

# LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

No. 439

November-December 2016

# jihō

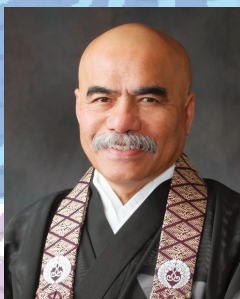
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LOS ANGELES HONPA HONGWANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE  
FOUNDED 1905



## RIMBAN'S MESSAGE

### THOUGHTS ON PRACTICE AND COMPASSION



**RIMBAN  
WILLIAM BRIONES**

*There is a difference in compassion between the Path of Sages and the Path of Pure Land. The compassion in the Path of Sages is expressed through pity, sympathy, and care for all beings, but truly rare is it that one can help another as completely as one desires.*

*The compassion in the Path of Pure Land is to quickly attain Buddhahood, saying the nembutsu, and with the true heart of compassion and love save all beings as we desire.*

*In this life no matter how much pity and sympathy we may feel for others, it is impossible to help another as we truly wish; thus our compassion is inconsistent and limited. Only the saying of nembutsu manifests the complete and never ending compassion that is true, real and sincere."*

When visitors come to the Betsuin, inevitably the question most frequently asked is, "What is your practice?" For many Buddhist, the obvious answer is the practice of compassion. The Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hanh the Vietnamese Zen monk, speak of this compassion. As Buddhists, our task is to manifest compas-

sion in everyday life, beginning with members of our own family and extending it to all society. But when one really tries to practice compassion, expressing care, concern, empathy and love, one encounters a huge obstacle. That obstacle is never the other, but rather one's own self-centered ego. The awareness of our inconsistencies is the starting point of the Jodo Shinshu Buddhist path.

For other Buddhist traditions there are various practices that one could do to eliminate our anger, hatred, envy — our 108 blind passions that prevent us from being compassionate. For monks and nuns, one need only follow the Six Paramitas to attain enlightenment. The paramita's being: 1) Giving or sharing, 2) Conduct 3) Effort 4) Patience 5) Meditation 6) Wisdom.

In the Larger Sutra, it states that the Dharmakara Bodhisattva made 48 Vows to save all sentient beings. By practicing all the disciplines, including the Six Paramitas, for an immeasurably long time, he realized his vows and became Amida Buddha.

However, it is extremely difficult for us as lay people and more so for priest and ministers with school, work and family obligations to fully live up to the high ideals as the paramitas.

*(continued on page 5)*

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## TRIPLE CELEBRATIONS

by Rev. Koho Takata



REV. KOHO TAKATA

The Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple will be commemorating a triple celebration: 1) The Dedication Service for the restored altar, 2) the 85th anniversary of Betsuin status, 3) and the 111th anniversary of Betsuin. This auspicious occasion will take place on **November 6, 2016** at 10:00 am officiated by Bishop Kodo Umezu.

The restoration of the altar is one of the commemoration projects for the 50th anniversary of current temple site, moving from the First Street & Central Avenue in 1969. The 50th Anniversary of the current temple site which will be commemorated in 2019 was first discussed at the General Membership Meeting in November 2013. Soon after, the 50th Anniversary Committee was formed and the first meeting was held in February 2014 to discuss about various commemorative events from 2015-2019, commemoration projects, and so forth.

The core committee has decided upon three main commemoration projects for the 50th anniversary. One is the altar restoration project which is traditionally done every 50 years. The second is the establishment of the Dharma Center to strengthen Buddhist Education programs which is core of the temple. The third is building repair. The temple building is nearly a half century old. As with our own bodies, areas of the building are deteriorating — the roof, heating/air conditioning system, and so forth. Repairs are needed in order to keep the temple in good condition so that we have a sound facility in which we can hear the Buddha-dharma.

The first commemoration project, the altar restoration, will have been completed upon delivery of this issue of the Jiho. We observed an Auspicious Commemoration Service for transportation of Amida Buddha statue and altar for restoration in Kyoto, Japan in January of this year. Following the service, all of altar pieces and ornaments were disassembled, packed, and shipped to Kyoto, Japan for restoration. During the absence of the onaijin articles, we have been conducting our Sunday, funeral and memorial services, with a temporary altar from our Muryokojudo. Our long awaited, restored altar ornaments will be returned on October 29th. It will require approximately a week to carefully unpack, assemble, and properly install everything into the altar area.

