Inouye was born December 5, 1915 in Los Gatos, California, the oldest of six children. He attended a one-room classroom elementary school while working on his parents' prune ranch. He was told by his father at a young age that the opportunity in America to prosper was great and therefore he should try to assimilate into American society.

Following graduation from Los Gatos High School, Kaoru enrolled at the University of California, Berkeley, and graduated with a B.S. in chemistry in 1938. While attending Cal, he was affiliated with the Young Men and Women Buddhist Association and started photographing their functions.



Kaoru Inouye

He and his family were incarcerated at Heart Mountain Wyoming concentration camp via the Santa Anita Race-track in Arcadia, CA. While in camp, Kaoru assisted the Heart Mountain Buddhist Church Sunday school, following superintendent, Mr. Yutaka Shinohara.

He was drafted out of camp and into the MIS (Military Intelligence Service) and was sent to Japan as a language interpreter during the U.S. occupation of Japan. While in Sendai, he met Yoshiko Utsushigawa, an American, who was forced to remain in Japan during WWII, suffering the side effects of war. After the war, she was hired by the US Army as a secretary, where she met Kaoru.

Upon returning to the U.S. with a Japanese-American war bride, Yoshiko, and two year old daughter, Cheryl, he was employed at Aerojet General in Azusa during the "space race" and Analytical Research Labs, Inc. Children, Marvin, Sheila, and Tedd, followed.

Kaoru passed away September 11, 1999, in Los Angeles.

Thank you to Marvin Inouye, son of late Kaoru Inouye, for donating many photo albums, to the Nishi archives. Photos from the 1970s – 1999, including Nishi events, BCA National Council Meetings and events, Southern District events, Southern District temple events. BCA and Southern District photos have been donated to the BCA Collection at the Japanese American National Museum; photos of Little Tokyo events have been donated to Little Tokyo Historical Society.

Donations: To Archives—Nishi Matrons financial records, late Helen Adler, treasurer, donated by Michael Richards; To Library—Japanese and English books, donated by Cindy Oda; Bukkyo sha no Sensou Taiken, Bukkyo Times, donated by Yukikazu Nagashima. Gassho

DHARMA CENTER SPRING COURSES

The Dharma Center of the Los Angeles Hampa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple will be offering the following courses in General Buddhism and Jodo Shinshu Buddhism. The courses will be introductory for those who are new to the Buddhist concepts and continuing education for those already learning the truth of the Dharma to live each moment in the teachings. Let us all enrich our lives by listening to the teachings.

Shoshin Nembutsu-ge (Shoshinge) - Hymn of True Shinjin and the Nembutsu

Monday, 6:30-8:00PM Rev. Koho Takata
April 18, 25, May 2, 9, 16 (5 week class: \$50)

Introduction to the Three Pure Land Sutras

Tuesday, 7:00-8:30PM Rev. Ryuta Furumoto
April 19, 26, May 3, 17, 24 (5 week class: \$50)

Contemporary Issues and Jodo Shinshu Perspective (Discussion)

Wednesday, 7:00-8:30PM Rev. William Briones April 6, 13, 20, 27, May 4 (5 week class: \$50)

Traditions of Nishi Hongwanji

Thursday, 7:00-8:30PM Rev. Masao Kodani
April 7, 21, 28, May 5, 26 (5 week class: \$50)

Jodo Shinshu Ritual on Death and Dying (in Jpn)

Friday, 10:00-11:00AM (6 week class: \$60) Rev. Koho Takata April 15, 29, May 13, 27, June 3, 17

Drawing Closer to and Learning from Extraordinary lay Shin Buddhists, Such as the Myokonin Shomatsu, Saichi, Kichibe, and Others

Saturday, 10:00-11:30AM Rev. Tetsuo Unno

May 7, 14, 21, June 4, 11 (5 week class: \$50)

Introduction to Buddhism/Jodo Shinshu Buddhism

Every Sunday, 11:00-11:30AM (free) Rev. William Briones

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

Sunday, 11:30-12:15AM (free) Rev. Kazuaki Nakata April 3, 17, 24, May 8, 22, 29, June 5, 12, 19, 26

For further information about the courses or to register for one or more courses, please call the temple office at 213-680-9130.

You may also download the pamphlet on the temple website: <http://www.nishihongwanji-la.org/>



Rimban Briones' Dharma Center class discussing "Contemporary Issues and Jodo Shinshu Perspective". Pictured is the casual culmination class for the Winter session.

