

LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

No. 457

November-December 2019

jihō

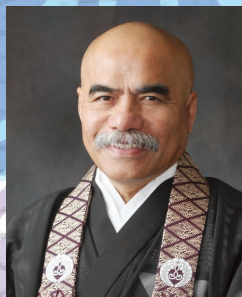
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LOS ANGELES HONPA HONGWANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE
FOUNDED 1905



RIMBAN'S MESSAGE

THOUGHTS ON 50 YEARS AT THE PRESENT LOCATION



RIMBAN
WILLIAM BRIONES

*We respectfully call
upon Tathagata Amida
to enter this Dojo,
As we joyfully scatter
flowers of welcome,
We respectfully call
upon Tathagata
Shakyamuni
to enter this Dojo,
As we joyfully scatter
flowers of welcome,
We respectfully call*

*upon Tathagata
of the ten directions to enter this Dojo,
As we joyfully scatter flowers of welcome.*

Five years ago the Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple embarked on the 50th Anniversary fundraising 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 and Vignes Street. The funds would go towards repairing, replacing and refurbishing 50 years of wear and tear on the Betsuin.

Those five years quickly passed, but we were able to complete many of the projects that we set out as our goal and then some. The restoration of our *naijin* (altar), air conditioning in our *kaikan*, replaced heating/ventilation/air

condition in all upstairs and downstairs rooms and several other much needed repairs around our temple were some the projects that were completed.

To culminate the five years of fundraising and the completion of refurbishing the *naijin*, and other projects, the 50th Anniversary Committee planned two days of special services and a banquet. We were especially honored by **Gomonshu Kojun Ohtani** attending our services and banquet.

It was truly the efforts of so many people that made our 50th celebration such a wonderful event. I would like to express my sincerest appreciation gratitude to all those who devoted so much of their time and effort into making this celebration a success. Of course, to all those who contributed to the 50 Anniversary fundraiser. It is truly heartwarming that so many of our members, friends and friends of our community came together to make this event so meaningful.

As I reflect upon the weeks and days leading to the 50th Anniversary events as well as the celebration itself, there are so many wonderful memories that filled my heart.

One such memorable moment was during the

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50th Anniversary at Current Temple Site
Group photo including His Eminence Monshu Kojun Ohtani
Photo courtesy of Toyo Miyatake Studios (see article on page 3 and additional photos on pages 10-12)

BUDDHA'S WISH

by Rev. Koho Takata



REV. KOHO TAKATA

On September 7th & 8th, 2019, long awaited Commemoration Service for the 50th Anniversary of the Current Temple Site was officiated by the **Kojun Ohtani Gomonshu-sama**, the 25th resident minister of the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha in Kyoto, Japan. Also the related events were observed by many dedicated members. I was truly grateful

to receive the teaching from Gomonshu-sama who is a spiritual leader and a direct descendent of Shinran Shonin, founder of our school.

At the Opening Ceremony of the Dharma Center, Gomonshu-sama delivered his message and quoted Shinran Shonin's saying. It was *"The true essence of the Pure Land way is the consummation of Mahayana Buddhism."* I understand that it signifies the teaching and working of Amida Buddha's Primal Vow never change and are universal for anyone without regard to time and place.

The true essence of the Pure Land way is the selected Primal Vow and the selected Primal Vow is the true teaching which was clarified by Shinran Shonin. Gomonshu-sama taught us how those who walk the path of the Pure Land way and hear the selected Primal Vow should live in this defiled world.

Shinran Shonin sent many letters to his followers and he wrote that we are always drunk with ignorance of *sake* in our daily lives in one of his letters. We are always drunk with the mind of greed – becoming greedy for what is convenient for us. We are drunk with the mind of anger – upset with what is inconvenient for us. We are drunk with the mind of ignorance – we are unaware of our self-centered nature. Shinran Shonin said we are always drunk with the mind of greed, anger, and ignorance and we do not realize this drunkenness and still tend to pretend to be a smart and good person. Shinran Shonin added that there is a way to "cool off" from the drunkenness with ignorance of *sake*. It is the Buddha-Dharma. By hearing the true mind and heart of Amida Buddha in our daily lives we will be able to reflect upon our true nature, acknowledge our ignorant and selfish nature, and follow the Nembutsu way of life by lighting up Amida Buddha's Wisdom to our egoism.

Gomonshu-sama provided the following guidance in his message titled "A Way of Living as a Nembutsu Follower." *"By listening to the Primal Vow and how it was established by Amida Tathagata, we are enabled to become conscious*

of our own ignorance and self-oriented inclinations, and through such awareness, we naturally become gentle in word and deed in our efforts of minimizing our egocentric way of thinking."

