

LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

No. 453

March - April 2019

jihō

WWW

LOS ANGELES HONPA HONGWANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE
FOUNDED 1905



BETSUIN'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY PLANS INCLUDE WELCOMING HIS EMINENCE MONSHU KOJUN OHTANI

Plans are in the works to welcome the Gomonshu for the commemoration of the Los Angeles Hampa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple's 50th Anniversary at the current location at the corner of First Street and Vignes Street.

This auspicious milestone will be observed during the weekend of September 7th and 8th of 2019.

"*Monshu*" literally means "keeper of the gate" and is noted as the spiritual leader of Jodo Shinshu- Nishi Hongwanji.

Gomonshu Kojun Ohtani serves as the 25th generation descendent of Shinran Shonin, succeeding his father in June 2014.

Detailed information for the weekend events can be found in the following pages.



KOJUN OHTANI, MONSHU

Los Angeles
Hampa Hongwanji
Buddhist Temple

815 East First Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

TEL: 213.680.9130

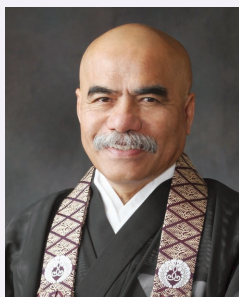
FAX: 213.680.2210

WEB: nishihongwanji-la.org

EMAIL: info@nishihongwanji-la.org

RIMBAN'S MESSAGE

THOUGHTS ON BEING A PRIEST



**RIMBAN
WILLIAM BRIONES**

The emperor and his ministers, acting against the dharma and violating human decency, became enraged and embittered. As a result, Master Honen, the eminent founder who had enabled the true essence of the Pure Land way to spread vigorously in Japan, and a number of his followers, without receiving any deliberation of their alleged crimes, were immediately sentenced to death or were stripped of their priesthood, given secular names and exiled. I was among the latter. Hence, I am now neither a monk or layman. For this reason, I have taken the term Toku "stubble-haired" as my name.

The reading I began with is from the post script of the last chapter of *Kyogyoshinsho*.

Shinran wrote this in opposition to the government officials and the emperor, only after Honen Shonin and some of his disciples, Shinran being one of them, were stripped of their priesthood and exiled to remote parts of Japan.

Honen Shonin's only crime was to advocate the saying the *Nembutsu*, a religious act which when practiced exclusively, could lead any human being to salvation in Amida's Pure Land. However Honen's radical Pure Land interpretation did not sit well with established Tendai monks on Mt. Hiei. So through political maneuvering, they had Honen and his followers persecuted. Some were sentenced to death and others were stripped of their priesthood and exiled.

As Jodo Shinshu followers the words "Neither priest or layman," should be reflected upon and how it relates to our lives.

I've been a minister now for almost 17 years and, at times, I can honestly say it's still difficult for me to believe I'm a Buddhist priest. A couple of weeks ago, I drove home for the holidays to see my kids, my grandkids, my mom and the rest of the family. Do you think they treat me like a minister? My mom calls me "*mijo*," my kids call me "dad," my grandkids call me "papa" and everyone else including my little cousins call me "Junior." Our conversations are centered around what the family is up to, school, work, play and local politics. The *Nembutsu* seems to be the farthest thing from my mind.... at least consciously. After work I go home, throw off my shirt and tie... get into my sweats and raggedy tee-shirt ...crash on the sofa turn on the television and watch the news.

It is within these words of Shinran... "Neither priest or layman" ... that I see myself caught up in a secular world that leads me chasing my dreams and desires. How I'd love to get that Mazda MX-5 Miata convertible with six-speed manual transmission.

And yet, I am given the privilege to share and study the *Nembutsu* teachings with you and to the many visitors that come to our Betsuin. I find my marriage to Nobuko to be very meaningful in that we can share our thoughts about the *Nembutsu*. It is through our relationship that I feel that I am on the *Nembutsu* path. It is through our deep discussions of our understanding of the dharma during dinner or driving that I realize that I am neither a layman ... of course not in the same profound sense that Shinran expressed himself.

You don't have to be a minister to reflect upon Shinran's words either. Are you so preoccupied with the frivolous stuff that you forget about finding the true self?

Priest or lay person, we cannot escape this mundane world. Even Shinran could not escape this reality. Shinran lived a life in clear violation of his vows. Although he continued to share the *Nembutsu* teachings and wore priestly robes he also got married and had a family. Shinran's marriage and family life was definitely not something that monks were doing at that time.

Shinran Shonin showed us the way to live in this mundane world. And though Shinran lived almost 750 years ago, we are still plagued with the same everyday problems of survival. Even getting old, sick and, yes, even death is part of this mundane world. Yet, through self-reflection through the *Nembutsu* teachings, we consider what is really important to us, and aspire to understand and seek ultimate truths which remain constant in spite of ever changing conditions of our mundane world.

Namo Amida Butsu

**...HAVE A CAR YOU
DON'T NEED?
DONATE IT TO THE
BETSUIN
FOR INFORMATION:
213-680-9130**



THE EGOCENTRIC SELF

by Rev. Koho Takata



REV. KOHO TAKATA

One day, an individual visited our temple from Chiba, Japan. He had visited Seattle and New York. He was going to visit San Francisco but his flight was delayed for 10 hours. He changed his itinerary and came to Los Angeles knowing that there was a Betsuin temple.

The next day, he visited the temple at around 8:30 am to attend the morning service. I was expecting Nishi Center children to join in the morning service as usual to chant *Jusei-ge*, but they had an excursion that day and didn't attend. Since I was just with this visitor who said that he chanted *Shoshin-ge* daily, I decided to chant *Shoshin-ge* and the *Wasan* with him during the morning service.