YOUTH ESSAYS

Applied Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Studies for Teens

In February of 2015, Rev. Kaz Nakata started an intensive Buddhist studies class for teens who belong to the Boy and Girl Scout program at the Nishi Betsuin. During 2015, the students learned the essential teachings of Buddhism in English, Chinese, Japanese and Indian Sanskrit. Each of the students wrote an essay on a particular topic in Buddhism. Here, two of the students will share what they have learned in the class. We hope you will enjoy how they enjoy learning Buddhism.

Sangha: Pass It On — by Michelle Itomura

A long time ago, sangha referred to the monks who practiced Buddhism. So in order to be enlightened, you had

to be a monk. That was until Shinran Shonin, under the guidance of Honen Shonin, opened up Buddhism to everybody through lecturing about the Nembutsu way. This teaching became what we call Jodo Shinshu Buddhism. Since we are practitioners of tradition of Jodo Shinshu at Nishi Hongwanji Buddhist Temple, we believe that the sangha is everyone who follows and listens to the dharma as well as our ancestors that came before us.

Sangha relates to many aspects of my life. In Girl Scouts, my leader is like a dharma school teacher. She teaches us new things and helps understand what we are doing. She probably gained the experience from someone who

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50TH ANNIVERSARY BENEFIT DANCE II

by Mirei Kagawa

With our elevated commitment to ensure the future of the temple that serves so many of us in many ways, we are featuring the **2nd annual 50th Anniversary Benefit Dance** on **Saturday, May 21st**, right here in the kaikan. Unlike last year this announcement is being made well in advance so that everyone is on board. Even if you and “dancing” don’t get along, please consider coming out with friends to listen and enjoy the sounds and rhythms of **Kokoro**. There will even be an area carved out for ‘live

chats’ for those who’d like to reconnect and catch up with As plans for this event take shape, please consider being a part of it and making it a success. Let’s make this dance a night to remember to preserve what we hold dear that is our temple. Let’s keep the Betsuin a constant in our lives and for generations to come. Flyers are available at the office and for questions, please call Kenji Hatakeyama at (323) 719-4479.

(Form can be found on the last page of this issue)



**CELEBRATING
THE 50th**



Bishop Kodo Umezu assists the Wakabayashi Co. in packing the Amida statue to be shipped to Kyoto for refurbishment.



Rimban Briones and Rev. Takata conducting the “Auspicious Commemoration Service for Transporting Amida Buddha Statue and Altar” for refurbishment.

(Rimban - continued from page 1)

of spiritual/mystical practice in the history of mankind. It is natural for people to want to be blessed with personal benefit.

As Jodo Shin Buddhist we reject this form of prayer since the basic teaching rests on the Law of Cause and Effect. Buddhism teaches that happiness and unhappiness are the results of action. And that good fortune and misfortune are also the results of ones thoughts, words, and deeds. If we cannot understand this then for sure we will continue to be frustrated and unhappy.

For Buddhists we are to awaken or be mindful of our innate inner capacities of strength, compassion and wisdom rather to petition external forces. The well-being of human life is dependent upon the consequences of our actions. There are no miracles, magic or prayers that can change the course of events.

Amida Buddha is not a god, a creator of the universe, a being who watches over me and the world or that judges the action of man. Rather Amida Buddha is ultimate truth/reality. Amida is the living compassion, free from all limitations.

Therefore, there is no judge and no judgment. There is no wrong and there is no right. There are only the effects of our thoughts, words and deeds. These effects exist as the consequences of what we think, say and do. And, how we respond to these effects, determines what our next moment shall be. It determines what type of human being I shall become.

As Shin Buddhist we do not consider the Nembutsu a mantra or prayer to be used to evoke awaking or to invoke Amida. It's not even a practice or good action that helps us reach enlightenment.

The recitation of Nembutsu, "*Namo Amida Butsu*," is the outward expression of appreciation and gratitude to Amida. My saying "*Namo Amida Butsu*" is not merely my saying it... rather it is Amida calling to me. Therefore Amida Buddha is not the object I am calling, rather the subject who calls to me.

The wonderful thing about Nembutsu is that when we say *Namo Amida Butsu*, anywhere or anytime, it transforms the ordinary and mundane into the path of awakening. Nembutsu enriches our lives with deep spiritual connection and makes every moment special manifesting the Pure Land here and now.