On Saturday, November 5, 2016, Commemoration Service for transportation of Amida Buddha statue will be held at

Wisteria Chapel from 1:30 pm followed by procession with Amida Buddha statue and all participants from Wisteria Chapel to the hondo, and Ceremony for Amida Buddha statue returning to the original altar officiated by Rimban William Briones at hondo.

On the following day, Sunday, November 6th, the triple celebration service will take place. I am very honor to witness this once-in-a-lifetime observance and share the joy, gratitude, and appreciation with all of you by welcoming the restored altar.

The altar was originally installed when temple was built at present site and the dedication service was held on November 16, 1969, officiated by the former *Monshu Kosho Ohtani*, with many dedicated members who made tremendous financial sacrifices to engage in their strong commitment to hand down the essential teaching of nembutsu to the next generations and spread the Buddha-dharma to all beings.

The statue or name of Amida Buddha is the manifestation of boundless wisdom and compassion and also represents our forefathers who selflessly dedicated and contributed their time and energy to our temple for solely planting the seeds of the nembutsu and handing down the essential teachings of the nembutsu to the next generations. Our temple altar represents their constant working as all buddhas who always remind us to hear the teachings and live in the teachings daily in the universal truth of oneness. Although they already passed away, they, as buddhas, are still working hard for us to hear their dharma messages.

We now have a number of opportunities to hear the Buddha-dharma because of the tremendous support and selfless contributions made by our forefathers. It is now our turn to contribute our appreciation and gratitude to the Buddha-dharma. Our legacy and nembutsu teaching will be sustained and carried over by our children and grandchildren as we have received them from our parents, grandparents, and founders. Let us come together to commemorate once-in-a-lifetime triple celebration, appreciate and honor our founders, realize the true intent of establishment of our temple, and renew our commitment to hear the Buddha-dharma in our daily lives.

*Such is the benevolence of Amida Buddha's  
Great Compassion,  
That we must strive to return it,  
even to the breaking of our bodies;  
Such is the benevolence of the masters*

(continued on page 4)

## STEADY GROWTH OF OUR BETSUIN'S FUTURE

by Rev. Kazuaki Nakata



REV. KAZ

We will soon be reaching the end of the year of 2016. While I have been enjoying my routine daily life, there were several important events during the year of 2016.

In January, our family gratefully welcomed our third daughter, Akika Nakata. Our family really appreciated that our Nishi Dharma School Par-

ents had a baby shower for her. When Akika was born, she was the size of a pineapple. Now she is two-pineapple-sized. My wife, Michi, feeds her and my other two daughters, Kanon and Michilu, have been helping with the diaper changing. With this, Akika has been steadily growing. I thank them for their care support of Akika's growth. She will soon grow into a three-pineapple-sized little girl.

In August, I was accepted into the PhD program in Buddhist Studies at the University of the West. Since Rev. Umezu being assigned as the Bishop of the BCA five years ago, he has been encouraging the BCA ministers to continue their education. When I was doing the outreach activities and the panel discussion at various public locations such as colleges to introduce Jodo Shinshu Buddhism, I realized that I had no knowledge of the other schools of Buddhism and religions. I decided that I needed to research and educate myself on comparative religion and Buddhism. It is easy to say Jodo Shinshu is great in our own temple, but when it is said outside of the temple, listeners will ask, "How is so?"

Before beginning my continued education, I would say to myself, "The one who that stays in the valley shall never get over the hills." I am now on that path towards the top of the hill where I will have the knowledge and confidence to speak about Buddhism. Rev. Matsubayashi often calls me and tells me the importance of the continuing education and he encourages me to complete the program. He, too, studied Buddhism at the graduate level while he was serving as a minister at a temple, so he is aware of how difficult it is to take courses while working as a fulltime resident minister. I appreciate his support.

My most recent important event of the year was that I paid off my mortgage! When I reported this to Rimban Briones, he jokingly said, "Oh! You must have second job!" My reply to Rimban was, "Oh, no! I am always saving wherever I can."

When I was a middle school student, I read the Nirvana Sutra. If you are aware of the teaching of "Buddha nature (everything has a potential to be enlightened)", the teach-

ing is taught within the sutra. In our Betsuin hondo, there is a mural panel that depicts the near death of Shakyamuni Buddha lying on the bed. The drawing of the mural scene was based on the Nirvana Sutra. So it is an important sutra for all Buddhists. I learned the teaching of, "Knowing how much is just enough" from the sutra. It is a phrase in Chinese – 少欲知足. Senshin Buddhist Temple has the stone monument with the Chinese phrase carved into it in the garden next to their hondo building.