While I was chanting with him, I noticed that his tone or key was a little different from usual way of chanting the *Shoshin-ge*. After the chanting, I went down to *gejin* where he was seated to talk with him. He apologized about the way he had chanted. He said that it was a first opportunity for him to chant *Shoshin-ge* and the *Wasan* with only one minister. He also said that he thought his late grandparents may have chanted the *Shoshin-ge* at this Betsuin while they were alive and living in Los Angeles. He felt grateful for the numerous causes and conditions that brought him to encounter the precious opportunity to chant the *Shoshin-ge* at the Los Angeles Betsuin. He was overwhelmed with his thoughts and he was crying during his chanting so that his key or tone was often shifted.

After he apologized about his chanting, he started to talk about himself. He had recently retired from his business. He had been asked by his family members about his plans after his retirement. He replied to his family that he wanted to be a Jodo Shinshu minister. His family members strongly opposed this idea. They expressed to him, "*You have a strong ego. You don't listen to others. You cannot be a minister.*" He revealed to me that their comments were the reason why he started studying Jodo Shinshu at the seminary in Kyoto, Japan. After studying for three years, however, he was, again, told by his family members, "*You cannot be a minister. Your ego is too strong. Minister has to listen to others. You studied Jodo Shinshu for three years but you are still same. You still have too strong an ego.*" He reluctantly said that their comments caused him to decide to travel to the United States to visit his ancestral places and reflect upon who he was. His tears continued to flow as he spoke to me in the hondo.

After listening to his plight, I confessed that I was a minister,

but like him, I was also *wagamama*. I am self-centered because of my ego, my attachments, and my self-centered nature. Traditional Buddhism/Sakyamuni Buddha has taught the attainment of "non-self" or "non-ego." However, I cannot reach such a high goal. As we had chanted *Shoshin-ge* together, Shinran Shonin is teaching us that the reason why Sakyamuni Buddha appeared in this world was solely to teach the Primal Vow of Amida Buddha. Knowing about our self-centered nature, Amida Buddha established the Primal Vow to save all beings at all times and in all places without discrimination. Moreover, Shinran Shonin is teaching us in the *Shoshin-ge* that we are saved even with our blind passions.

I explained that I continue to hold onto my ego probably until my death. However, Amida Buddha saves me as I am—*konomama*. This is the reason why I am truly grateful for the teaching of Amida Buddha's Primal Vow. I said to him that it is not essential for me to know or study about Jodo Shinshu academically and intellectually. The most important thing for me is to live on the teachings and apply the teachings to my daily life—though I continue to fail because of my ego. By repeatedly listening to the teachings, we are enabled to become conscious of our own egocentric self. Through hearing the Buddha's Mind (Primal Vow), we naturally becomes gentle in word and deed in our efforts of minimizing our egoistic way of thinking.

When we study academic at school, we become smarter. In the case of studying Jodo Shinshu, we become foolish beings. Followers of Jodo Shinshu often express their way of life with a famous Japanese aphorism, "*Minoruhodo kobewo tareru inahokana.*" What it means is that the more the rice stalk grows and matures, the more deeply it bends down. If we truly listen to the teachings, we become more conscious about our egocentric ways of life and we become more humble and grateful.

Let us fully reveal our poisons and foolishness by the Light of Wisdom of the Buddha, the mirror of the dharma, accept and recognize our true nature, and become consciousness about our egocentric way of life as we walk together to the path of the Nembutsu.

Persons of the Pure Land tradition attain birth in the Pure Land by becoming foolish selves.

(CWS P.531)



WHAT DOES “GOKURAKU” MEAN?

by Rev. Kazuaki Nakata



REV. KAZ

I recently wrote about the basic understanding of Jodo (Pure Land) and the meaning of Jodo Shinshu. The term, Jodo often appears in Chinese sutra translations, but we cannot find them in the original Sanskrit sutras. In the early centuries, when the Sanskrit Buddhist texts were translated into Chinese, certain terms were added, modified or

omitted by Chinese translators, in order to make the Sanskrit literature more comprehensible for the Chinese. These adjustments made by the Chinese are known as *Geyi* (idiomatical matching technique). The term, *Jodo* (Pure Land) sounds like a *purified heaven* in the western countries. As the result, people often mix up the term *Jodo* with *heaven* in Abrahamic religions. I have been hearing people say, “*Pure Land is like the heaven,*” or “*It is like heaven, but it is not heaven.*” I hope readers of my recent article were able to grasp the essential concepts of what *Jodo* is and that it is quite different from the concept of “heaven.” If still confused, please stop by my office and we can have a discussion about *Jodo*.

As mentioned in the previous Jiho issue, the Sanskrit term *Sukhavati*, is translated as *Jodo* in Chinese or Japanese. The translation of *Sukhavati* is not only *Jodo* but also there are several other translations. There is *An-raku* (安樂), *An-nyo* (安養), *Goku-raku* (極樂), *Hou-do* (報土), *Raku-hou* (樂邦), *Jou-hou* (淨邦), *Jakujo-mui-raku* (寂靜無為樂), *Muryo-koumyo-do* (無量光明土), and more. We should, at least, know *An-raku*. The last line of *Jusei-ge* or *Sanbutsu-ge* reads “*O-Jo-An-Raku-Koku.*” This means, “*I sincerely hope that all sentient beings will live the life of utmost calmness.*” Originally, this line was not a part of *Jusei-ge* in the Larger Sutra (the Infinite Life Sutra). It was written by one of our Jodo Shinshu seven masters, Shantao in his book, *A Commentary on the Contemplation Sutra*. Later, when the masters started chanting *Jusei-ge* as an individual text, Shantao’s writing was added to the end parts of *Jusei-ge* and *Sanbutsu-ge*.