Gomonshu-sama also provides the following guidance in his message entitled "Our Pledge." *"In truly appreciating the Buddha's compassionate aspiration directed to each one of us, we naturally become enabled to aspire to act and speak in accordance with the Buddha's wish and feel joy and sadness of others as our own."*

The manifestation of the Buddha's Primal Vow or Compassionate Aspiration is reaching to me in the form of the Name with Boundless Wisdom and Compassion. By single-mindedly hearing the cause and effect of the establishment of the Primal Vow of Amida Buddha and entrusting myself to the constant working of "Namo Amida Butsu," I am enabled to realize my small minded self-centered nature that I am a person who is always imperfect and incapable, always led by my ignorance to the truth, and yet I had been already encompassed by the perfection of the true reality, *Namo Amida Butsu*, as I am. I understand that Shinran Shonin truly appreciated the Primal Vow which enabled him to realize his true nature and express his deep appreciation by reciting "Namo Amida Butsu" from his profound reflection and gratitude.

Let us keep hearing the Amida Buddha's Primal Vow and continue to live in accordance with the teaching as Nembutsu followers.

*When people are not in correspondence
with the Primal Vow,*

*Various conditions arise to trouble
and confuse them.*

*To lose sight of shinjin in confusion
Is to "lose right-mindedness."*

(CWS P.382, #81, Hymns of the Pure Land Masters)

SAVE THE DATE

JANUARY 2020

- 1 SHUSHO-E
NEW YEAR'S DAY SERVICE
10:00 AM.
- 5 5th KOHAKU UTAGASSEN

50TH ANNIVERSARY MESSAGE

by Ernest Hida

After five years of planning and preparations, the celebration of the **50th Anniversary of the Current Temple Site** on September 7th and 8th.

On September 7th, the *Opening Ceremony of the Dharma Center* was held with **Go-Monshu-sama Kojun Ohtani** participating and gave his special message, "*A Way of Living as a Nembutsu Follower.*" Later, dharma messages based on the Go-Monshu-sama's message were given by Rimban William Briones, Rev. Koho Takata, Rev. Ryuta Furumoto, and Rev. Masao Kodani. The Dharma Center began five years ago as a pilot program to provide a Buddhist educational center at the Los Angeles Betsuin. Now it is an official on-going program which is open to anyone interested in learning the Buddha dharma.

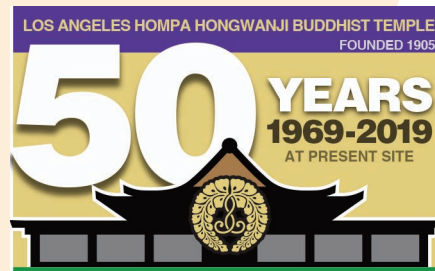
Later, that evening, the 50th Commemoration Banquet was held at the Quiet Cannon Restaurant with approximately 460 members from the Los Angeles Betsuin and other Southern District temples. The Go-Monshu-sama gave his greetings to everyone. Later, a video was shown of the 50th Anniversary Projects.

The next day on September 8th, the highlight of the celebration was the *50th Anniversary Commemoration Service* with the Go-Monshu-sama Kojun Ohtani officiating this auspicious service. It began with a group photo (which you can order at the temple office) with the Go-Monshu-sama and all attendees of the service. Later, the *chigo* procession began, lead by the children in *chigo* costumes, followed by the chairpersons of the Betsuin's Affiliated Organizations, participating ministers, temple president Bessie Tanaka, BCA president Richard Stambul, Betsuin *komons*, and the Go-Monshu-sama with the Governor General Bishop Keiichi Abe and BCA Bishop Kodo Umezu. The Go-Monshu-sama entered the *hondo* with the sound of sacred court music played by the Kinnara Gagaku group from Senshin Buddhist Temple.

It was an honor to have this special commemoration service officiated by the Go-Monshu-sama. This was a unique and extraordinary service with precise ceremonial procedures required when the Go-Monshu-sama officiates a service. Participating in this service were Rimban William Briones, Rev. Koho Takata; former Rimbans Rev. Seikan Fukuma, Rev. George Matsubayashi, Rev. Hiroshi Abiko, Rev. Nobuo Miyaji; Rev. Sala Sekiya, Bishop Keiichi Abe and Bishop Kodo Umezu.

In the afternoon, the Go-Monshu-sama performed the *Kikyoshiki Ceremony* for members to receive their Buddhist name.

We express our sincere gratitude to everyone who attended and participated in the 50th Anniversary Celebration. Everyone's attendance and participation made it a very special celebration and it conveyed a warm welcome to the Go-Monshu-sama.



We especially express our deepest gratitude to all the volunteers who helped out at all celebration events and programs. Without their help, the events and programs would not have gone smoothly and successfully.