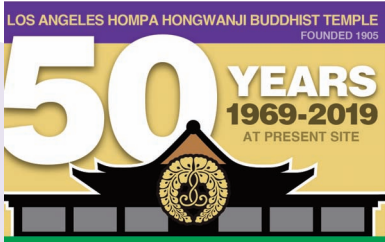
Ever since starting the ministry in the BCA, I have mindfully spent and saved money. Finally, in September, I was second daughter Michilu is still in the kindergarten and I teach her the importance of the saving. She collects every penny and nickel, and she saves them in her piggy bank. Through her piggy bank she is able to see the steady growth of her savings although it has a small amount of coins. I believe that it is a good start for her in planning to buy a house in her future.

I have described the three of important events I experienced this year. I would now like to share the story of steady growth of the Betsuin's future. In January of 2015, I started Sangha Padma class which is a Buddhist study class for scouts. It is a two year course and the current scouts will complete their course in October. When they began, they were not comfortable chanting *Sanbujo* and *Juseige* by themselves. For the second year of the class, I am teaching the basic Jodo Shinshu ritual to them. You may have see teenage boys and girls wearing black robes and practicing their chanting in the *Hondo* or striking the kansho bell behind the hondo on Sundays.

In summer of 2015, I planned their first Buddhist education field trip to San Francisco, Berkeley, and San Jose. This year, 18 individuals participated in the trip. In Berkeley, there is the Jodo Shinshu Center which is a Buddhist education facility. It is maintained by the BCA. There is lodging available in the facility which is where we stayed. There is a hondo on the second floor, which we used every morning and evening for service training. I assigned the chanting leader and seating positions for the participating scouts. For the services, one scout would strike the kansho bell, and all scouts would walk into the altar from the back of the hondo and would take their seats. The chanting leader would strike the service gong and begin chanting *Sanbujo*. The other scouts followed with the chanting. It was very beautiful moment. I wish I could have recorded their chanting and the ritual movement in the altar. I witnessed and realized how much these scouts progressed

(continued on page 9)

## 50TH YEAR COMMEMORATION CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



For ten months, with great anticipation, we awaited the arrival of the temple's refurbished *butసు* (housing of the statue of Amida Buddha) and its accessories. It will be

wonderful to see the *butసు* in the beautifully refurbished onaijin/altar, as the hondo will finally be whole and complete.

However, to be completely whole, it would be the attendance of many temple members to hear and learn the Buddha-dharma from the ministers. It took the hard work of dedicated artisans and craftsmen to skillfully refurbish the *butసు*. In addition, the dedicated work of the 50th Anniversary Project Committee, chaired by Shoichi Sayano, and its many volunteers involved with this project to plan, arrange and coordinate this refurbishment. But let us not forget the valuable and generous support of temple members and ministers.

During the installation of the *butసు* and its accessories, the hondo and Wisteria Chapel will be closed. After the installation is completed, a special service and ceremony will be held on November 5 for the transferring of the statue of Amida Buddha from the Wisteria Chapel to the hondo. On the following day, November 6, the Dedication Service of the Refurbished Altar will be held, officiated by Bishop Kodo Umezu. In addition, this service is to celebrate the 85th Anniversary of the temple's Betsuin status and the 111th Anniversary of the temple.

For the 50th Anniversary Fundraising Campaign, the Hui Aikane Club made a donation from proceeds of their monthly ballroom dance. A big *mahalo* (thank you) to members of the Hui Aikane Club for your generosity. The dharma school students are continuing with their fundraising project of collecting recyclable plastic bottles and aluminum cans. Please support the students by bringing your recyclables to the temple office. It is very heartwarming to see these young students making a big effort to raise funds for the 50th Anniversary. A big thank you to the students for their dedicated efforts to the campaign and to the dharma school teachers for their assistance and guidance. A big thank you to all who made donations to the campaign in time for their names to be installed on the back of the Buddhist floral tiles above the onaijin. This is not the end as the campaign is ongoing through 2019, so we are still accepting your donations. (continued ⇨)

**DEDICATION SERVICE FOR THE RESTORED ALTAR,  
THE 85TH ANNIVERSARY OF BETSUIN STATUS,  
& THE 111TH ANNIVERSARY OF  
LA HOMPA HONGWANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE**

御内陣総修復完成慶讃法要  
羅府別院昇格八十五周年慶讃法要  
並びに  
羅府別院創立百一十周年慶讃法要



**OPEN TO PUBLIC**

**November 5, 2016 @1:30PM at Wisteria  
Officiated by Rimban William Briones**

**November 6, 2016 @ 10:00AM at Hondo  
Officiated by Bishop Kodo Umezu**

**Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple**

*Takata - continued from page 2)*

*and true teachers,  
That we must endeavour to repay it,  
even to our bones becoming dust.*

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

Thank you very much for your dedicated support and for your past and future donations. We hope to see you at the special services on November 5 and 6.