Shinran Shonin wrote a book, *Yuishinsho Moni*. In the book, he explained that *goku-raku* can be stated as *an-raku*, and it can be called *an-nyo*. This is an indication that he considered these terms can be interchangeably used as the translation of *Sukhavati*, although we don’t know how much Shinran Shonin studied Sanskrit.

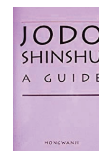
The English translation of *Sukhavati* is *Pure Land* in general. However, this translation may misguide you to understand what really *Sukhavati* means. The term *Sukhavati*

consists of two words. One is *sukha* and the other is *avati*. According to the early discourse of the historical Buddha, Shakyamuni in the Pali Buddhist text, Anguttara Nikaya, *sukha* means “utmost calmness.” *Avati* can be translated as “lead” or “guide.” So *sukhavati* can be understood as, “leads (guides) one to utmost calmness.” An official name of the Larger Sutra in the Chinese translation is the Infinite Life Sutra (Muryoju Kyo). The original title of the Sanskrit Larger Sutra is *Sukhavativyuha*. *Vyuha* means, “structure or method.” *Sukhavativyuha* can be translated as, “A method in this sutra leads one who practices the method to the state of utmost calmness.” If you have read the Larger Sutra, you may think the original Sanskrit title makes lots of sense than the Chinese title.

The term *gokuraku* appears in the *Contemplation Sutra* and *Smaller Sutra* (Amida Sutra), but not in the Larger Sutra. The meaning of *gokuraku* is, utmost calmness.” *Goku* is “utmost” or “highest,” and *raku* is pleasure, happiness, ease, or calmness. To follow the explanation of Shakyamuni, the term *gokuraku* is equivalent to *sukha*. As the explanation of *gokuraku*, Shinran Shonin stated “calmness continues endlessly without any difficulties” in his book, *Yuishinsho Moni*. It proves that Shinran Shonin’s understanding of *gokuraku* matches Shakyamuni’s understanding of *sukha*. In that sense, his Jodo Shinshu propagates the true understanding of Shakyamuni’s teaching. We are so fortunate that our Shinran Shonin guides us to the state of utmost calmness by his down-to-earth explanation and we can hear the true teaching of Buddha- dharma at Nishi Hongwanji. *Gassho*

L.A. BETSUIN

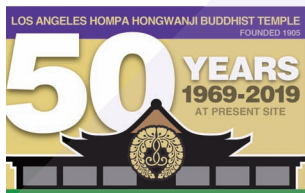
BOOK CENTER



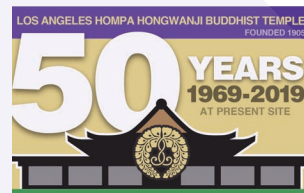
SUNDAY: 9:00 AM - 12:30 PM

WEEKDAYS - BETSUIN OFFICE PERSONNEL WILL ASSIST WITH PURCHASES

Email: nishibookcenter@sbcglobal.net



LOS ANGELES HOMPA HONGWANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE 50 YEARS 1969-2019 AT CURRENT SITE



CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

The 50th Anniversary Committee is busy preparing to welcome the Gomonshu for his participation in the celebration of the *Betsuin's 50th Anni-versary at its Current Location* in September. It is indeed a great honor for the temple for the Gomonshu to be with all of you for this auspicious celebration. The events of the 50th Anniversary Commemoration weekend is as follows:

September 7, Saturday:

- * Opening Ceremony of the Dharma Center with a special guest speaker.
- * Commemoration Banquet at Quiet Cannon Restaurant.

September 7, Sunday:

- * Group Photo
- * Chigo Procession
- * 50th Anniversary Commemoration Service
- * Confirmation Ceremony

Please mark your calendars for these various events and we look forward to your participation. Details of events can be found in this issue of this newsletter.

For the 50th Anniversary fund raising efforts, the Adult Buddhist Association (ABA) has donated \$3,200 from the proceeds from their November 2018 bingo/dinner fund raiser, and the dharma school students donated \$522 from the proceeds of their recycling of plastic bottles ongoing program. It is wonderful that our students are making a great effort to help us raise funds for the 50th Anniversary. Thank you very much to the dharma school students and members of ABA.

We thank everyone for their support and generous donations to the 50th Anniversary and we look forward to your continued financial support and participation in the 50th Anniversary Celebration weekend events.

Gassho,
Ernest T. Hida,
General Chairman 50th Anniversary Committee



50 YEAR COMMEMORATION

by Rimban William Briones

Five years ago, the Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple embarked upon a fund raising campaign to commemorate its 50th Anniversary of the historic move from the original site on Central Avenue and 1st Street to our present location on 1st Street and Vignes Street. Since then we've completed numerous remodeling projects. These projects include the restoration of the *onajjin*, the improvement of the air conditioning system in the kaikan, replacement of the heating-ventilation-air conditioning systems in all the upstairs and downstairs rooms and several other much needed repairs around our temple. Most of the major projects have been now completed and we have begun preparing for the special events for our 50th Anniversary.

On Saturday, September 7, the Opening Ceremony of the Dharma Center will take place. Later, the Commemoration Banquet at the Quiet Cannon Restaurant where everyone is encouraged to attend. On the following morning, children will have the opportunity to take part in the Chigo procession. The children will be dressed in traditional kimono, Chigo garb, and makeup for this occasion. The procession will make way into the hondo where the Commemoration Service will be observed. Later that day the Confirmation Ceremony or *Kikyoshiki* will take place where participants in the ceremony will be able to receive a Buddhist name (*homyo*.)