With deep gratitude, I sincerely express my heartfelt thank you to our ministers and committee members for their dedication, support and perseverance for the past five years with the planning and preparation for this auspicious celebration, the establishment of the Dharma Center and the completion of various projects to improve and maintain the temple for the future generations. The main project was the renovation of the *onaijin*/altar and in addition, for comfort, the renovation of the air conditioning system. They all worked so hard and spent many hours meeting, planning, preparing and completing their responsibilities. Thank you so much.

Thank you to all ministers and members, past and present, who were a part of the legacy of this temple. *Okagesama* for all of your contributions, support and active involvement in the temple that made it possible to reach this historic milestone. We look forward to a bright future with all of your support and dedication.

Thank you very much.

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

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

November 10 @ 12:00 pm

All Betsuin members should attend to cast their votes. Bring your current membership card as validation of membership.

EITAIKYO (SANGHA MEMORIAL) SERVICE

by Rev. Koho Takata

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

Saturday, November 16 at 1:30pm

English Speaker: Rimban William Briones

Japanese Speaker: Rev. Koho Takata

Sunday, November 17 at 10:00am

Guest Speaker: Rev. Nobuo Miyaji
(minister emeritus)

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

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

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

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

BODHI DAY (ENLIGHTENMENT SERVICE)

by Rev. Koho Takata

The members of Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple and their families are invited to attend the annual Bodhi Day Service, which is the observance of Buddha's Enlightened Day to be held on Sunday, December 8, 2019.

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

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

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

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

DID YOU KNOW?

by Eiko Masuyama



“The New Temple”

March 10, 1969 Betsuin JIHO

The dedication service for our new temple will be held on the fifteenth and sixteenth of November of this year. For this reason, we must immediately prepare the inside of the temple and for this we need donations.

The following is the breakdown of the financial situation to date:

Lot	\$400,000
Temple	\$822,000
Architectural drawings	\$ 70,000



Rendition of original architectural drawing of 1969 temple, drawn to scale, in detail, by Glen Tao, used on 2019 Obon t-shirt and 50th Anniversary t-shirt.

At present, the total amount of pledges is \$1,020,000. None of this is to be spent on furnishings and the like. An amount estimated at some two hundred thousand dollars will be needed for furnishings for such as the following: altar, office, guest room, meeting rooms, organizational offices, Sunday Dharma School classrooms, kitchen furnishings, etc.

This notice is to inform you of the need for special donations (aside from donations and pledges to the Building Fund), and to inform you of those who have already donated.

Donors to the altar fund: Betsuin Fujinkai \$20,000; Betsuin ABA \$1,000; Masami Sasaki \$2,000; \$1,000 from Eijiu Sasajima, Keiichiro Sayano, Minoru Muranaka, Masashi Kawaguchi, Akiyo Nagayama, Waichi Yoshimura; Donors to the pew fund (\$250 per pew, 35 pews needed)

We should like to express our thanks to the following groups for donating to the Building Fund, also: Yamanaka

Daibutsu Do (Osaka) \$1 million yen in goods; Izutsu Hoi-ten (Kyoto) \$331,600 yen in goods; and Miyoko Komori & students \$400.

* * * * *

“Altar Decorations”

**by Rev. Russell Hamada,
March 1, 1989, JIHO**

As prescribed by Hompa Hongwanji tradition, the arrangement of altar decorations periodically change depending upon circumstance and occasion. It would be a great mistake to believe that politics and/or finances determine how we adorn our altar.

As it is mentioned throughout the sutras, including the Larger Sutra of Eternal Life (*Daimuryojukyo*), the three major elements of Light (candles), Flowers and Incense are to be utilized as adornments for all objects of reverence.

Traditionally, the most common arrangement of the three elements is called *Mitsugusoku* (Three-Element-Arrangement). Here, as one faces the altar, a candle is placed to the right representing the world of Enlightenment (*Nirvana*) and to the left a floral arrangement representing the world of Birth and Death (*Samsara*). In the center is found an incense burner.

Incense not only permeates the atmosphere with a religious hue, but also symbolizes the oneness of birth and death. When incense is lit, it seemingly comes to life as a room is filled with smoke and fragrance, however it is also the beginning of its own death as it burns to ashes. For this reason, the incense burner is placed in the center symbolizing the Oneness of the ever-changing world of Samsara and the eternal unchanging world of Nirvana. This corresponds to Oneness as expressed in the Name, Namoamidabutsu. Namo representing “me” (the world of Samsara) and Amida Buddha (the world of Truth or Nirvana).

On more formal occasions, the three elements are arranged in *Gogusoku* (Five-Element-Arrangement), which consists of two floral arrangements, two candlesticks and one in-cense burner. Here, the floral arrangements are placed on the outside, with the two candle stands on the inside and the incense burner in the center. The significance of the basic three elements is the same as with Mitsugusoku.