*Gassho,*

Ernest Hida, 50th Anniversary Chairman

[see photos on page 10]

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



**Kenji  
Hatakeyama**

As my term as president of the board of directors of the LA Betsuin comes to a close in 2016, it is with deep appreciation that I would like to thank the members of the sangha for the support you have given to me and our temple for the past two years.

A sincere thank you and appreciation goes to Rimban William Briones, Reverend Koho Takata, and Reverend Kazuaki Nakata who have given much more of their time than one can imagine. The many hours of their devotion and dedication to the temple and to the Japanese American community is greatly appreciated. With our ministerial staff, under the guidance of Rimban Briones, our members can be assured that our religious future will continue to move in a positive direction for many years to come.

I would like to thank the *komons*, the board of directors and trustees for their continued guidance and support. I also, want to thank the office staff and the many volunteers for their tireless efforts. With all the responsibilities needed to keep the Betsuin functioning, it is with sincere gratitude and appreciation for all you do for our temple.

All of the affiliated organizations are an integral part of our Betsuin. Along with the special committees, they are the backbone of the temple. Thank you all for special events, programs, fundraisers, and facility maintenance that you have performed throughout the year. This year's Kohaku Utagassen, Surf & Turf, and Obon were very successful because of our organizations. Please continue to support the temple in the coming years. Everyone looks forward to these events and it brings our members and community closer together.

Finally, I ask that you, the members of the Betsuin, continue the support you have given me to the incoming president, Ms. **Bessie Tanaka**. She will be installed in January of 2017 along with the other officers. Under her leadership, the LA Betsuin will continue to be the place that families turn to for religious guidance and support for our community. Thank you again.

With Gratitude and *Gassho*,

Kenji Hatakeyama, Board President

*(Rimban - continued from page 1)*

Never the less the paramitas point us in the right direction and clarify the Buddhist ideals for us.

In Pure Land tradition, the daily life of a layman is taken as our practice. In our daily coming and going, we are reminded to be mindful of and to practice to the best of our ability the above *pāramitās*, so that we may become aware of the light of Wisdom/Compassion which surrounds and inhabits us.

The passage from above is from the fourth chapter of the *Tannisho*. It tells about the difference between the practice of "path of the sages" such as bodhisavatta's, monks and nuns and it tells of the path of Pure Land devotees like you and me. It's about *other power vs. self power*. It's about realizing our inability to attain enlightenment by means of doing good deeds or following the paramitas, because based on Shinran's realization all our good deeds are based on our ego and self-centeredness. We expect to receive rewards from our good actions. In contrast, the Pure Land way makes us aware of our human limitations and frailties. It reveals our motives and actions as ego-centered and evil.

Jodo Shinshu doesn't require us to practice meditation or mantras like most other schools of Buddhism. Shinran rejected these sorts of practices because he felt they were calculated and contrived which led to attachment and self-righteousness. He felt that often practice increased the very problem it set out to overcome, self-centeredness.

This brings us to practice in Jodo Shinshu, which refers to a process of deepening awareness. Our lives are a result of innumerable causes and condition, interdependent and interconnected with other people, things, and events. All these conditions together form and define the true nature of our existence. Amida Buddha is the manifestation of all those causes and conditions that allow each and every one of us to exist.

It is this on-going deepening awareness in which we realize that we are unable to practice compassion, and yet at the same time, we also realize with deepest gratitude, that we are embraced by Amida Buddha, just as we are — *sonomama*.

When we practice compassion, we do it out of a sense of deepest gratitude. The recitation of Nembutsu, *Namo Amida Butsu*, then, is the outward expression of thanks giving and gratitude to Amida Butsu. "Only the saying of Nembutsu manifests the complete and never ending compassion that is true, real and sincere."

*Namo Amida Butsu*



## EITAIKYO SERVICE (SANGHA MEMORIAL)

by Rev. Koho Takata

The members of Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple and their families are invited to attend the annual **Eitaikyo Sangha Memorial Service**, which is one of the Six Major Services in the Jodo Shinshu tradition to be held on as follows:

**Saturday, November 19 at 1:30pm**

English Speaker: Rimban William Briones  
Japanese Speaker: Rev. Koho Takata

**Sunday, November 20 at 10:00am**

English Speaker: Rev. George Matsubayashi  
Japanese Speaker: Rev. George Matsubayashi

The spiritual origin to this observance goes back to a few centuries after the historical Buddha Sakyamuni entered Nirvana. At this time the lay followers practiced many types of offerings, including the building of stupa and offerings of services for the maintenance of temple and their compounds. The purpose was to accumulate religious virtues to be directed to the deceased or for themselves.