Namoamidabutsu

(Essays- continued from page 7)

has acquired the knowledge themselves from someone else. We learn how do like a craft from our leader and set the example for the younger girls and teach them what we learned. On my basketball team, my coaches are also like dharma school teachers because the ministers would be the people that taught them how to play basketball. My coaches teach us different techniques to do during our games that we practice to help us. I hope, if I have kids, I could teach them how to play basketball.

By learning about sangha, I understand how it can be seen through the many parts of my life. We pass on Buddhist traditions just like we pass on how to do a craft or how to do a play in basketball. These analogies help me remember what sangha means and can help me pass on the meaning of sangha as well.

Amitabha Amitayus — by Kendall Kirio

When we come to the temple, we are always reminded to thank Amida Buddha. However, probably only a few of us actually know who we're thanking, other than an obscure idea of a very wise man. Understanding what his name means can help us understand who he is. There are two interpretations of his name: Amitabha and Amitayus. While the two names are very similar, they are not identical.

Amitabha is conveys two meanings. The first part, "amita" means immeasurable or uncountable. This can be likened to infinite. The second part, "bha" means light. This light can be understood as the connections between people. So "Amitabha" means immeasurable or uncountable light, or in everyday terms, infinite connections. This interpretation of the name explains this is the Buddha of the infinite connections that link everything.

These connections can be explained by a circle of friends. Every friend is connected to each other. Every person in that circle knows other people outside that circle of friends. Those people outside the circle know other people. So one friend in that circle is connected to another friend, who is connected to a relative, who is connected to another person. These connections form a global web that links any one person to any other person. These connections also link other things, such as the grass cows eat, which go into the hamburgers that we eat. There are so many of these links that they can't be counted – there are an infinite number of them.

Amitayus also consists of two meanings. "Amita," as mentioned before, is immeasurable or uncountable. In everyday terms, it means infinite. However, "yus" means something a bit different than "bha." Rather than connections, "yus" means life. When the two meanings are put

(continued on page 11)

BETSUIN PIX



Institute of Buddhist Studies / Buddhist Churches of America Winter Pacific Seminar - "East Meets West: Higashi and Nishi Perspectives"- held at the LA Betsuin and at Higashi Honganji. Pictured to the left is the Higashi onajin with the panelists Rinban Noriaki Ito, Dr. Mark Blum, and Rev. Marvin Harada. Below are some of the Nishi Hongwanji and Higashi Honganji ministers.



Hundreds came to enjoy the Surf and Turf dinner and play a game of BINGO.



*Board Luncheon Entertainment
Former Betsuin president, Lonny Quon, leads Betsuin president, Kenji Hatakeyama, Rev. Nakata, Rev. Fukuma, and Rimban Briones in a dance wearing workers' vests and protective helmets.*



Pictured are the newly-installed officers of the Betsuin temple and the various affiliated organizations.

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*

January, 2016

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 22 Noburo Kaku | 6 Shizue Yamashiro |
| 22 Takashi Uyejo | 10 Norio Otani |
| 22 Fred Takeru Jr. Sako | 16 Tsutomu Ben Mito |
| 29 Junichi John Fujinaka | 17 Etsuko Igi |
| 29 Ben Shoji Noda | 19 Kenneth Mitsuharu Yokoyama |
| 30 Setsuko Kominami | 19 Toshiaki Hamai |
| | 21 Lillian Midori Mikuriya |
| | 22 Gregory Okaneke |
| | 29 May Yukiye Fujino |

February, 2016

2 Walter Kakuro
Matsumura

3 Chie Iseri

3 Ben Tsutomu Kawaguchi

3 Sumiko Tsuchiyama

3 Hisashi Furuta

4 Utano Okita

March, 2016

3 Saburo Nishikawa

11 Theodore Takeshi Tsuji

14 Ayako Nomoto



WEAR A YUKATA!

Again, this year, for the Betsuin's Obon, dressers will be available. Essentials for wearing a yukata are:

- yukata,
- obi,
- 2 koshihimo (narrow ties at least 2 yards long to secure your yukata)
- geta or zouri for footwear and no tabi
- hadajuban - undergarment (if not available, a tank top and shorts will be fine)

For men:

- yukata
- obi
- 1 koshihimo (see above)
- geta or zouri (no tabi)
- Shorts will be fine for underneath