According to guidelines established by Hompa Hongwanji in Kyoto, the type of service being held dictates the

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NISHI BOY SCOUT TROOP 738 CELEBRATES 50 YEARS

by Vicki Kassa

On August 18, 2019 close to 200 people gathered at the Nishi Hongwanji Buddhist Temple Kaikan to celebrate 50 years of scouting with Troop #738. The troop was established once the temple moved to the present location and was comprised of six charter scouts. Scout Master Sayano and some of the scouts migrated from the Troop at Koyasan Temple. From this humble beginning the troop has impacted almost 300 scouts and produced 106 Eagle Scouts. The troop received letters of commendation from Governor Newsome, Mayor Garcetti, Senator Feinstein, Los Angeles County and Los Angeles City officials.

There have been seven Scout Masters in the history of the troop. They were presented with plaques to recognize the

leadership they have provided for the Scouts. **Shoichi Sayano** was the first Scout Master of Troop 738. He was our first speaker. We heard from each, in the order of their time as Scout Master; **Kenji Hatakeyama, Richard Odagawa, Kenny Imazumi, Bill Sato, Alan Hatakeyama** and the current Scout Master **Matt Chavez**.

In addition former scout **Derek Escano**, current Eagle Scouts **Kotaro Chavez** and **Matthew Mayemura**, as well as current Senior Patrol Leader **Justin Chu** spoke to our guests. It was wonderful to hear from our past, present and future community leaders.

The delicious dinner was provided by Rutts Hawaiian Café.



Past and current members and leaders of the Nishi Boy Scout Troop 738



Scout Masters

I-r: Alan Hatakeyama, Kenny Imazumi, Kenji Hatakeyama, Shoichi Sayano, Richard Odagawa, Bill Sato, and Matt Chavez

2019 PADMA AWARD SCOUT TRIP

by Eileen Nozaki, Nishi Girl Scout Troop Leader

In late July, Rev. Kaz Nakata led a small contingent of Scouts on his fifth annual Padma/Sangha road trip to the San Francisco bay area. The three-day trip is a culmination, following a year's worth of Buddhist teachings, per the Girl Scout's Padma and Scouts BCA's Sangha pin requirements.

This year three Cadette Girl Scouts - Kiyomi Banta, Tatsumi Capela, and Airi Montoya - were the fortunate Scouts to enjoy the religious and cultural sights in the Bay area. Girl Scout co-leader Eileen Nozaki and Girl Scout graduate Mia Forsline rounded out the single carload of participants.

Over the next few issues, as space allows, each of the Scouts' written memories will appear.

By Kiyomi Banta:

I had so much fun on my first Padma trip to Northern California with Rev. Kaz, Ms. Eileen, Ms. Eileen's daughter Mia, and my fellow Padma students. We woke up early on Monday to go drive to San Francisco in Rev. Kaz's very comfortable van together. We got to explore Fisherman's Wharf and all of the tourist attractions we were interested in. We stayed in a beautiful Buddhist Temple in Berkeley where we slept for two nights, where we had access to a kitchen and showers.

We went on a hike in Muir Woods and we got to explore Japan Town and visit the San Francisco Buddhist Temple where the very first Buddhist Temple was built in California. My absolute favorite part of the trip was waking up from my nap in the car to see that we were driving on the Golden Gate Bridge but everybody else was still sleeping in the car, and instead of waking them up, I started taking photos of them asleep with the bridge out the window and they could not believe that they slept through that.

We did do a lot of sightseeing and adventuring all the time that I couldn't blame how we all took a nap any time we could. When I was away from my family for three days and two nights, I learned even more independent life skills in a whole different city like how to spend my money wisely, stick together, stay in contact, be aware of my surroundings, and even how to make my own stir fry for the first time. After we completed our adventuring in San Francisco and Berkeley, we got to attend one of San Jose Buddhist Temple's morning services for the preschool kids. It reminded us about when we were their age at Nishi Center! We all had such a wonderful time learning exploring!

2019 NISHI YOUTH TOUR OF JAPAN PART 2

by Eileen Nozaki, Nishi Girl Scout Troop Leader

This is a continuation of article printed in the September-October issue of the Betsuin Jiho. The article is about the Betsuin's youth tour including the dharma school and the Nishi Boy and Girl Scout members and their families led by Rev. Kazuaki Nakata.

That first week, each night we fell into bed tired from full days. In that compressed time, we had become seasoned tourists in a very orderly society. Despite the language barrier, we were reminded to be orderly by the continuous barrage of recorded messages, at every doorway and road crossing. We quickly learned to walk to the left, to maximize movement in train stations and on the sidewalks, shared with bikes. Streets were mostly trash-free, but trash can free as well; we became accustomed to bagging our own trash and tossing it at the end of day. Loud talking is discouraged and we learned by experience. On our first night on the streets, while our group talked and laughed, we were shushed by a passerby.