This spirit has been carried with the Buddhist tradition as Buddhism spread into China and Japan and this practice of making offerings in the form of sutra chanting and rituals has become a part of the life of the people.

Here at the Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple, *Eitaikyo* or *Sangha Memorial Service* is observed, not as a means of accumulating virtues to be directed to others, but taken as a solemn occasion to express one's dedication to the sangha. Sutra chanting, rituals, and donations done by the sangha in the service are symbolic expressions of their dedication and appreciation.

The term *eitaikyo*, an abridgement of *eitai-dokkyo*, 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. This signification gives each of us a chance to affirm our own understanding of Buddhism because of the guidance of the Buddha through our loved ones. Such affirmation gives us the precious opportunity to see how the dharma has helped in our lives and to realize oneness of life. It means we are all connected. Acknowledging our dharma connection to those who have passed away empowers us to further pursue the path of the Buddha, dharma, and sangha, which have been our spiritual treasures. The great virtue that may be accumulated in Jodo Shinshu Buddhism is through the practice of the dharma in our daily lives.

## BODHI DAY SERVICE (BUDDHA'S ENLIGHTENMENT)

by Rev. Koho Takata

The members of Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple and their families are invited to attend the annual Bodhi Day Service, which is the observance of Buddha's Enlightened Day to be held on Sunday, December 11, 2016.

The number "8" is very significant for Buddhists. On April 8th, we celebrate the birth of the historical Buddha. On December 8th, we celebrate the attainment of Enlightenment of Shakyamuni Buddha. Also, Shakyamuni Buddha showed us the Eightfold (8) Path to end the life of sufferings.

We have four basic sufferings - birth, aging, illness, and dying. We also have four additional sufferings - separation from loved one, having to live with someone or some situation one does not like, non-fulfillment of one's most cherished desires, and physical and mental limitation.

What is the cause of those sufferings? The cause of suffering is "I" (our ignorance). We human always carry the mind of greed, anger, and hatred. Although we do not want to have such minds, they come upon us one after another to distress us. However, Shakyamuni Buddha showed us how to end the suffering by practicing the Eightfold Path.

Our life can be filled with light in sharing life with others. It is a simple truth to learn, but a difficult practice to fully realize. We, Buddhists, have precious opportunities to share with our sangha the true meaning of life as experienced in the practice of the nembutsu teachings. If each of us realizes the true meaning of life taught by Shakyamuni Buddha, it certainly could be a cause that could change our self-centered society of disharmony to happy, harmonious, and peaceful world. Let us practice the teachings of the Buddha in our daily lives and realize our ignorance and oneness of all life.



*Bodhi Leaf*

### Betsuin Jiho

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

## HOLLYWOOD BUDDHIST CHURCH TRIP TO BAY AREA

*by Judy Izumo*

During the weekend of August 26th, the Hollywood Buddhist Church (HBC) members visited the Bay Area to express our gratitude and appreciation to those who have continued to bring the Buddha dharma into our lives.

During our visit to the Jodo Shinshu Center (JSC), we were fortunate to have crossed paths with a few of the BCA leaders who were attending a committee meeting, and thanked them for their dedication and hard work. While learning about all the programs that operate out of the JSC, it truly opened our eyes, as to why we need to support the JSC, especially as they celebrate their upcoming 10th Anniversary.

At the BCA headquarters, Rev. Michael Endo, gave us a tour and explained to us about the BCA. We thanked the BCA for supporting HBC the past 100 years, so we could continue to benefit from what our Issei grandparents and Nisei parents knew all along... "support our temples and ministers for they are the ones who bring us the Buddha dharma to enrich our daily lives."

At the San Francisco Buddhist Temple, we were able to view the stupa and see the relics of Shakyamuni Buddha, Sari Putra and Mogallana. It was inspiring to know that in front of us, were relics from over 2,500 years ago.

The San Mateo Buddhist Temple was our final stop, to join Rev. Henry Adams for Sunday Service, where friendships were made as we got to know their members. Similar to HBC, San Mateo was established in a working community of gardeners and those who worked for the families in the Hillsborough area.