BETSUIN MEMORIAL DAY SERVICES

SUNDAY, MAY 29th

BETSUIN 10:00 am
BETSUIN NOKOTSU-DO 11:00 am

LOS ANGELES BUDDHIST TEMPLE FEDERATION SERVICES

SATURDAY, MAY 28th

RIVERSIDE CEMETERY 9:00 am
JACCC ALL WARS MEMORIAL MONUMENT 11:00 am

SUNDAY, MAY 29th

PACIFIC CREST CEMETERY 9:00 am
NEWPORT BEACH HIGASHI HONGANJI 9:00 am
PACIFIC VIEW MEMORIAL PARK 10:00 am
GREEN HILLS MEMORIAL PARK 11:00 am

MONDAY, MAY 30th

EVERGREEN CEMETERY

MUEN-TO 9:30 am
IREI-TO 10:00 am
KUYO-TO (Hiroshima Kenjinkai) 10:30 am
NISEI VETS 11:00 am

ROSE HILLS MEMORIAL PARK

NISEI VETS 9:00 am
IREI-TO 10:00 am

WOODLAWN MEMORIAL CEMETERY 9:00 am

ANGELES MEMORIAL CEMETERY 11:00 am

INGLEWOOD PARK CEMETERY 2:00 pm

(Essays- continued from page 9)

together, "Amitayus" can be translated to immeasurable life. So this interpretation explains this is the Buddha of infinite life.

Both interpretations complement each other. If you imagine that aforementioned circle of friends, there an infinite number of connections among them. They link any one person in the group to any other thing. However, that also means there are an infinite number of lives that are being connected. That is why both names can describe the same person. One cannot exist without the other.

Amitabha and Amitayus may not be identical in meaning, but describe the same entity. Both meanings are a powerful insight into who the Buddha is. After reading this, we should know what the names mean. And hopefully it means that thanking Amida Buddha is more meaningful.



OBON DANCE PRACTICE DATES



Where: Northwest Parking Lot
Time: 7:00 - 8:30 pm
Days: Tuesdays & Thursdays
June 16, 18, 23, 25, & 30
July 2, 7
 & 9 @ Keiro Retirement Home @ 6:00 pm

OBON KIMONO-MANIA

Sunday, June 26
 11:30 am - 4:00 pm

@ LA Betsuin - Lotus Room



**MANY ITEMS AVAILABLE
FOR WEAR AT OBON:**
 (Dancing and Tea Ceremony wear)
 yukata • summer kimono • dress kimono •
 haori • happi • undergarments • juban •
 various sized obi • zouri • geta

**MEN'S AND CHILDREN'S
ITEMS ALSO AVAILABLE**

Betsuin Jiho

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

SO. DISTRICT OBON ODORI SCHEDULE

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>June 11 Arizona 6:45</p> <p>June 18 & 19 Sun Valley 7:00 / 6:30</p> <p>June 25 & 26 San Fernando 7:00 / 6:30 West Covina 7:00 - not BCA (Saturday)</p> <p>July 2 Senshin 7:00 (Saturday)</p> <p>July 9 & 10 L.A. BETSUIN 7:00 / 6:00 Oxnard 6:00 (Saturday only)</p> <p>July 16 & 17 Orange County 7:00 Santa Barbara 4:00 (Saturday only) Venice 6:30</p> | <p>July 23 & 24 Pasadena 6:30 Vista 6:30</p> <p>July 30 & 31 WLA 5:30 Higashi 6:30 - not BCA</p> <p>August 6 Las Vegas 12:45 - not BCA (Saturday) San Diego 6:30 (Saturday only)</p> <p>August 8 Gardena 6:00</p> |
|--|---|



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**



Saturday, May 21, 2016 • 7:30PM-11:00PM

Nishi Hongwanji Buddhist Temple "Kaikan"

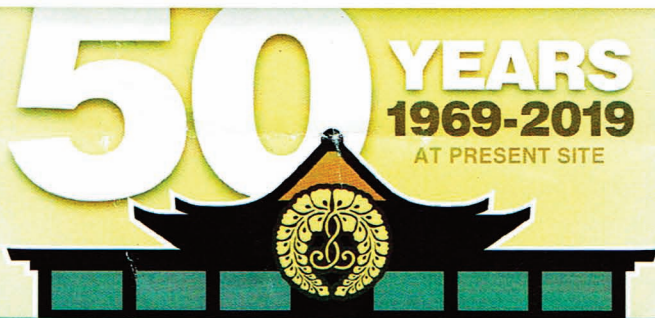
815 East 1st Street Los Angeles, CA 90012

Reserved Sponsor Tables

For more information

Gold Level: \$2,500 Table of 10 includes Hors d'oeuvres & wine
Silver Level: \$1,000 Table of 10 includes Hors d'oeuvres
Bronze Level: \$500 Table of 10
Individual: \$50 Advance/ \$60 at Door

Kenji Hatakeyama | 323-719-4479 | taicho738@gmail.com
Wayne Nagao | 310-374-0690 | wnagao@msn.com
Carol Tanita | 626-487-6226 | cntanita@mail.com



Cash Opportunity Drawing Net proceeds to go towards Nishi 50th Anniversary projects.

