

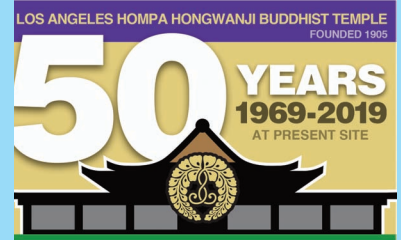
# LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

No. 447

March-April 2018

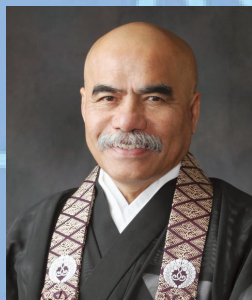
# jihō

WWW



## RIMBAN'S MESSAGE

### THOUGHTS ON LOVE AND MARRIAGE



RIMBAN  
WILLIAM BRIONES

The Buddha once said:

*"The greatest happiness that a person can imagine is the bond of marriage that ties together two loving hearts. But there is greater happiness still: it is the embrace of Truth.*

*Conditions may separate a couple, but conditions will never affect a person who has embraced the Truth. Therefore, be married unto the Truth and live with the Truth in marriage*

*The couple who love each other and desire for a union that shall be True and Real must be sincere with one another and themselves so as to be like Truth itself.*

*Continue to live in Truth and you may sense of life everlasting, for Truth transcends time. May the Wisdom and Compassion of the Buddha so shine within your hearts and minds that the mist of vanity of self be dispelled. May you always be surrounded with infinite love and compassion."*

A couple of months ago a couple came to the Betsuin's office and requested if a monk could bless their relationship as a couple. Rie, our office manager, not sure what to make of the couple, called me to the office. Again they repeated their request for a monk to bless their relationship. My first response was, we don't have monks at the Betsuin and my second re-

sponse was, we don't bless couples, however, I did tell them we do perform weddings. The young man said they weren't interested in getting married, they just wanted their relationship as a couple be blessed. I thought about it for a moment and I thought why not? After all, Buddhist historically, really don't do weddings. Basically, there is no set wedding service in the Buddhist tradition. Moreover, Buddhists don't consider marriage a religious rite nor a sacred ceremony, rather Buddhists see it as a social occasion, a coming together of two people wanting to share their lives together.

Here at the Betsuin we conduct approximately four to six weddings a year. The weddings that we conduct are basically westernized. Other than chanting, burning incense and maybe a tea/sake ceremony you would never guess that it was a Buddhist wedding. For the most part many of our Jodo Shinshu ministers in BCA make up their own wedding ceremony verbiage. But somewhere in the service, the ministers do read "The Buddha once said", the reading I began with.

Here the Buddha expounds that Truth is essential in any relationship. "Therefore, be married unto the Truth and live with Truth in marriage." There is next to nothing in the sutras or commentaries that mention romantic love. That's not to say love is not important, but as Buddhist our understanding of love is limited, conditional and constantly changing.

I read some where that Americans say "I love

*(continued on page 10)*

Los Angeles  
Homba Hongwanji  
Buddhist Temple  
815 East First Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

TEL: 213.680.9130  
FAX: 213.680.2210

WEB: [nishihongwanji-la.org](http://nishihongwanji-la.org)

EMAIL: [info@nishihongwanji-la.org](mailto:info@nishihongwanji-la.org)

## MOMOTARO

by Rev. Koho Takata



REV. KOHO TAKATA

Many of you probably know the Japanese folktale, "Momotaro" or "Peach Boy." The story starts with an old couple living in Okayama. One day, the old man goes into the mountains to cut firewood and his wife goes to the river to wash clothes. While washing, the old woman was surprised to see a big peach floating down the river. She

pulled the peach out of the river and took it home. When her husband returned home she got a big knife and was getting ready to cut the peach for dinner. There was sound of a human voice coming from inside of the peach and suddenly, the peach split open and a beautiful baby boy jumped out of the peach.

Because he was born from the peach, the baby boy was named Momotaro or "Peach Boy." At the age of 15, Momotaro decided to go to Ogre Island to help his village. Many wicked ogres lived there and they often came to his village to steal and take people away.

On Momotaro's journey to Ogre Island, he met a dog, a monkey, and a pheasant. Normally these animals hated each other but they became friends and accompanied Momotaro.

When Momotaro reached the island, a big battle began! The pheasant pecked at the heads and eyes of the wicked ogres. The monkey scratched at them. The dog bit them. Momotaro cut them with his sword. Ogres were defeated. They all bowed down before Momotaro and promised never do wicked things again. Then they brought Momotaro all the treasures they had stolen from his village.

In reading Momotaro is a seen as a hero. However, if you read only the part of battles with ogres he is a villain. By changing the viewpoint, you may realize that our judgments of good or bad will be changed.