Details and information can be found in this issue of the Jiho.

CHIGO PROCESSION

Sunday, September 8, 2019



\$100 for costume rental
(includes purchase of zori, tabi, etc.)
Deadline: May 31, 2019

Application form:
Tel: 213-680-9130
NishiDharmaCenter@gmail.com

KIKYOSHIKI CONFIRMATION CEREMONY

On the occasion of Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple 50th Anniversary of Current Temple Site, Special Confirmation Ceremony will be conducted on Sunday, **September 8, 2019 at 2:00 PM.**

Confirmation Ceremony or “*Kikyoshiki*” is a solemn ceremony performed before Amida Buddha to officially confirm your entry into the Path of the Nembutsu. Participants will affirm their reverence toward the Three Treasures of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. “*Buddha*” is not simply in reference to Sakyamuni Buddha, but refers more importantly to Amida Buddha, the Buddha of Infinite Wisdom and Compassion. “*Dharma*” is the teaching of Amida Buddha’s Great Compassionate Working to embrace all beings without any discrimination. “*Sangha*” refers to the community of people who have entrusted themselves to Amida Buddha and its Nembutsu teaching.

By participating in the Confirmation Ceremony, you will receive a Buddhist Name (*Homyo* - see below). These names are in the form of “*Shaku*” and two Buddhist terms which follow. The word “*Shaku*” means “disciple of Sakyamuni” and signifies that the person has joined the followers of the nembutsu teaching which was expounded by Sakyamuni Buddha and committed oneself to live on the teaching.

Please note that the Confirmation Ceremony is open to all members. There is no minimum or maximum age limit however the individual must be able to participate in the ceremony at the temple on the day.

We sincerely hope that you will take this wonderful opportunity and participate in the Confirmation Ceremony. Please contact Rev. Koho Takata if you have any questions about this ceremony.

An application form must be submitted with the fee (adult \$100/child \$50) by the deadline of May 31, 2019. Forms may be requested by:

Telephone: **213-680-9130** or

Ecmal: **NishiDharmaCenter@gmail.com**



HOMYO - DHARMA NAME

by Rev. Koho Takata

The Japanese term, *homyo* means a *dharma name*. The homyo is conferred upon ministers by the Gomonsu who is the spiritual leader of Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha denomination on the occasion of their doushiki or initial ordination ceremony. For lay people, it is also given by the Gomonsu on the occasion of *kikyoushiki* or confirmation ceremony. The dharma name is personally selected by the Gomonsu from the Jodo Shinshu scriptures. In the Buddhist Churches of America, a homyo is given by the Bishop on the occasion of kieshiki or affirmation ceremony. The dharma name given by the Bishop is often selected by a resident minister based on the favorite word or character from the dharma chosen by recipient.

Sample of Homyo
Dharma Name

釈
妙
法

SHAKU MYO-HO

When do we receive a Homyo?

Many people tend to think that a homyo is only given to the person after one’s life ends. This is a great misunderstanding. A homyo is conferred on a person when one is still living and not on a person who has passed away. The reason is to give the living person the opportunity to become a disciple of Shakyamuni Buddha. That is, it is to encourage people to hear the teachings of the Buddha while they are still able to do it. Therefore, one should receive a homyo while still living. However, a homyo can also be conferred after a person’s death if one missed the opportunity earlier. This is to allow the surviving members of the family as well as the friends of the deceased to hear the Buddha’s teachings.

What does it mean to receive a Homyo?

In the time of Shakyamuni Buddha, one was allowed to join in the Sangha by taking refuge in the Buddha, dharma, and sangha for guidance. Buddha refers to Shakyamuni Buddha, dharma to Shakyamuni Buddha’s Teaching, and sangha to the community of fellow followers who have entrusted themselves to Shakyamuni Buddha and his teaching.

To receive a homyo means that one becomes a disciple of Shakyamuni Buddha. This is why a homyo is preceded by the word *Shaku* followed by two Chinese characters which embody the essence of the Buddha’s teachings. *Shaku* means becoming a disciple of Shakyamuni Buddha. In other words, one joins in the Shakya family and commits oneself to live on the Buddha’s Teachings.

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COMMEMORATION SERVICE

The Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple will be commemorating the 50th Anniversary of Current Temple site on **Sunday, September 8, 2019**.

Prior to the service, there will be a Chigo procession which will include children, ministers, and temple leaders. The Kinnara Gagaku (ancient court music performers) will be leading the procession.

All the participating children will be dressed with traditional kimono and make up for the procession. We encourage all children and grandchildren to participate in this once-in-a-life-time occasion.

What is Chigo?

Chigo are children who participate in the Buddhist processions. From the Kamakura period on, well-to-do families sent their children to temples for their education. In major celebrations, the children being educated at the temple participated in ceremonial processions and major celebrations. They were dressed to represent heavenly beings.