Our second and final week's itinerary was slower paced, away from the bustle of Tokyo and Kyoto. We began our week with a leisurely Shinkansen train ride, with views of lush, deep green landscapes, to Atami, a bayside resort with natural *onsen*, and spent a welcomed day-and-a-half of free time. As a group, we celebrated Fathers' Day, taking time to market and barbeque a home cooked meal, while watching the fireworks over Atami Bay.

Rested and revived, we boarded another Shinkansen, traveling to the west side of Honshu, to Hiroshima. We toured the recently revamped Peace Museum, with exhibits now concentrating on personalized accounts of WWII's nuclear bombing. As Americans with varying backgrounds we walked away with just as varying impressions. Those of us with Hiroshima ancestry came away with a deeper understanding, and an appreciation for the Hiroshima people who continue to propagate the warnings to help prevent a repeat of the tragic events.

Everywhere we were amazed at the inexpensive price for quality food. To supplement our diet of convenience foods, we sought the local fare in each city. In Hiroshima we encountered the Japanese-dense, multi-storied restaurant buildings, and made a random choice from amongst six floors of *okonomiyaki* grills. We treated ourselves to the city's famous *teppan*-grilled egg pancake, layered with mounds of noodles, green onion and fresh

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BWA 2019 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT ESSAY BY KAYLEE TAKATA

In the September-October issue of the Betsuin Jiho, it was announced that Kotaro Chavez and Kaylee Takata were the recipients of the 2019 BWA Scholarships. Kotaro's essay was published in that issue. Below is Kaylee's essay answering the question: "What Jodo Shinshu means to me and how does it apply to my daily life?"

Has anyone ever told you how much group projects suck? Teachers randomly assign you to classmates you've never talked before, thinking that somehow you are going to magically get along and do well on the assignment. Depending who's in your group, you could end up with someone who's motivated or someone who thinks other people are going to get their work done for them.

I remember the second my teacher announced a group project in a class I had no close friends with, my stomach felt as if it was flipping inside out. I dreaded having to work with people who I wasn't too familiar with because what they will do is unpredictable. Walking into the classroom, I nervously look up to see the list of names displayed on the board. The people I was with were not the best nor the worst people. As I joined to meet them, I noticed that one was present looking around the classroom for me while the other was not present. Jannine, the person who was present the first day of our project seemed reliable but Kyle the other student was often absent. The two of us exchanged numbers saying we will keep in contact with each other during the duration of the project.

As time progressed, I stopped contacting my group mates as I attempted to finish the project. Internally I was fearful of the possibility of failing especially since this was the final project of the semester. At times, I would complain to my friends about how uncooperative my teammates

were and how I had to take all the responsibilities for it.

However, as I am reminded by the everyday teaching of Jodo Shinshu, we all have a self-centered nature. My mind was filled with trying to complete my project myself and getting frustrated over how the others were taking credit for my work when I never relied on them to begin with. The teachings which we are taught emphasize the importance of accepting people regardless of their flaws and differences.

Throughout the project, I had realized the cold treatment I had towards the people around me, only focusing on myself. Naturally, every person is filled with their own ego, continuously thinking for themselves. Moreover, it is because Amida Buddha appreciates us as the people we are, we should learn to respect others.

After confronting to my group members about the approach we should take towards this assignment, we settled on splitting the work evenly. At first, I was partly worried about trusting the work to my group members but initiating a conversation with them, we were able to successfully finish the project on time.



**TAI CHI
QIGONG**

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FRIDAYS @ 10 - 11 am
LA BETSUIN KAIKAN

\$5.00 per class

Especially geared towards
older individuals to promote
fitness, balance, prevent falls,
etc:

**SUPPORTED BY A
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BETSUIN PHOTOS



Preceding and following the BWA World Convention, several temples from various areas in Japan visited the LA Betsuin. The Betsuin BWA packed nearly 300 gift bags to present to the visitors. Pictured in the foreground is Gail Matsuura.



Ryukoku students escorted by Rev. Hiroaki Kadono (Betsuin 1988-91) come to the Betsuin for a day of study.



Annually during the Eshinni-Kakushinni Memorial Service, the BWA presents a donation to the youth organizations at the Betsuin. I-r: Rimban Briones, Bradley Tashiro (Jr YBA), Airi Montoya (Sangha Teens), and Pam Tabata (BWA president)



Each year, the BWA sponsors a Flu Clinic for anyone who wishes to get innoculated with the flu vaccine. Pam Tabata is getting her "shot."



Three LA Betsuin Rimban
Pictured are the three most current Rimban. I-r: Rev. George Matsubayashi (1999-2009), Rev. William Briones (2013-present), and Rev. Hiroshi Abiko (2009-2013)



The ministers above served as guest speakers at the specials services held at the Betsuin. I-r: Rev. Yugo Fujita (Salinas), Rev. Doei Fujii (Southern Alameda County), and Rev. Harry Bridge (Oakland)



Rev. Kazuaki Nakata was assigned to the Fresno Betsuin as of August 1st. Many of the LA Betsuin sangha gathered to express their gratitude for his deep involvement with all the age groups, especially the youth. Rev. Nakata came to the Betsuin in 2012.