Shinran Shonin said,

*"I know nothing at all of good or evil. For if I could know thoroughly, as Amida Buddha knows, that an act was good, then I would know good. If I could know thoroughly, as the Buddha knows, that an act was evil, then I would know evil. But with a foolish being full of blind passions, in this fleeting world, all matters without exception are empty and false, totally without truth and sincerity. The nembutsu alone is true and real."* (CWS P.679)

Thus, Buddha-Dharma was always central to the life of Shinran Shonin and he was not influenced by worldly mat-

ters.

One myokonin, Misuzu Kaneko, who is recognized as a very devout follower of Shinran Shonin's teaching, left over 500 poems before she passed away at the age of 26. One of my favorite poems is entitled "Tairyō" which means "Big Catch of Fish." She lived in Yamaguchi Prefecture which is a famous place for sardines. Traditionally, the fishermen would have big parties with each big catch of sardines. Kaneko, however, looked at the situation from a different perspective and reflected upon the life of the sardines and said that there was a big funeral service in the ocean. She recognized our self-centered views. The fishermen were happy about catching many fish but fish in the ocean were unhappy about it. Kaneko also realized that although she could express her sympathy towards the fish but in reality she had to take their lives in her daily life to survive in this world. Thus, her poem reminds me of my self-centered nature and also interdependency of all lives.

Through Misuzu Kaneko we learn that we always judge and label everything from our self-centered or self-righteous views. However, Buddha-Dharma always reminds us of looking inside of our minds to be aware of our true self. I always try to have the Buddha-centered mind instead of the self-centered mind at least when I am at temple or listening to the teachings in my daily life. However, I am always made to realize that I am the one who always fails to accomplish it. Because of my imperfectness, Amida Buddha prepared his Name, Namo Amida Butsu, which embodies his Great Compassionate Mind vitalized by his Perfect Wisdom. For this reason, I am truly grateful. Let us always reflect upon our true self revealed by the Buddha-Dharma and express our gratitude and appreciation to Amida Buddha by reciting his Name, Namo Amida Butsu, for always embracing our ego self as it is and turning it into Wisdom in his True and Real Light.

*Obstructions of karmic evil turn into virtues;  
It is like the relation of ice and water:  
The more the ice, the more the water;  
The more the obstructions,  
the more the virtues.*

(CWS P.371, #40)



## ONDOKUSAN

by Rev. Kazuaki Nakata

### Ondokusan

#### 59th verse of Shozomatsu Wasan

*Nyo rai dai hi no on do ku wa*

The debt of gratitude,

I owe to Tathagata's Great Compassion

*Mi wo ko ni shi te mo ho zu be shi*

I will proclaim until my life disintegrates into dust

*Shi shu chi shiki no on do ku wa*

The debt of gratitude, I owe to my dharma teachers

*Ho ne wo ku da ki te mo sha su be shi*

I will express until my bodily form is finally shattered



REV. KAZ

When you see the passage of *Ondokusan*, you may read it with music on your lips. You may croon it like... *Nyo~ ra~ i~ dai~ hino~ on doku wa~*. Shinran Shonin, the historical founder of Jodo Shinshu Buddhist tradition, wrote hundreds of poems during his time, because he was always eager to share his understandings of Jodo Shinshu with as many

as possible. These poems are known as *wasan*. *Wa* means Japanese writings/poems, and *san* means praising. *Wa-san* can be understood as praising writings/poems in Japanese. *Wasan* is often translated as hymn, but the word hymn is heavily associated with the Christian culture and their ritual. There are praising writings with song in Islam. They prefer to call them *nasheed*, instead of Islamic hymn, to respect their culture and tradition. I prefer to call *wasan* as *wasan*, not Shinran Shonin's hymn. Shinran composed three series of *wasan*. They are *Jodo Wasan*—Praising writings on Pure Land Teachings, *Koso Wasan*—Praising writings on Masters in Pure Land Teachings, and *Shozomatsu Wasan*—Praising writings on Three Dharma Ages. The set of three series of *wasan* is known as *Sanjo Wasan*—Three volumes of Praising writings. *Ondokusan* is the 59th poem in the *Shozomatsu Wasan*.

In this article, I would like to give you a detailed explanation of *Ondokusan*.

#### *Nyo Rai Dai hi no On do ku wa*

The historical Buddha, Shakyamuni taught that Nirvana is one of the essential objectives and truth in Buddha dharma. Shinran Shonin translated Nirvana as the equivalent to truth, the equivalent to oneness, Tathagata (*Nyo rai*), the essence of dharma in his book, *Yuishin Sho Moni*. These equivalents, Tathagata or the essence do not have any color or shape. When things have no color or shape, people in general like me, cannot understand what it is.