It was a worthwhile experience I would encourage all LA Betsuin members to enjoy. HBC had a blast! Great food, great friends & great experience!



*Hollywood Buddhist Church members visit to the Bay Area. Pictured are the members at the San Francisco temple with Rev. Ron Kobata.*

## BREW HA HA

*by Judy Izumo*

This past August, the Hollywood Buddhist Church (HBC), once again, was able to hold another fun and enjoyable evening in the kaikan, for our **Brew Ha Ha Fundraiser**.

We would like to sincerely thank everyone who helped support this event. Without all who attended, it would have been very quiet and boring. (See the picture of M/M Sayano in their party gear!)

We hope everyone enjoyed all seven beers or non-alcoholic beverages, and had enough to eat! The beer pairing included: french fries w/ spicy buffalo wings sauce, Hiroshima style okonomiyaki, poke, bratwurst & spicy sausages, Akira's chicken wings, pineapple/beer pork sliders, and yummy chocolates.

Thank you once again to the Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple for all your help and support. HBC will always be a proud supporter of our mother temple!

^Biig Judy



*Otafuku brand chef prepared the okonomiyaki in the kaikan kitchen.*



*Shoichi and Nobuko Sayano celebrated their anniversary at the Brew HaHa event.*

## DID YOU KNOW?

by Eiko Masuyama



### CONGRATULATIONS TO THE NEWLY ELECTED OFFICERS FOR 1957 [affiliated organizations], Betsuin Jiho, No. 93

(continued from July-August, 2016  
JIHO issue)

#### L.A. Junior Matrons

Mrs. Yaye Nakashima, President (reelected); Mrs. Mickey Nagamoto, Vice-pres.; Mrs. Irene Tateishi, Sec.; Madames May Tanaka and Amy Sasaki, Corres. Sec.; Mrs. Makino Morioka, Social Chrm.; Mrs. Yoshiko Kishi, Publicity.

#### L.A. Betsuin [YABA]

Yoshio Shibata, President (Sab Yoshino was elected to presidency, but because of personal and family reasons was forced to send in his resignation. The YABA extends its regrets); Mrs. Rose Nakao, Women's Vice-pres.; Mrs. Mickey Nagamoto, Secretary; Madames Shiz Shibata and Hisako Nagamoto, Corres. Sec.; Mrs. Josie Watamura, Treas.; Noboru Ishitani, Auditor; Yaye Nakashima, Publicity; Akira Murakami, Religious; George Yamaguchi, Activities.

#### Los Angeles YBA

Ed Kato, President; George Inatomi, Men's Vice-pres.; Toshi Kusumoto, Women's Vice-pres.; Helen Abe, Rec. Sec.; Misa Masumoto, Corres. Sec.; Jack Oriba, Treas.; Sam Yoneyama, Auditor; Clyde Saito, Sgt. at Arms; Joanne Hirata, Rel. Chrmn.; Amy Goto, Res. Chrmn.; Jimmy Iwamoto, Pub. Rel. Chrmn.; Nancy Tanaka, Music Chrmn.; Satsuki Yoshida, Publicity; Tomo Yoshida, Literary; May Tanaka, Social Welfare; Tosh Washizaki, Men's Athl.; Penny Kusumoto, Women's Athl.; George Waki, Men's Social; Minako Nishikawa, Women's Social; Mariko Iwamoto, Historian

\* \* \* \* \*

#### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Hisao Hamanaka, Betsuin JIHO, September 1, 1969

We are fast approaching the day of our present Temple Building's 20th Anniversary celebration. Accordingly, I would like to take this opportunity to extend my sincerest congratulations to all the members and supporters of Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple, for their unwavering support and cooperation in the growth of our facilities since the inception of the new temple building in 1969.

We are grateful to the Isseis and Niseis, many of whom are no longer with us, for having the foresight and fortitude to construct this magnificent structure as a legacy to the future generations. To them, we bow our heads in deep

appreciation.

From the most humble beginnings of Yamato Hall on Jackson Street in 1917, to the original temple structure on Central Avenue in 1925, and finally to the present facilities on First Street---we have certainly come a long way. The adjoining Multi- Purpose Hall, which was excluded from the original temple plans in 1969 because of rising construction costs, was finally completed and dedicated in 1976. Other projects added since 1969 includes: dedication of Japanese Garden in front of the temple (1970); dedication of mural painting of the life of Shakyamuni Buddha displayed in the Hondo (1971); dedication of statue of Shinran Shonin in the front garden (1973); dedication of the bell tower (1979); dedication of ramps for handicapped persons (1984); and dedication of stone lanterns in front of the temple (1985).