A new addition to the Betsuin's organ player team: Thomas Mochizuki



In preparation for the arrival of the Gomonshu, Nobuko Sayano saw to it that the "Gomonshu's Room" was spick and span.

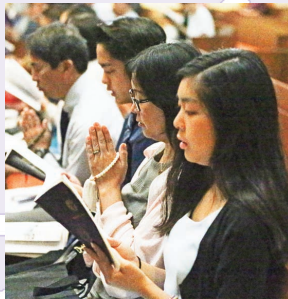
50TH ANNIVERSARY AT THE CURRENT SITE COMMEMORATION PHOTOS



Lonny Quon practices holding the parasol to shade Rev. Koho Takata who is standing in for the Gomonsu



Dharma Center Opening Service Chairperson, Ernest Hida — He also served as the General Chairman of the 50th Anniversary Committee



Dharma Center Opening Youth



Dharma Center Opening — Ministers



Bishop Kodo Umezu in the onajin



Dharma Center Opening — BWA



l-r: Yoshinori Akutagawa served as MC for the banquet, Rimban William Briones, Rev. Koho Takata, and Bessie Tanaka, temple president.



Nearly 500 were attendance at the banquet from the various Betsuin affiliated organizations and Southern District temples



Left photo l-r: Rev. & Mrs. Abiko, Rev. & Mrs. Fukuma, Rev. & Mrs. Miyaji, and Mrs. Takata



Right photo: Adult Buddhist Association (ABA)

50TH ANNIVERSARY AT THE CURRENT SITE COMMEMORATION PHOTOS



Hollywood Buddhist Church



Buddhist Women's Association (BWA)



Nishi Boy Scout Parents



Jr. Young Buddhist Association (Jr YBA)



Senshin's Kinnara Gagaku musicians provided traditional court music.



Alan Miyatake of Toyo Miyatake Studios in a "cherry picker" to enable him to take the large group photo (see page 2).



Chigo Children



Nishi Boy Scout color guard leading the procession followed by chigo children, ministers, and dignitaries.

50TH ANNIVERSARY AT THE CURRENT SITE COMMEMORATION PHOTOS



Rimban William Briones and Rev. Sala Sekiya



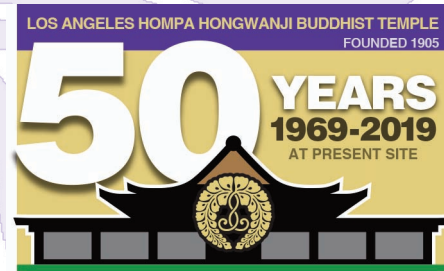
Rev. Hiroshi Abiko and Rev. Nobuo Miyaji



Rev. Seikan Fukuma and Rev. George Matsubayashi



*Komon - Former Temple Presidents
l-r: Kenji Hatakeyama, Gary Kawaguchi, Fuji Yamamoto, and Shoichi Sayano*



Above two photos: Participants anxiously awaiting receiving a Buddhist name from Gomonshu Kojun Ohtani at the Kikyōshiki Ceremony



Items participants received during the Kikyōshiki ceremony

Rimban - continued from page 1)

Commemoration Service, where Gomonsu-sama was the officiant. I, along with Rev. Sala Sekiya, from the Gardena Buddhist Church with the former Rimban of the Los Angeles Betsuin, had processed into the *naijin*, followed by Gomonsu-sama. After Sekiya Sensei and I took our proper position. We lead with the chanting of *Sambujo*.

Sambujo is literally translated as "The Three Respectful Invitations".

The first verse:

*"We respectfully call upon Tathagata Amida
to enter this Dojo
As we joyfully scatter flowers of welcome"*

The chant continues welcoming Shakyamuni Buddha as well as the Buddhas of the Ten Quarters.

Sambujo is a short introductory piece, used at the beginning of many Jodo Shin Buddhist services. The verse was written almost 1300 years ago by Shan-tao (Jpn. Zendo), the fifth Patriarch of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism. It is taken from the *Hojisan*, a commentary on the sutra, *Amidakyo*.

Sambujo is metaphor, a story, that calls and welcomes Amida, Shakyamuni and the Buddhas of the Ten Directions to this dojo... literally "the place where Dharma is cultivated." *Sambujo* awakens us to the truth of interdependency and causes and conditions. To awaken with gratitude and appreciation for all those causes and conditions that enable me to be who, what and where I am.