The historical Buddha had anticipated people may not understand Buddha dharma itself. Therefore, he shared his dharma talk on Dharmakara Bodhisattva who arose from the equivalent to oneness as a colored and shaped being. This is known as *Hoben Hosshin*, to explain the essence of dharma in comprehensible mean. *Hoben* is the translation of Upaya in Sanskrit. Dharmakara Bodhisattva had practiced for five kalpas ultimately establishing the 48 Vows in order to become Amida Tathagata. One kalpa is about millions of years. At this point you realize that this is a mythological story. The Buddha shared the story with thousands of disciples including Ananda. After the Buddha died, disciples gathered to collect all the words and actions of the Buddha. Ananda shared his memory of the story on Dharmakara Bodhisattva and the story was recorded. Around the beginning of the first century, the story was published as the Infinite Life Sutra and Amida Sutra in the northwestern India.

Shinran Shonin praised *nyo rai* in the first line of *Ondokusan*, the *nyo rai* indicates *Amida Nyorai*, Amida Tathagata which I explained above, not any other Tathagatas. Shinran Shonin encountered the true intent of the 48 Vows of Amida Tathagata after he left Mt. Hiei of the Tendai Buddhist order. The true intent can be understood as the following: the sentient beings are at a loss, and don't know what course of action to take in the life of their worldly desires and passions. Through the Buddha dharma as the 48 Vows of Amida Tathagata, the Buddha wanted to let all sentient beings know the way of true beings (the state of enlightenment). Shinran Shonin's praise is expressed (*ondoku*) in the Infinite Life Sutra as the Great Compassion (*dai hi*) of Tathagata.

#### *Mi wo ko ni shi te mo ho zu be shi*

For expressing his deepest gratitude (*ho zu be shi*) to the Great Compassion, Shinran Shonin studied tirelessly to propagate the teachings of the Infinite Life Sutra. An anecdote about Shinran tells that he had continued making corrections in his main publication, *Kyo Gyo Shin Sho* until he died. It means he really wanted to share the true understandings of Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Teachings until his life (*mi wo*) disintegrates into dust (*ko ni shi te*).

#### *Shi shu Chi shiki no On do ku wa*

Shinran Shonin stated all Indian, Chinese, and Japanese Pure Land Masters (*shi shu*) established Jodo Shinshu to lead sentient beings in their worldly desires, who have wicked and sham intentions to the way of true beings in his book, *Jodo Monrui Jusho*. We as Jodo Shinshu follow-

(continued on page 10)



## 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 18, 2018 at 10:00 am**. The guest speaker for the service will be **Rev. Hoshu Matsubayashi** of BCA Ministers Emeritus for English Service and **Rev. Ryuta Furumoto** of resident minister of Senshin Buddhist temple 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: Perfect Peace*" on **Saturday, March 17, 2018**. The seminar will begin with opening service at 9:00 am and end with closing service at 3:00 pm. For English speaking attendees, **Rev. Hoshu Matsubayashi** will be speaking in the morning session and **Rev. Ryuta Furumoto** in the afternoon session. For Japanese speaking attendees, Rev. Furumoto will be speaking in the morning session and Rev. Matsubayashi in the afternoon session. The registration is available at temple office. The deadline will be on March 10, 2018. The registration fee is \$15.00 including lunch and refreshments. We encourage all of you to

(continued on page 9)

## HANAMATSURI SERVICE

by Rev. Koho Takata

The members of Los Angeles Homba Hopngwanji 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 8, 2018**. The guest speaker for the service will be **Rev. Uma Lama Ghising** of Kathmandu Hongwanji in Nepal, birth place of Sakyamuni Buddha, 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 "*Hanamatsuri*" 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 "*Hanamatsuri*" 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 Sid-

(continued on page 9)

## DID YOU KNOW?

by Eiko Masuyama



Los Angeles Buddhist Women's Association (Fujinkai) will be celebrating its 100th anniversary in October, 2018.

### **BWA Advisors (continued from Betsuin Jiho Jan/Feb 2018 issue)**

Rev. Sensho Inouye 1968 – 1971

Rev. Keizo Norimoto 1971 - 1975  
1975 – 1985

Rev. Rev. Kodo Umezu 1985- 1987

Rev. Nobuo Miyaji 1987 – 1996

Rev. Doei Fujii 1996 - 1998

Rimban Seikan Fukuma 1998 – 1999

Rimban George Matsubayashi 2000 – 2009

Rimban Hiroshi Abiko 2009 - 2013

Rimban William Briones 2013 – present

\* \* \*

### **History of the Los Angeles Betsuijn Fujinkai, 90th Anniversary Celebration,**

#### **LA Homba Hongwanji Buddhist BWA, 2008 (edited)**

1971...Shizuye Yamada elected president. Held a service in commemoration of 50th anniversary since the founding of the Fujinkai. Established a scholarship fund as part of the celebration.

1973...Emiko Sasaki elected president. Assisted in the service to dedicate the bronze statue of Shinran Shonin. Participated in the National Fujinkai conference in Sacramento.

1974...Participated in the 5th World Fujinkai Conference in Canada.