To commemorate the 20th anniversary of the temple building, the Naijin has been refurbished to complete it as initially planned in 1969. Like any structure that ages, maintenance gets to be a major task and on the anniversary celebration, many projects have been or are being undertaken to keep the facilities in the best of condition.

Much has been accomplished in the provision of facilities for our Sangha. But as we go on into the future, we need to foster a deeper awareness of the Dharma. As Masashi Kawaguchi once said, "Let us all advance with continued cooperation, in the true spirit of Dharma, to build a greater brotherhood, so that we may share with all mankind, the true appreciation of the infinite wisdom and compassion of Amida Buddha."

Again, --- Congratulations and Arigato Gozaimasu.

Gassho,

HISAO HAMANAKA, President

Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple

## SAVE THE DATE

### JANUARY 2017

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 | <b>SHUSHO-E</b><br>NEW YEAR'S DAY SERVICE<br>10:00 AM. |
| 8 | <b>46th KOHAKU UTAGASSEN</b>                           |



## YOUTH ESSAY

### ***Applied Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Studies for Teens***

*In February of 2015, Rev. Kaz Nakata began a course of intensive Buddhist studies for the Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops at Nishi Betsuin. During the 2015, they were taught the essential teachings of Buddhism in English, Chinese, Japanese and Indian Sanskrit. Their essays have been in the previous issues of the Jiho. Here is another one.*

#### **Kurtis Kato**

In Buddhism, Nembutsu is a spiritual awakening helping you to go to the Pure Land. Nembutsu is considered the "living embodiment of Amida Buddha in our minds and hearts."

The Nembutsu first began as a tool for meditation. Over time, it was simplified but gained more significance. It created a more approachable form of Buddhism.

When you practice Nembutsu you call on the name Amida Buddha. Saying "Namu Amida Butsu" means you are thinking about Buddha. This means that you have total reliance upon the compassion of Amida Buddha. Reciting the Nembutsu is affirming your gratitude, saying that you will embrace all people without discrimination, and leave no one behind on the path to the Pure Land. We want to receive the wisdom, compassion, power and love of Amida Buddha.

Through the chanting of Nembutsu, people share spiritual benefits with themselves and others. It is easy to become busy with our everyday lives and feel separated from others. We are all looking for a way to overcome suffering, so Nembutsu is what comes in handy. Nembutsu helps us to realize that we are all interdependent. Attitude is very important in practicing Nembutsu because even if you do something wrong, it is like a reflection for you to think

about what has happened so far. We have a connection with others and by wishing for others to have peace, we receive our own inner harmony and well being.

In Jodo Shinshu, there are three different times when you recite Nembutsu. One of them is used in our everyday lives. This is called Jinjo Gyogi and is considered the daily Nembutsu, where you recite it in your everyday life. The second one is Betsuji Nembutsu. This one is for special services and occurs at a time or place that has been predetermined according to a calendar. Finally, the third is Rinju Gyogi. The Rinju Gyogi is chanted on one's deathbed, just before the person is welcomed into the Pure Land.

When I started this assignment I had some trouble understanding Nembutsu. I searched on the internet and found multiple definitions for the word Nembutsu. Many of them were not the same, and it was perplexing to me on what the true definition was. I feel like I gained a better understanding of Nembutsu as I read through the many different articles. In my opinion, the true meaning is that through the ways of Nembutsu we all can realize that there is no separation in our happiness and other people's happiness. It expresses our joy and gratitude and helps us to understand that the Dharma embraces us. People go to church for spiritual benefit for themselves and others.

The next time I go to church and chant the Nembutsu, I will take more time to put Amida Buddha in my heart and mind. I will be grateful for all of the people in my life and all those who have helped to guide me to be the person I am today. As I listen to everyone chanting in unison, I know that I will feel like everyone is one and that we are all connected in some way. We have all come to church for the same purpose, to listen and understand the teachings of Amida Buddha.

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### ***Nakata - continued from page 3)***

in of their ritual and skills.

The second day, we visited Buddhist Church of San Francisco. Their resident minister, Rev. Ronald Kobata welcomed us into their hondo. He first explained the history of the temple. He then said that because they were being trained in Buddhist rituals, he wanted to chant with one of them in the altar. It was a very surprising offer and the scouts were reluctant to join Rev. Kobata. One of boys, however, Kurtis Kato, stood up and volunteered to do so. We do not pray in Jodo Shinshu, but I was wishing he will do well. Rev. Kobata asked Kurtis to lead the chanting of *Juseige*. When he started to chant, I realized that I did not

have to worry. Kurtis did well. I am so honored to be able to teach the Sangha Padma class at the Betsuin. It was a very successful educational trip.