As we chanted *Sambujo*, in front of the newly refurbished *Gohonzon* (Statue of Amida Buddha) the very same statue that was purchased some 50 years ago, our voices reverberated with joy, knowing that the lives of all those past members and ministers are still very much part of our Betsuin and are continuing to influence our lives, through their thoughts, words and deeds.

As we continued to chant, I was not only overwhelmed with appreciation and gratitude for our past members but I was moved to tears knowing how our present members worked so hard and sacrificed so much of their time and energy as well as financially to make our newly refurbished *naijin* a reality.

Finally, I realized how rare it was for me, Bill Briones, a Mexican/Filipino-American, born and raised Catholic, 354 miles from the Betsuin, how rare it was for me to be there at that very moment. I realized how truly fortunate I was to be a part of this precious moment.

It's these moments of thankfulness and appreciation that open our hearts to joy, fill us with peace, and connect us

to those around us. For it is within this realization of the past and present with this life now, that we can pass the teaching of *nembutsu* on to future generations.

As we reflect upon the Betsuin's 50th Anniversary celebration, let us truly reflect on the countless causes and conditions that enabled us to be who we are. As we become more aware of the inconceivable causes and conditions of our beautiful temple and the refurbishing our *hondo* and the many projects that were completed, we are able to inwardly realize the wisdom and compassion of Amida Buddha and outwardly live with gratitude for the life made possible for us not only by the pioneers of the past 114 years but to many of our current members and friends. It is the responsibility of this generation to keep the light of Buddha-Dharma shining not only for ourselves but for the next generation and for generations yet to come.

Namoamida Butsu



BETSUIN VEHICLE DONATION



HAROLD'S CAR DONATION SERVICE

***Donate any vehicle:
car, truck, motorcycle, or boat***

The vehicle need not be operational.

***Funds received will go to the Betsuin general
fund and donors can get full amount credit
towards income tax.***

Contact the Betsuin office: 213-680-9130

(Did You Know? - continued from page 5)

arrangement to be utilized. For example, red candles are to be used on Shinran Shonin's birthday and Mitsugusoku on Ohigan. At a Betsuin, we are bound to rules and regulations that do not affect smaller independent temples.

A Betsuin is considered to be a direct branch of the mother temple in Kyoto (*Honzan*). Technically, the head minister of a Betsuin is the Gomon-shu, but since he cannot be physically present to care for the day to day activities, his duties are performed by the Rimban (Guardian of the Bell). The Rimban is a representative of the Gomonshu and shall serve in his place.

Therefore, the altar arrangements utilized by our Betsuin have previously been determined by Honzan in Kyoto, and it is our responsibility to conform when possible.

* * * * *

**“Church Election”
SANGHA,
Los Angeles YBA
Newsletter,
February 9, 1947**

Shigemi Aratani was re-elected president of the Los Angeles Hongwanji Buddhist Church at a special election meeting, Jan... His cabinet, all incumbents, are Masuo Sakamoto vice president; Noboru Ishitani, secretary; Leo Sugani, treasurer; and Frank Kakita, auditor.

“Jun Okimoto”

Y.B.A. member, Jun Okimoto is the newly-elected president of the Manza-Knights. He is also the vice chairman of the Inter-Club Council.

“Buddhist Church”

Thirty six Buddhist churches are now serving members of this faith in the U.S. according to figures recently released by the headquarters of the Buddhist Churches of America.

Five new churches have been organized in many communities since the war. They are Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland,

Spokane, and Ontario.

New York was the only city in the East to have a Buddhist church before the war.

“L.A. Nishi Hongwanji Sunday School”

Re-organization of post-war L.A. Nishi Hongwanji Sunday School officially formed on January, 1947 with 7 teachers present: Rosie Sasajima Nakao (daughter of Eijiu Sasajima, temple president, and mother of Glen Nakao and Noreen Yasukochi), Ichiya Tsuchiyama-Nagae, Elso Ito Kanagawa (mother of Celia Huey), Kimiko Yamasaki, Yutaka Shinohara (father of Bruce Shinohara and Penny Nishimura), Masaye Masuyama Shigemura, Eizo Masuyama (father of Eiji Masuyama) and advisors, Rimban J. Kow (father of Kuni Kow Odama) and Rev. G. Yamamoto.

* * * * *

Thank you to Alan Miyatake of Toyo

Miyatake Photographic Studios for 60 plus, 5 x 7 black and white photo donations of Monshu Koshin Ohtani and Lady Yoshiko's 1951 southern California tour; thank you to May Nii Soeda/Ron Soeda of Las Vegas for their donations of books and photos to the Nishi archives; Yoshiko Yamamoto of Monterey Park for booklet and service programs from] 1969 dedication services.