Cut here

Please submit **RSVP Form with Payment** by **Saturday, May 14.**

Contact Name: _____ **Required e-mail for Confirmation:** _____

___ **Gold Level** - \$2,500 Table(s) of 10 \$ _____
 ___ **Silver Level** - \$1,000 Table(s) of 10 \$ _____
 ___ **Bronze Level** - \$500 Table(s) of 10 \$ _____
 ___ **Individual** - \$50 Advance/\$60 at Door \$ _____
 ___ Cannot attend but glad to donate \$ _____
Total Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Sponsor Table Guests (Please print)

One Check Only per Table. Make check payable: **LAHHBT**

Return Address:
 LAHHBT - 50th Dance
 815 East 1st Street
 Los Angeles, CA 90012

MAY 2016

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|--|--|--|---|--|--|
| 1 Family Service 10:00 am | 2 Shoshin Nembutsu-ge (Shoshinge) Rev Takata 6:30-7:30 pm | 3 Intro to the Three Pure Land Sutras Rev Furumoto 7:00-8:30 pm | 4 Contemporary Issues & Jodo Shinshu Perspective Rimban Briones 7:00-8:30 pm | 5 Traditions of Nishi Hongwanji Rev. Kodani 7:00-8:30 pm | 6 | 7 Myokonin Rev Unno 10:00 - 11:30 am |
| 8 Mother's Day Service 10:00 am Eitaikyo Shotsuki Hoyo 1:00 pm | 9 Shoshin Nembutsu-ge (Shoshinge) Rev Takata 6:30-7:30 pm | 10 Bon Odori Exercise 6:30 pm | 11 | 12 Board Meeting 7:30 pm | 13 Jodo Shinshu Rtual on Death and Dying (JPN) Rev Takata 10:00 - 11:00 am | 14 Myokonin Rev Unno 10:00 - 11:30 am |
| 15 Regular Service 10:00 am | 16 Go-Meinichi-ko 1:30 pm Shoshin Nembutsu-ge (Shoshinge) Rev Takata 6:30-7:30 pm | 17 Intro to the Three Pure Land Sutras Rev Furumoto 7:00-8:30 pm | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 Myokonin Rev Unno 10:00 - 11:30 am |
| 22 Bon Odori Exercise 8:30 am Gotan-ye & Hatsumairi Service 10:00 am | 23 | 24 Intro to the Three Pure Land Sutras Rev Furumoto 7:00-8:30 pm | 25 | 26 Traditions of Nishi Hongwanji Rev. Kodani 7:00-8:30 pm | 27 Jodo Shinshu Rtual on Death and Dying (JPN) Rev Takata 10:00 - 11:00 am | 28 Memorial Day Services |
| 29 Memorial Day Service 10:00 am Nokotsudo 11:00 am | 30 Memorial Day Services | 31 | | | | |

JUNE 2016

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|--------|---------------------------------------|-----------|---|--|--|
| | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| | | | | | Jodo Shinshu Rtual on Death and Dying (JPN) Rev Takata 10:00 - 11:00 am | Myokonin Rev Unno 10:00 - 11:30 am |
| 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| Regular Service 10:00 am | | | | Board Meeting 7:30 pm | | Myokonin Rev Unno 10:00 - 11:30 am |
| 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| Regular Service 10:00 am Eitaikyo Shotsuki Hoyo 1:00 pm | | Bon Odori Practice 7:00-8:30 pm | | Go-Meinichi-ko 1:30 pm Bon Odori Practice 7:00-8:30 pm | Jodo Shinshu Rtual on Death and Dying (JPN) Rev Takata 10:00 - 11:00 am | |
| 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| Father's Day Service 10:00 am | | Bon Odori Practice 7:00-8:30 pm | | Bon Odori Practice 7:00-8:30 pm | | |
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | |
| Regular Service Graduation & Attendance Awards 10:00 am | | Bon Odori Practice 7:00-8:30 pm | | Bon Odori Practice 7:00-8:30 pm | | |