A few weeks ago, one of the Boy Scout leaders, Ernest Hida, was asking black-robed boys while they were in the hondo training if they were interested in becoming a minister? I am sure that Mr. Hida was not asking seriously, but until now such a question would not have been asked. Now I believe this possible concept is a positive sign of the steady progress of our temple's future.

*Gassho*

**ONAIJIN REFURBISHMENT**



*Pictured above is the refurbished onaijin area with new wood floors, floral ceiling panels, newly applied gold leaf to the walls, and the paintings of the “heavenly angels” above the onaijin area. The photograph shows the temporary butsudan relocated from the Wisteria Chapel. Inset: Takeshi Nakamura of the Wakabayashi Co. painstakingly applying gold leaf in the onaijin area.*

**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 *Nem-but*su.



--*Namo Amida Butsu*

**July, 2016**

- 6 Paul Hayashida
- 16 Larry Hideo Mitsui

**August, 2016**

- 7 Mitzie Mitsuye Weiss
- 13 Yeiko Imamura
- 16 Etsuko Morinaka
- 22 Toshiro Nishikawa

**September, 2016**

- 1 Sho Susumu Oshida
- 3 Hanayo Oda
- 4 Shoji Furutani
- 5 Amie Emiko Maruyama
- 12 Yoshiye Honda
- 15 George Kurose
- 15 Shizue Imai



**46<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL**

**KOHAKU UTAGASSEN**

The 46th Annual Kohaku Utagassen will be held on Sunday, January 8, 2017. Tickets are available at the temple for \$20 donation.

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**WINTER PACIFIC SEMINAR - 21ST CENTURY**

*Presented by the Institute of Buddhist Studies,  
Buddhist Churches of America Center for Buddhist Education & Shinshu Center of America*

***EAST MEETS WEST PART II***

*Jodo Shinshu from the Higashi and Nishi Perspectives*

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 28, 2017**

**9:00 am - 4:30 pm** (Doors open at 8:30 am)

**Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple**

**815 East First Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012**

*OPENING DHARMA TALKS BY:*

**Rev. Kodo Umezu**

Bishop, Buddhist Churches of America

**Rev. Noriaki Ito**

Bishop, Higashi Honganji North American District

*DHARMATHON FEATURING MINISTERS AND SPEAKERS FROM BOTH TRADITIONS  
IN ENGLISH AND JAPANESE.*

*MORE DETAILS AND REGISTRATION INFORMATION TO COME. SAVE THE DATE!*

**REGISTRATION: \$40** (Includes lunch) **DEADLINE: JANUARY 19, 2017**

Visit [www.BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org](http://www.BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org) and click on CBE to check for updates.

Hosted by the BCA Southern District Ministers Association & Buddhist Education Committee

# NOVEMBER 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5 <b>Return of Amida Statue to Onaijin Service 1:30 pm</b>
6 <b>Altar Dedication/ 85th Anniversary of Betsuin Status/ 111th Anniversary of LA Homba Hongwanji Service 10:00 am</b>	7	8	9	10 Board Meeting 7:30 pm	11	12 Myokonin (Jpn) Rev. Matsubayashi 10:00-11:30 am
13 Regular Service 10:00 am General Meeting 12:00 pm Eitaikyo Shotsuki Hoyo 2:00 pm	14	15	16 Go-Meinichi-ko 1:30 pm	17	18	19 <b>Eitaikyo Service 1:30 pm</b>
20 Eitaikyo Service 10:00 am	21	22	23	24 Thanksgiving Holiday Betsuin Closed	25 Betsuin Closed	26
27 Regular Service 10:00 am	28	29	30	31		

# DECEMBER 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4 Temple Clean-Up 8:00 am	5	6	7	8 Board Meeting 7:30 pm	9	10
11 Bodhi Day Service 10:00 am Eitaikyo Shotsuki Hoyo 1:00 pm	12	13	14	15	16 Go-Meinichi-ko 1:30 pm	17 Myokonin (Jpn) Rev. Matsubayashi 10:00-11:30 am
18 Oseibo Kansha Appreciation Service and Program 10:00 am	19	20	21	22	23	24 Betsuin Closed
25 Christmas Holiday Betsuin Closed	26	27	28	29	30	31 Joya-e New Year's Eve Service 6:00 pm