1976...Prepared lunch (1000 bentos) for the service to commemorate the completion of the Multi-Purpose Hall (Kaikan)

1977...Setsuko Iwata elected president. Sponsored service for the S.D. Fujinkai commemorating the 50th anniversary of the passing of Lady Takeko Kujo (founder of Fujinkai in Japan). Over 600 persons attended. Membership fee increased to \$6.

1978...Participated in the service held at the San Fernando Buddhist Temple for L.A. Betsuin and branch temple members. Attended the 6th World Fujinkai Conference in Brazil.

1979...Mickey Nagamoto elected president. Attended National Fujinkai Conference in Fresno, which was followed by tour to Yosemite National Park with guest lecturer, Mrs. Masako Konoe. Reception held for Mrs. Konoe when she visited Los Angeles Betsuin. Prepared otoki and refreshments for ceremony commemorating completion of the

Bell Tower.

1980...Membership exceeded 300 persons. The primary functions of the BWA are visitations to the Keiro Home; assisting in mailing temple newsletter, JIHO; cleaning the altar area; preparing otoki, refreshments for major services; and participating in the annual temple carnival. Membership fee increased to \$10.

1981...Makino Morioka elected president. Prepared otoki, refreshments, for funeral service for the late Rimban Ryuei Masuoka. Prepared luncheon for the service commemorating 50th anniversary since our temple was elevated to betsuin status. Prepared luncheon for the Nisei Week queen Reception at request of Japanese Consulate.

1982...32 members attended 7th World BWA Conference in Hawaii. We were in charge of reception for S.D. Buddhist Conference. A banquet held for Lady Yoshiko Ohtani, Ourakatasama.



**Row 1: Shizue Yamada, Setsuko Iwata, Junko Akutagawa, Rev. Nobuo Miyaji, Mrs. Yoshiko Miyaji, Emiko Sasaki, Helen Takata, Tsuruko Iwohara Row 2: Hiroko Mayeda, Moruko Okita, Masako Tanaka, Suzuko Nakamura, Takeko Sadamoto, Emiko Ichikawa Row 3: Yuri Yamasaki, Yukie Yokoyama, Yoshie Ishigame, Amy Miyakawa, Ikuko Shimizu, Toshiko Kusumoto**

1983...Setsuko Iwata re-elected president. Raised funds to help victims of Kauai hurricane disaster. At the National Fujinkai conference in Portland, all 58 attending members appeared in matching uniforms for the first time.

1984...Prepared luncheon to commemorate Rimban Mohri's 30 years of service to the BCA.

1985...Emiko Sasaki re-elected president. Assisted in service to commemorate the 80th year since founding of our temple, and to show appreciation for our senior citizens. Assisted at banquet held to commemorate Fukurimban Sensho Inouye's 25 years of service to BCA and

*(continued on page 6)*

*(Did You Know? - continued from page 5)*

20 years of service to our temple.

1986...12 members attended the 8th World Fujinkai Conference held in Kyoto, Japan.

1987...Tsuruko Iwohara elected president.

1988...Began sponsorship of BWA Dharma talks by Professor Kakuei Miyaji.

1989...Setsuko Iwata re-elected president. Assisted in service to commemorate 20 years since moving temple to 815 East First Street location.

1991...Helen Takata elected president.

1993...Began preparation for 10th World BWA Conference, 1994: workshops (at Senshin) and Obon odori practice (OCBC).

1994...Participated in the 10th World BWA Conference (held together with the Preliminary Service for 500th Memorial Service for Rennyō Shōnin) held at Anaheim Hilton Hotel. Lady Yoshiko Ohtani attended. Over 3500 persons from all over the world attended.

Activities 1995 – 2007: Volunteer at Keiro Nursing Home and Keiro Retirement Home; otoki for major services; hospitality to visitors and special events; cooking demonstrations; manju, sushi and bento fundraising projects; choir; Bon Odori exercise class; annual donations to youth groups, Dharma school teachers and parent organizations, office volunteers; day trips to points of interest, to mention a few.

1995...Donated \$200 to Kobe Earthquaker Fund; Oct 14-15: Betsuin 90th Anniversary/BWA 575th Anniversary Celebration with guest speaker Rev. Shue Matsubayashi, movie director and minister. Junko Akutagawa elected president.

1997...Gomonshu visit for Kikyoshiki and Rennyō 500th Memorial Commemorative Services with choir participation, followed by banquet. National BWA Conference at Fresno, guest speaker, Mrs. L. Onizuka from Hawaii (English) and Rev. Reiko Yukiya (Japanese). Tsuruko Iwohara elected president.

1998...Purchased DVD of Rennyō and Related Historical Places (animation); donated \$5000 towards purchase of dishwasher; supported 5 participants in ministerial course study in Kyoto, Japan. Sotoku High School Concert (served refreshments)

1999...Tokyo District BWA and SD BWA signed sister BWA agreement at LA Betsuin. Retirement dinner for Rimban Fukuma. Welcome luncheon for Rimban George C. Matsubayashi. Farewell Party for Rev. Nobuo Miyaji.