Fall, 1947, the first official post-war picture of the L.A. Nishi Hongwanji Sunday School Teachers. First row (seated): Grace Harada, Kiyoshi Yamada, Rev. G. Yamamoto, Eizo Masuyama, Elso Ito Kanagawa; Second row: Tom Harada, ?, Clara Yoshimi Hara, Michiko Mohri, ?, ?, ?, Masako Kohno Shingu, Ichiya Tsuchiyama Nagae; Third: ?, ?, ?, ?, Tamiko Kosakura Sakimoto, Masaye Masuyama Shigemura, ? [If you can identify any of the unidentified teachers, please contact temple office and leave message for Eiko Masuyama]



(Youth Tour 2- continued from page 7)

local oysters.

The next morning we ferried to Miyajima Island, with a view of the iconic, large red, *torii* gate. Some in our group climbed the calf-breaking steps to the top outlying shrines of the Itsukushima Shinto grounds. Others wandered the grounds alongside the freely roaming, sacred reindeer.

By this second week we lemmings had matured to tackle the subway system in separate groups. Thank goodness for Google maps. We made our way to personalized destinations, many with specific shopping requirements – used *yukata*, Japanese character t-shirts, tea ceremony instruments. Others satisfied their curiosity for unique stores found in travel guides, including a petting café with live hedgehogs and owls! Each group managed to find the trains to their destination, be it high-end Ginza, modern Shibuya, fashionable Shizuoka, or youth-oriented Harajuku. Four families spent a day and 10,000 steps at port-themed Disney Sea. Despite our distance from one another, everyone kept in close touch, sharing treasured finds on LINE, the popular Japanese messaging app with built-in translator.

From the conversations on the plane ride home and in our messaging group, our troopers agreed the "*Nishi Youth Trip to Japan*" was a rousing, yet tiring success. We had ample opportunities to get to know one another at a deeper level, housed in such close quarters. We'll each incorporate our experiences and insights of Japan into our

lives. Everyone would agree on the crucial efforts of Rev. Kaz and Mari. Their roles were to be planning facilitator and interpreter, but in the end, our huge group pressured them to take on tour guide responsibilities as well. Thank you for shouldering the stress! And to our tour travelers, thank you for your accommodating adaptability. Where's our next destination?



REUNION 2020

PLAYERS, COACHES, REFS, & FAMILY...

SAVE THE DATE!

Saturday, January 18, 2020

at Nishi Hongwanji Buddhist Temple

for more information contact: reunion2020.wudios.com

The Wanji/Wanjettes 2020 Reunion Committee cordially invites all present and former Wanjis and Wanjettes with their families and friends to join in a night of food, fun, and friendship.

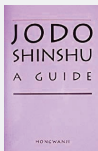
Casual dining begins at 4:30 p.m. Program events includes special speakers familiar to all, a "can you fit in your old uniform contest", photobooth, and lots of conversation, smooth music and plenty of old memories rekindled.

Please join us on Saturday, January 18, 2020 at Nishi Hompa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple (in the kaikan) from 4:00 to 9:00 p.m. The cost is \$25 per person with proceeds benefiting Nishi Hompa Hongwanji and the Wanji/Wanjettes. Deadline to join the guest list is December 15, 2019.

For more information and to join the guest list, please email:

wanji.wanjettes2020reunion@gmail.com

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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*

July, 2019

6 Merle Katsuko Suwa	26 Hitoshi Kakimoto
13 Masako Kubo	29 Mieko Eto
18 Linda Kawaguchi	30 Fumiko Nakagawa
Roehm	31 Chiyeko Hamada
	31 Hisako Nomura

23 Haruo H. Sakino
24 Shigeko Sugata
24 Mitsuru Hamai
24 Takayeko Fujita
27 Misato Nakamori

September, 2019

2 Nobuyuki Kashiwabara
4 Dean Hojo
Matsubayashi
7 Lucy Chiye Matsuura

August, 2019

16 Roy Haruo Nagata

ARE YOU A TEMPLE MEMBER?

Rev. Mas Kodani says that “*A member of the temple is someone who comes to it, who plugs in to it — to be energized by its life and contributes to that life energy.*”

Temple membership provides stability and health of the temple. It helps to provide the temple with its ministers, the operations, and maintenance of the facilities.

At the LA Betsuin, membership for a single adult is \$250 per year. Breaking it down, it’s less than \$21 per month. Breaking it down even more — 68¢ per day.

Another factor of the \$250 membership is that \$143 of it goes to BCA to support the programs.

The year 2020 is just around the corner. Be a member and contribute to and become a vital part of the “life energy.”

Check with the temple office.



49th ANNUAL KOHAKU UTAGASSEN

SUNDAY, JANUARY 5, 2020
@ 1:00 PM

NISHI HONGWANJI
BUDDHIST TEMPLE

TICKETS: \$20 (donation)

2020 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Valid from January 1 through December 31, 2020

\$250 FOR EACH ADULT FAMILY MEMBER

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

Payments may be made in full or by installments
throughout the year of 2020

Betsuin Jiho

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