The children wore the *kariginu*, a robe with long, wide sleeves which is worn over *hakama*, a culotte-like skirt. This is the hunting costume of the Heian nobility which later became official garb of the government. Boys wear a stiff hat of lacquered gauze called *eboshi*. Girls wear a crown of a Phoenix bird and bright metal pendants called *tenkan*. (*Traditions of Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha* written by Rev. Masao Kodani & Rev. Russell Hamada)

Date: Sunday, September 8, 2017

Place: Kaikan

Schedule:

7:30 am Registration and dressing

8:30 am Group photo

9:15 am Chigo Procession

10:00 am Commemoration Service

An application form and rental fee of \$100 must be submitted by May 31, 2019. Forms may be requested by:

telephone: **213-680-9130** or

email: **NishiDharmaCenter@gmail.com**



LOS ANGELES HOMPA HONGWANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE
FOUNDED 1905



50TH ANNIVERSARY SCHEDULE

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2019

1:00 PM Dharma Center Opening

6:00 PM Commemoration Banquet
@ Quiet Cannon, Montebello

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2019

8:30 AM Group Photo

9:15 AM Chigo Procession

10:00 AM Commemoration Service

2:00 PM Confirmation Ceremony

COMMEMORATION BANQUET

Saturday, September 7, 2019
Quiet Cannon, Montebello

Adult - \$65 Child (3 - 10 years) - \$25

Deadline: August 5, 2019

Further information will be forthcoming

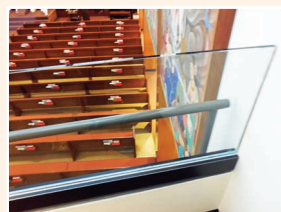
LOOKING BACK ON THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY PROJECTS

The most important project for the 50th Anniversary was the refurbishing on the onaijin. It was a major task taking apart the onaijin parts, piece by piece, packing everything, and shipping everything to Kyoto.

Nearly a year later, the process was reversed and everything had to be pieced back together.

Pictured are the the closed folding onaijin panels, onaijin ceiling panels that replaced the water-stained tiles, new donated kansho bell, and the new onaijin.

Other photos depict repairing/improving the building facilities after 50 years of wear and tear.



Clear barrier for the hondo balcony



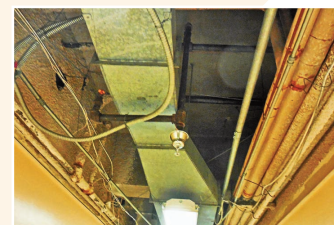
New iron gate to the kitchen



Onaijin ceiling panels



Parking lines newly painted



Ceilings were exposed throughout the temple to repair/replace the HVAC system.

50TH ANNIVERSARY BENEFIT DANCE



April 20, 2019, marks the LA Hampa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple's last 50th Anniversary Benefit Dance.

Newcomers as well as the five-year veterans are encouraged to join the festivities. For one last time, come and dance to the live music of Kokoro. Snacks, dinner, desserts, and plenty of gift and cash opportunity drawings will be available. There are three levels of tickets to purchase with ten to a table. There are dances throughout the year, but your support in coming out to this one will help with the much-needed repairs for this temple. Mark your calendars and help preserve the legacy of the Nishi Hongwanji Buddhist Temple for the future generations.

For further information please visit our home page: <http://nishihongwanji-la.org>.

Homyo - continued from page 6)

How the Homyo can guide and enrich your life?

In the case of our secular name (first name), there is a wish made by our parents but no commitment on our part since it was chosen before our birth. In the case of the dharma name, there is a strong commitment made by recipients to center the teachings in their lives.

There are so many conflicts and problems occurring in our daily lives. In Buddhism, we are the problem. We always carry attachments and a self-centered nature. Because of I myself, we have to suffer with problems. The dharma is the answer to our lives. The dharma is a mirror which reflects the reality of who we are and shows the cause of our problems.

ABA SPONSORS TOYO MIYATAKE STUDIO FUND RAISER

This is a unique opportunity to have portraits taken by the Toyo Miyatake Studio and to support the Nishi Betsuin. It is also an opportunity to have portraits taken of your family and/or family members that you've been meaning to do for a long time.

Toyo Miyatake Studio will donate 50% of the sitting fee to the temple. Also, discounted portrait packages will be offered.

TOYO MIYATAKE STUDIO PORTRAITS

Sundays March 17 and April 28
9:00 am - 2:00 pm

Individual and Family Portraits

- \$20 - 1 family sitting
- \$30 - 2 family or individual sitting
- \$50 - 3 to 5 sittings

**For an appointment, call
Dianne Odagawa 626-571-1336
Leave a message with
name and telephone number.**

Shinran Shonin, founder of Jodo Shinshu, further defined our human nature in his writing as follows; *"We are full of ignorance and blind passions. Our desires are countless, and anger, which means one who encountered the Excellent dharma wrath, jealousy, and envy are overwhelming, arising without pause; to the very last moment of life they do not cease, or disappear, or exhaust themselves."* (CWS P.488, Notes on Once-Calling and Many-Calling #20)

Buddhism signifies the teachings of the Buddha but also awakening to the Truth. However, our eyes are always covered and hindered by our ignorance and blind pas-

(continued on page 14)

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 17, 2019 at 10:00AM**. The guest speaker for the service will be **Rev. Kory Quon** the resident minister of Venice Hongwanji for English Service and **Rev. Ryuta Furumoto** the 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: Shinjin and Nembutsu" on **Saturday, March 16, 2019**. The seminar will begin with opening service at 9:00am and end with closing service at 3:00pm. The registration is available at temple office. The deadline will be on March 9, 2019. The registration fee is \$15.00 including lunch and refreshments. We encourage all of you to Listen to the Buddha-Dharma and apply it to our daily lives.



HANAMATSURI 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 7, 2019**. The guest speaker for the service will be **Rev. Nobuo Miyaji**, BCA minister emeritus, delivering dharma messages both in English and in Japanese.



It is a day of joy and a great significant for all Buddhists. We call the observance "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 "Hana-matsuri" or a "flower festival".