*(continued on next column)*

## BWA AWARDED KEIRO GRANT



*(l-r) Setsuko Nakahara (class organizer), Pam Tabata (BWA president), Keiro Grant representative, and Rimban Briones.*

The BWA was awarded a grant from the Keiro Grant Program. The grant is for the Qi Gong/Tai Chi weekly class sponsored by the BWA. The grant will help subsidize the cost of the venue as well as help those who attend the classes. This class is basically geared for seniors, but is open to anyone of any age. The class takes place on Friday mornings from 10:00 to 11:00 in the kaikan.

Last year, the Betsuin was awarded a Keiro grant which enabled the temple to purchase a new van to transport seniors to and from the temple.

BCA Centennial and BCA FBWA Conference in San Francisco with guest speakers, Mrs. Houston (UCLA, English) and Rev. Shōyō Taniguchi (Japanese); 52 members attended. 16th SD BWA and BCA 100th Celebration with guest speaker, Rev. S. Matsubayashi, movie director and minister.

2000...Purchased an for kurimanju (no longer homemade). Separate Sunday Obon service from Obon carnival weekend. Matrons disband and join BWA. Emiko Sasaki, Agnes Nakamura, Shizuye Takahashi volunteer at Keiro Nursing Home. Fundraising projects chairperson for temple 100th chairperson: Miyoko Yonemoto. Rimban Matsubayashi's 40 years of service to BCA luncheon. Es-shini Memorial Service guest speaker, Rev. Laverne Sasaki. Amy Miyakawa elected president.

2001...Raised BWA membership dues to \$15 (\$2 goes to

*(continued on page 9)*



## KUMAMOTO TEMPLE

by Seibi Okita

I received news from my family temple, Hokoji, in Kumamoto. The nokotsu-do that was severely damaged in the two earthquakes in April of 2016 has been repaired.

A ceremony was held for the return of the statue of the Amida Buddha to its "home" in the nokotsu-do. The temple members also returned their families' remains to the nokotsu-do.

I, along with my family, wish to thank everyone for the generous donations and expressions of concerns.

The quake foreshock with a magnitude 6.2 took place on the April 14th and two days later, the mainshock of magnitude 7.3 struck Kumamoto.

I travelled to Kumamoto three weeks after the earthquakes. It was an unbelievable sight. Nearly all the homes were covered by blue tarps and the quake debris was pushed into huge piles at the edges of the streets.

When I arrived home at the temple, I saw that parts of the hondo roof had collapsed, and other parts were broken and had holes causing rain to pour into the hondo. The nokotsu-do had cracks in the walls, exposing the inner walls. The roof of the living quarters had collapsed, the walls were cracked, and the glass windows were broken. All the items in the kitchen shelves and counters had tumbled to the floor.

My brother, the temple minister, said that following the foreshock, he took down the Amida statue in the hondo and placed it in his car. He then retrieved the Amida statue in the nokotsu-do and one in the living quarters and also placed them in the car. He drove the car away from the building and stayed in the car with the statues for three days. As a minister, it is his duty to protect the Amida statues. I have great respect for my brother's actions.

With this Kumamoto earthquake of 2016, everyone suffered damage, including the temple members. My brother felt he could not ask for their help in repairing the temple. He did, however, want to restore the nokotsu-do as soon as possible for the temple members. I stayed for five weeks to help clean up and clear the debris.

To finally hear that the nokotsu-do repair has been completed is wonderful. Thank you everyone in Los Angeles for your support.

*gassho*, Seibi Okita



Hokoji Temple, Kumamoto, Japan



Okita Family at the Hokoji Temple. Rev. Seijun Okita is second from right.



Photo to the right: Service in the nokotsudo

SPRING OHIGAN SEMINAR

## LIFE OF AWAKENING

### Perfect Peace

Saturday, March 17, 2018

9:00 am- 3:00 pm

GUEST SPEAKERS:

Rev. Ryuta  
Furumoto

Rev. Hoshu  
Matsubayashi

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 10th**

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



BETSUIN PHOTOS



*HOLLYWOOD BUDDHIST CHURCH  
The HBC sangha comes together to observe Ho-onko with Rev Takata (center).*



*The 47th Annual Kohaku Utagassen at the Betsuin. The Red (Women's) Team won the competition.*



*Kenji Hatakeyama rings the bonsho after the New Year's Eve (Joya-e) service. Rev. Nakata (left) and Rimban Briones look on.*

HO-ONKO



*Ho-onko Ministers  
L-front: Rev Toshima, Rimban Briones, Rev Haneda Back: Rev Nakata, Rev Fukuma, & Rev Takata*



*Rev. Nobuo Haneda (left) and Rev. Ryoso Toshima serve as guest speakers at the Ho-onko seminar and service.*