Many of the rites that are observed during Hanamatsuri are based on the events we are told happened at the time of Prince Siddhartha's birth. The Hanamido or miniature floral altar of bright flowers provides the setting of the beautiful Lumbini Garden where he was born. The statue of the baby Buddha with its arm extended illustrates the virtues of Amida Buddha reaching out to all beings and the pouring of sweet tea on the statue represents the gentle rain that fell in Lumbini Garden and bathed the baby Buddha. May we all realize the meaning of his appearance in this world, so that we may humbly accept and understand his teaching as a way of our lives. Let us all gather to celebrate the birth of Sakyamuni Buddha, who guided by Wisdom vitalized by Compassion continue to aspire to develop the person, both ourselves and others, that we may all fulfill the ultimate meaning of life.

This celebration of the Buddha's birth will bring together a diverse group of Buddhists from many rich traditions who share in the single purpose of celebrating the birth of Siddhartha Gautama who became enlightened as Sakyamuni

(continued on page 14)

DID YOU KNOW?

by Eiko Masuyama



EIKO MASUYAMA

Lord Abbot Kosho Ohtani, New Year's Greetings: "... I wholeheartedly hope that you will have good health throughout the coming year, that you will rejoice in

Amida's Compassion, work for the propagation of the Dharma, that you will support your own immediate goal of the construction of your own temple, and that you will demonstrate the special characteristics of the follower of the Nembutsu..."

Rimban Ryuei Masuoka, New Year's Greetings: "... Begun in November, construction of the new temple is finally underway. As with the birth of a baby, in about nine months the new temple will add its beauty to Los Angeles. In today's world, what we must do is to build a dojo in which followers of the Nembutsu can be shown their true selves. We seven [Rev S. Fujiwara, Rev J. Doami, Rev S. Inouye, Rev S. Hida, Rev K. Norimoto, Rev S. Sawada] ministers feel it our duty to propagate the teachings so that we can have something suitable to match the new temple..."

President Eiju Sasajima, New Year's Greetings: "... An epoch-making project is not something which moves along as decided on an agenda around a table. At times there will be miscalculations and misunderstandings. There will be times when the opinion of the younger members and the older members will clash. However, there should be no difference of opinion whatsoever that the realization of our goal stems from the desire to carry on the Dharma. It goes without saying that everyone, from Mr. Sasaki, chairman of the Building Committee, the Board of Directors, the ministers, through you, the members, wishes to see the completion of this project which we have brought so far along..."

Chairman of Building Committee Masami Sasaki, New Year's Greetings: "... For the past five years, we have been occupied with the problem of the new temple, decisions concerning it, and the actualization of these decisions... However, with the help of the Buddha and your understanding, in the fall of this year, in the middle of November, together with the completion of the temple, we will have our dedication service. On the other hand, it is my wish, as well as the wish of the Board of Directors, that we turn over the temple to the younger people following us with as few liabilities as possible..."

Guest Speaker Ho-onko Rev. Kakumin Fujinaga of BCA

Headquarters, January 11-12, 1969, Japanese Service at 1:30 on both days, Sunday School and English Adult Services at 9:30 and 11, on Sunday; otoki will be served after the afternoon service on both days.

Weddings

The following couple was united in matrimony:
Young H. Hahn and Mary Y. Yoshida

ABA Canned Food Drive by Kaz Shimizu, President, LA Betsuin ABA

As in the previous years, the ABA is again spearheading a canned food drive for the Betsuin Senior Citizens Home for their oseibo.

Again we are asking all organizations and individuals for their assistance by donating a can of fruits or some Japanese staple item. Receptacles will be located in the basement under the bulletin board.

Deadline for donations is set for December 28, 1968.

Since the year end is near, may I also take this opportunity to thank everyone for their continued support of our projects and wish all a Happy New Year!



ABA CABINET 1969

FRONT L-R: Mickey Nagamoto, Helen Takata, Sam Shirai, Kaz Shimizu, Rev Fujimura, Shig Sugimoto, Yosh Shibata, Tamiko Ono, Florence Yamaguchi **BACK:** Kats Nagamoto, Ed Yoshimoto, Yaeko Nakashima, Amy Miyakawa, Setsuko Iwata, Sanaye Yoshimoto, Woody Kobayashi, Yasuko Sugimoto, Shiz Shibata, Makino Morioka, Mits Sakaniwa, George Yamaguchi

Fujinkai Set Plans to Attend 1970 Buddhist Women's Confab in Kyoto and Expo '70 in Osaka

The L.A. Betsuin Fujinkai have now completed arrangements for members and their families to attend the coming
(continued on page12)

NISHI DHARMA CENTER SPRING 2019 (APRIL - JUNE) COURSES

The Dharma Center of the Los Angeles Hampa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple will be offering the following classes in General Buddhism and Jodo Shinshu Buddhism. The classes 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.

Reason to Live the Shin Buddhist Way

Monday, 6:30-8:00 PM

Rev. Koho Takata

May 6, 13, 20, June 17, 24 (5 week class: \$50)

There are many religions and Buddhist Schools in this world. What is a reason to live the Shin Buddhist way? This class will focus on how Shin Buddhist Teaching applies to our daily lives and how the teaching changes and enriches our lives by reading the words of Rennyo Shonin, the 8th Monshu, who teaches us how to live a life of Shinjin.

The Basic Teaching of Jodo Shinshu

Tuesday, 7:00-8:30 PM

Rev. Ryuta Furumoto

April 23, 30, May 14, 21, 28 (5 week class: \$50)

The basic teaching of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism will be presented. Important terms such as *shinjin*, *tariki* (other power), and *ojo* (birth in the Pure Land) will be presented. The class will also cover the life of Shinran Shonin, the history of Jodo Shinshu, and the introduction to the teaching of Seven Pure Land Masters.

Contemporary Issues and Jodo Shinshu Perspective (Discussion)

Wednesday, 7:00-8:30 PM

Rimban William Briones

April 3, 10, 17, 24, May 1 (5 week class: \$50)

Issues like same sex marriage, immigration, global warming were not an issue during Shinran Shonin's life, on the other hand there was war, sexism, and poverty during his time. What is our understanding of these contemporary issues living a life of Nembutsu? These five lectures will discuss current events and issues that effect our way of life and how Jodo Shinshu Buddhism influences our view point.

Buddhist History to Kamakura Period

Thursday, 7:00-8:30 PM

Rev. Masao Kodani

April 18, 25, May 2, 16, 23 (5 week class: \$50)

法座 『阿弥陀佛と御釈迦様、親鸞様と私たち』

(Class taught in Japanese)

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

Rev. Nobuo Miyaji

April 27, May 25, June 22 (3 week class: \$30)

The Unrecognized Depths of Shinran Shonin's Writings

Saturday, 10:00-11:30AM

Rev. Tetsuo Unno

April 13, 20, 27, May 11, 25 (5 week class: \$50)

The depths of Shinran Shonin's writings are not always easily recognizable. For example, the depth of such lines as, "The medicine of the Tathagata's Vow destroys the poisons for our wisdom and foolishness." The task of these lectures will be to bring out the incomparable depth of such lines. The lectures will be followed by Questions and Answers.

The course tuition is collected and no refund on missed classes. Please mail completed registration form with a check for the total payment (payable to: LAHHBT) or bring it to temple.

For more information: Phone: (213) 680-9130

Email: nishidharmacenter@gmail.com

Did You Know? - continued from page 11)

Buddhist Women's conference to be held April 17-19 in Kyoto and Expo '70 in Osaka.

The Fujinkai will organize two tour groups.

"A" Tour Group

This group will spend four weeks in Japan. The charter flight will depart LAX on April 6 and return May 5. The air fare per person will be \$355 round trip, Los Angeles, Tokyo and return. The fourteen day tour cost including all hotel accommodations, transfers, and all meals except during the conference will be approximately \$375.

"B" Tour Group

For the convenience of those who wish to extend their visit to Japan, this "B" tour group will be organized for departure aboard JAL, on the same day. The air fare will be \$584 and the cost of two week tour including the conference will be \$390. This "B" tour group will be a deluxe tour.

BETSUIN PHOTOS



Installed Affiliated Organization leaders



Ho-onko Service Ministers

Front l-r: Rev. Kenneth Fujimoto, Rimban Briones, Rev. Nobuo Haneda Back: Rev. Nakata, Rev. Seikan Fukuma, Rev. Takata



48th Annual Kouhaku Utagassen



BWA BEIJU

Hisako Mori (center) was recognized for BWA Beiju (88 years). She is flanked by Rimban Briones and Pam Tabata, BWA president. (Missing: Yoko Munekata)



Temple Clean-Up
Michael Obi (left) and Kyle Tomita scrubbing the kitchen.



Ozouni Preparations for New Year's Day



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 2018	13 Shozo Nagai
17 Kinichi Kondo	14 Kagako Miyamoto
20 George Ogawa	15 Shiro Iwai
22 Mariko Tozaki	16 Sachiko Karen
24 Sandra Sanae	Watanabe
Torigoe	18 Masae Kunisaki
26 Masami Yokoyama	20 Chiyoko Nakagama
29 Hirohisa Hiro Suzuki	

January 2019

December 2018	2 Haruye Masukawa
1 Ruby Satomi	2 Grace Sachiko
Nishimura	Honda
7 Mike Yoshikazu	6 Sam Kurachi
Tenno	12 Machiko Matsumura
8 Harry S. Torigoe	

2019 APPLIED JODO SHINSHU BUDDHIST STUDIES

**Instructor: Rev. Nakata,
Ph.D Candidate in Buddhist Studies**

These classes are opened to the public in combination with the Scouting program. There is no charge for the classes. The class runs from 11:30 am - 12:15 pm

- 2/3 Foundation of Buddhism
- 3/3 Sanskrit Buddhist History
- 3/10 Chinese Buddhist History
- 3/17 Tibetan Buddhist History
- 3/24 Pali Buddhist History
- 3/31 Japanese Buddhist History
- 4/7 Buddha in Sanskrit and Chinese
- 4/14 Dharma in Sanskrit and Chinese
- 4/21 Sangha in Sanskrit and Chinese
- 5/5 Nianfo/Nembutsu
- 5/10 Puja/Incense Burning
- 5/26 Buddhism as Psychology
- 6/2 Bodhi in Sanskrit and Chinese
- 6/9 Nirvana in Sanskrit and Chinese
- 6/30 Sukhavati in Sanskrit and Chinese
- 7/16-18 San Francisco Field Trip TBD
- 9/15 Tibetan Studies (1) Vajrayana Concepts
- 9/22 Tibetan Studies (2) Mandala
- 9/29 Buddhism in Pali Sutta (1)
- 10/6 Buddhism in Pali Sutta (2)
- 10/20 Apocrypha in Buddhism
- 10/27 Brahmanism and Confucianism in Mahayana
- 11/3 Jhana in Pali Sutta (3)
- 11/17 Daoism and Mahayana
- 11/24 Sukhavati in Pali

Homyo - continued from page 9)

sions and they obstruct us from seeing the Truth. This is the key point Shinran Shonin focused on to resolve the issues in his life. Jodo Shinshu teaching is for those foolish beings possessed blind passions and cannot be free from the self-centered mind.