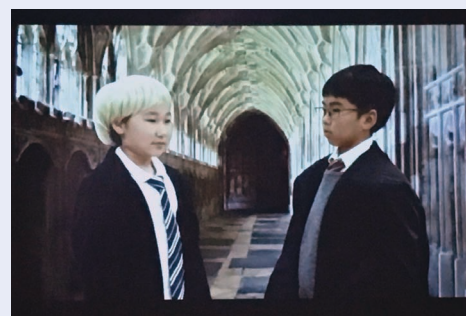
OSEIBO PROGRAM



*Rev. Nakata and family doing their "thing."*



*Marley Uyemura poses as Dumbledore (Harry Potter character) with Rimban.*



*Through the magic of video, two dharma school students become characters in the World of Wizardry.*



*(Did You Know? - continued from page 6)*

FBWA). Volunteers to Keiro Retirement Home: Suzuko Nakamura, Masako Tanaka, Tsuruko Iwihara, Teruyo (Tootsie) Yoshimura, Yoshiko Yamamoto, Yoshiye Sasaki, Michiko Matoo, Shizuye Takahashi.

2002...Chirashi fundraising sale for Betsuin 100th Anniversary.

2003...Donation to Honzan, Kyoto to support Honzan Restoration Project (roof tile). Kohaku Utagassen Bento sale proceeds donated to Betsuin 100th Anniversary "Fund. Tsuruko Iwihara re-elected president.

2004...Centennial donation of \$50,000. Koromo donation for all ministers. Performance group, SHIN3 under sponsorship of BWA; Mrs. Mie Hida Memorial Service sponsored. Bib presentation to Keiro Nursing Home.

2005...Bon Odori exercise class under BWA activity. Choir begins practice for 100th Anniversary Service. Donation (\$2000) to Betsuin's 100th from proceeds of Kohaku bento sales. Day trip to Palm Springs with 28 members.

2006...Monshu Kosho and Lady Yoshiko Ohtani Memorial Observance. 13th World BWA Conference and Tour in Hawaii.

2007...Donation of \$3,000 to Jodo Shinshu Center Building Fund. Surf 'n Turf fundraiser planned for 2008, to replace Yakisoba with BWA assigned 1500 cups of goma ae. Ikuko Shimizu elected president.

2008...S.D. Proclamation Service for Shinran Shonin 750th Memorial (2011) with Bishop Koshin Ogui officiating. Tsuruko Iwihara and Jean Kondo elected co-presidents. LA Betsuin BWA Memorial Service and Commemorative Service in celebration of 90th anniversary, 1918 - 2008.  
... (to be continued)

\* \* \*

In response to call for assistance in the Betsuin office from Rie Fujii, office manager, many thanks to those who stepped up and volunteer their time on a regular basis: Edd Hayashibara, Nancy Hayashibara, Harumi Hatakeyama, Kenji Hatakeyama, Reiko Ikkanda, Vance Ikkanda, Elsie Inouye, Jean Kawakami, June Kondo, Reiko Kondo, Gail Matsuura, Lucy Matsuura, Suzy Saita, Bessie Tanaka, and others... Thank you very much.

*(Hanamatsuri - continued from page 4)*

dhartha Gautama who became enlightened as Sakyamuni Buddha. Hanamatsuri Service, sponsored by the **Los Angeles Buddhist Temples Federation**, will be also held on **Saturday, April 8 at 1:00PM at Nishi Kaikan.**

## 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, 2017

- 16 Danny Hirahara
- 17 Tomoko Iizuka
- 20 Yoshiko Matsushita
- 22 Hatsumi Yamaguchi
- 24 Robert Hiromu Hamataka
- 28 Poston Nobuo Ishii
- 29 Kenichi Nakashioya
- 30 Yoshito Ariyasu

- 22 Makiji Mike Kurata
- 23 Helen Hisaye Hiyoshida
- 30 Reiko Hiraike

### January, 2018

- 3 Aiko Masada
- 4 Irene Itsuko Matsuno
- 9 Jennifer Umeko Hirose
- 13 Tami Fukusako
- 14 Maximo Zenichi Shimabukuro

### December, 2017

- 1 Calvin Ige
- 8 Masato Myodo
- 10 Betty Chiyoko Shinmoto
- 13 Fusae Alice Nobui
- 15 Edward Errol Kunio Nakamura
- 16 Shizue Tsuno





## NISHI BOY SCOUT



pancake breakfast






### CELEBRATE MOTHERS' DAY

#### Sunday, May 13, 2018

**7 AM - 10 AM**

Donation: \$6<sup>00</sup>

**Betsuin Kaikan**

*(Spring Ohigan - continued from page 4)*

Listen to the Buddha-Dharma and apply it to our daily lives.