Receiving a homyo and centering one's daily life in the dharma will become a precious opportunity for one to focus one's true nature on the Universal Truth of the dharma and fully live with deep meaning rooted in one's own homyo, which embodies the essence of the teaching of the Buddha. The dharma connection to one's daily life will change and make one's life meaningful and fulfilling and further empower one to pursue the path of the Buddha, dharma, and sangha.

What is the difference between Homyo and Kaimyo?

In Jodo Shinshu, the dharma name we receive is called a homyo and not a kaimyo which offered by other Buddhist schools. *Kai* means precepts. Therefore, receiving a Kaimyo means to seek enlightenment by upholding the precepts. We, Jodo Shinshu followers, however, are not mandated to observe the precepts of Buddhism as practiced by other Buddhist schools. Followers of Jodo Shinshu receive a homyo, which signifies living in the True Teaching by wholeheartedly entrusting the working of the Buddha, thereby abandoning self-practice that is a reflection of our self-centered nature.

Hanamatsuri - continued from page 10)

Buddha. Hanamatsuri Service, sponsored by the **Los Angeles Buddhist Temples Federation**, will be also held on **Sunday, April 7 at 1:00PM** with a guest speaker, Rev. Masao Kodani of BCA minister emeritus.

Betsuin Jiho

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

HATSUMAIRI INFANT PRESENTATION

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 19th** 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 5, 2019. (Form can be found on page 16)



**BON ODORI
EXERCISE CLASS**

BETSUIN LOTUS ROOM

1st & 3rd Sundays 8:30 am
2nd & 4th Tuesdays 6:30 pm

NISHI BOY SCOUT




pancake
breakfast



CELEBRATE MOTHERS' DAY
Sunday, May 13, 2018

7 AM - 10 AM

Donation: \$6⁰⁰
Betsuin Kaikan

SPRING OHIGAN SEMINAR

LIFE OF AWAKENING

Shinjin and Nembutsu

Saturday, March 16, 2019
9:00 am- 3:00 pm

GUEST SPEAKERS:

Rev. Ryuta Furumoto **Rev. Kory Quon**
Senshin Buddhist Temple *Venice Hongwanji*

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 9th

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



HULI HULI CHICKEN DINNER

Saturday, May 4, 2019
Nishi Hongwanji Kaikan
“Aloha Spirit” Happy Hour 3:00 pm
Dinner 4:00 - 7:00 pm

\$15 per plate
Pre-Sales Only

Deadline to order - April 21

Get an order form by email:
kylektomita@gmail.com

HATSUMAIRI

May 19, 2019

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 5 2019

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

**Email: info@nishihongwanji-la.org
FAX: 213-680-2210**

MARCH 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 Surf and Turf Fund Raiser Dinner
3 Family Service 10:00 am	4	5	6	7	8	9 <u>...Zen, Psychology, Literature, etc...</u> Rev. Tetsuo Unno 10:00-1130 am
10 Girl Scout Sunday Service 10:00 am Eitaikyo Monthly Memorial Service 1:00 pm	11 <u>Reason to Live the Shin buddhist Way</u> Rev. Koho Takata 6:30-8:00 pm	12	13	14	15	16 Spring Ohigan Seminar 10:00 am Go-Meinichi-ko 1:30 pm
17 Spring Ohigan Service 10:00 am	18 <u>Reason to Live the Shin buddhist Way</u> Rev. Koho Takata 6:30-8:00 pm	19	20	21	22	23 <u>...Zen, Psychology, Literature, etc...</u> Rev. Tetsuo Unno 10:00-1130 am
24 Family Service 10:00 am	25	26	27	28	29	30 <u>法座 『終活』 (In Jpn)</u> Rev. Nobuo Miyaji 10:00-11:30 am

APRIL 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3 Contemporary Issues & Jodo Shinshu Perspective Discussion Rimban William Briones 7:00-8:30 pm	4	5	6
7 Hanamatsuri Service 10:00 am Butsuren Hanamatsuri 1:00 pm	8	9	10 Contemporary Issues & Jodo Shinshu Perspective Discussion Rimban William Briones 7:00-8:30 pm	11	12	13 ...Shinran Shonin's Writings Rev. Tetsuo Unno 10:00-1130 am
14 Family Service 10:00 am Eitaikyo Monthly Memorial Service 1:00 pm	15	16 Go-Meinichi-ko 1:30 pm	17 Contemporary Issues & Jodo Shinshu Perspective Discussion Rimban William Briones 7:00-8:30 pm	18 Buddhist History to Kamakura Period Rev. Masao Kodani 7:00-8:30 pm	19	20 ...Shinran Shonin's Writings Rev. Tetsuo Unno 10:00-1130 am
21 Family Service 10:00 am	22	23 The Basic Teaching of Jodo Shinshu Rev. Ryuta Furumoto 7:00-8:30 pm	24 Contemporary Issues & Jodo Shinshu Perspective Discussion Rimban William Briones 7:00-8:30 pm	25 Buddhist History to Kamakura Period Rev. Masao Kodani 7:00-8:30 pm	26	27 法座『阿弥陀佛と御釈迦、親鸞様と私たち』(In Jpn) Rev. Nobuo Miyaji 10:00-11:30 am ...Shinran Shonin's Writings Rev. Tetsuo Unno 10:00-1130 am
28 Family Service 10:00 am	29	30 The Basic Teaching of Jodo Shinshu Rev. Ryuta Furumoto 7:00-8:30 pm				