*(Rimban Briones - continued from page 1)*

you” than any other county. Love, is an emotion. Emotions are fleeting. We love one minute and are out of love another. We confuse lust with love. We confuse desire with love. We confuse acceptance with love. We see love as a way to hold onto another. Our love is conditional. You love me — I love you. But even within this warped view of love, there is that potential of realizing what real love is.

Love that comes and goes is only a reflection of the real love. Let me explain that. I’d like to use a metaphor somewhat like the finger pointing to the moon. Except this is the moon reflecting in a lake. The moon reflected in the lake looks exactly like the moon, but the reflection can be disturbed very easily. It becomes distorted within the ripples of the lake, and as the lake settles back, it again appears as the moon. But the real moon in the sky is not disturbed by winds, by seasons, by anything. It is even there in the day, we just can’t see it because the sun is too bright.

Love is the same. Real love is just love; it is not a relationship, it is your state of being. It has nothing to do with anybody, you are simply full of love. Many can share it, others have a hard time to share or express it.

The love between man and woman ... the love between parents and child... The love between friends; it can have many manifestations, but they are always changing. They have to change, because they are only reflections, shadows and in their wake they may bring much misery.

When the moon is reflected in the lake, there is serenity and beauty but when it is shattered by wind, or just a small pebble is thrown into the lake, it’s all gone... shattered. And you know from your own experience that your love relationships with friends, with spouses, are all very fragile. Any small thing and the whole love disappear. Not only disappears, it changes into the opposite. Friends become enemies, husband and wives divorce.

Authentic love is total fulfillment in yourself and at the same time we feel a deeper appreciation for that which sustains our lives, we become truly human. We see the need to make life better for all the living, not just humans.

In Buddhism there is a word that describes this concept — Metta. Metta can be translated to loving-kindness, generous mindfulness, sending our thoughts of love towards others. Loving-kindness is what true compassion is, and more. It is built on wisdom. Wisdom, in itself, includes compassion. Thus, wisdom and compassion are necessary for loving-kindness to exist.

Later that day, the young couple and I stood before Amida Buddha and rather than “bless” the couple or perform a wedding ceremony, I talked about loving-kindness and I closed with ... *“Continue to live in Truth and you may*

*sense of life everlasting, for Truth transcends time. May the Wisdom and Compassion of the Buddha so shine within your hearts and minds that the mist of vanity of self be dispelled. May you always be surrounded with infinite love and compassion.”*

---

*(Nakata - continued from page 3)*

ers understand Shinran Shonin is a historical founder of Jodo Shinshu Buddhist sect. However, Shinran believed that the Jodo Shinshu Buddhist teachings did not start with him. His belief was that the Seven Masters took the teachings and handed their knowledge (*chi shiki*) through their commentaries from generation to generation (*on doku*). Finally, Shinran became the recipient of this accumulated knowledge in the Kamakura period of 13th century Japan. With this awakening, the propagation of Jodo Shinshu became a lifelong endeavor for him. As we hear about the life story of Shinran Shonin, we learn that he experienced the reverence and appreciation to the historical Buddha and the masters who came before him and gave him the opportunity to encounter Jodo Shinshu Buddhist teachings.

#### ***Ho ne wo ku da ki te mo sha su be shi***

In Japanese, *hone* (bone) is sometimes used to express “effort”. For instance, there is an expression, “*hone wo oru*.” It literally can be translated as “break a bone.” Figuratively, the Japanese expression should be understood as a “one makes an unearthly effort,” or “one does things until he breaks his bone.” We sometimes hear that top athletes practice so hard that they hurt themselves. This is a true case for *hone wo oru*, breaking a bone. *Kudaki* means “shattering.” Shinran Shonin thought *oru* (to break) was not adequate to express his reverence and appreciation to the masters, so he wrote *kudaki* to express his deepest reverence and appreciation (*sha shu be shi*) from the bottom of his heart.

Shantao, one of the Seven Masters in China, stated “*Until my life disintegrates into dust, until my bodily form is finally shattered, I express my sincere appreciation to Buddha’s compassion*” in his book, *Kannen Homon*. Shinran Shonin truly admired Shantao. It seems that both Shantao and Shinran Shonin may have had same perception of Buddha’s compassion.

Now the question arises. What were the bone-shattering events for Shinran Shonin? Why did he believe that his bones should be shattered?

*(continued on page 11)*

*(Nakata - continued from page 10)*

When Shinran was in his mid 30s, he experienced the religious persecution of the Buddhists priests by the emperor. His teacher, Honen Shonin was exiled to the Shikoku Island, and he was never able to see Honen again. Six of his dharma friends were also exiled while four other dharma friends were executed. While studying under Honen, Shinran was basking in his life of Nem-buttsu. The onset of the persecution, however, turned into a bone-shattering event. Moreover, it became a life threatening crisis.

In studying *Ondokusan* at Ryukoku University with Professor Koju Fugen, I learned how seriously Shinran examined the bone-shattering efforts of many. There are probably many Jiho readers who have gone to the temple since childhood and have sung *Ondokusan* a number of times. Do you now have some understanding of *Ondokusan*? The next time you have the opportunity to sing *Ondokusan* at a service, see if you experience Shinran Shonin's passion behind it.

*Gassho*

## 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 21st** in conjunction with the *Gotan-ye* Service which is the observance of the birth of the *Jodo Shinshu* founder, Shinran Shonin.



The ministers and the *dharma* school teachers will be conducting the *Hatsumairi* Service for any infant up to one (1) year of age.

To those who are interested in participating in the *Hatsumairi*, please contact the *Betsuin* office by May 7, 2017. (Registration form on page 12)

## 2018 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Valid from January 1 through December 31, 2018

**\$250 PER EACH MEMBER OF A HOUSEHOLD**

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

Payments may be made in full or by installments throughout the year of **2018**

## Betsuin Jiho

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

Tri-Temple Seminar 2018  
(LA Betsuin, Pasadena, and Senshin)

## JODO SHINSHU IN NEPAL

Saturday, April 7, 2018 1:00 - 4:00 pm

GUEST SPEAKERS:



**Rev. Uma Lama Ghising**  
*Kathmandu Hongwanji*



**Mayumi Kodani**  
*Senshin Buddhist Temple*

1:00-1:30 pm Opening service  
1:30-2:20 pm Rev. Ashma  
2:20-2:30 pm Break

2:30-3:20 pm Kodani  
3:20-4:00 pm Panel and Q & A

Free Admission (but registration is necessary)  
LA Honpa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple

Contact: Rev. Ryuta Furumoto (Senshin Buddhist Temple) 323-731-4617  
Rev. Koho Takata (Nishi Betsuin) 213-680-9130 NishiDharmaCenter@gmail.com



# ***HATSUMAIRI***

**May 20, 2018**

## **REGISTRATION FORM**

**NAME OF CHILD:** \_\_\_\_\_

**BOY** \_\_\_\_\_ **GIRL** \_\_\_\_\_ **BIRTHDATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>NAME IN KANJI</b>	
--------------------------	--

**PARENTS' NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**EMAIL:** \_\_\_\_\_

**TEL:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **ZIP:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE SUBMIT THIS FORM TO THE BETSUIN OFFICE BY:**

**MAY 6, 2018**

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

**Email: [info@nishihongwanji-la.org](mailto:info@nishihongwanji-la.org)  
FAX: 213-680-2210**

# MARCH 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1  Rituals Rev. Masao Kodani 7:00-8:30 pm	2  Qigong/Tai Chi Classes 10-11 am	3  Surf and Turf Dinner Fundraiser
Bon Odori Exercise 8:30 am 4  Regular Service 10:00 am	5	6	7	8  Board Meeting 7:30 pm	9  Qigong/Tai Chi Classes 10-11 am	10  Shinran Shonin's Hymns (in Japanese) Rev. Yoshiko Miyaji 10:00-1130 am  ...Words of Shinran... Great Myokonin... Rev. Tetsuo Unno 10:00-1130 am
11  Girl Scout Sunday 10 am Eitaiyo Shotsuki Hoyo 1 pm	12	13  Bon Odori Exercise 6:30 pm	14	15	16  Qigong/Tai Chi Classes 10-11 am  Go-Meinichi-ko 1:30 pm	17  Ohigan Seminar 9 am - 3 pm
Bon Odori Exercise 8:30 am 18  Ohigan Service & Rimban Memorial Service 10 am	19	20	21	22	23  Qigong/Tai Chi Classes 10-11 am	24  Shinran Shonin's Hymns (in Japanese) Rev. Yoshiko Miyaji 10:00-1130 am
25  Regular Service 10:00 am	26	27  Bon Odori Exercise 6:30 pm	28	29	30  Qigong/Tai Chi Classes 10-11 am	31

# APRIL 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Bon Odori Exercise 8:30 am 1	2	3	4	5	6 Qigong/Tai Chi Classes 10-11 am	7 <b>Tri-Temple Seminar</b>
8 <b>Betsuin Hanamatsuri</b> 10 am <b>Butsuren Hanamatsuri</b> 1 pm	9	10 Bon Odori Exercise 6:30 pm	11	12 Board Meeting 7:30 pm	13 Qigong/Tai Chi Classes 10-11 am	14
Bon Odori Exercise 8:30 am 15 <b>Regular Service 10:00 am</b> <b>Eitaikyo Shotsuki Hoyo 1 pm</b>	16 <b>Go-Meinichi-ko 1:30 pm</b>	17	18	19	20 Qigong/Tai Chi Classes 10-11 am	21
22 <b>Regular Service 10:00 am</b>	23	24 Bon Odori Exercise 6:30 pm	25	26	27 Qigong/Tai Chi Classes 10-11 am	28
29 <b>Regular Service 10:00 am</b>	30	31				