

LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

jihō

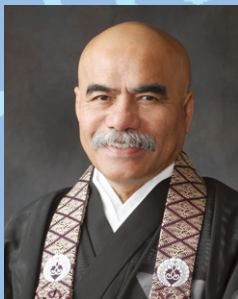
WWW

No. 474

September - October 2022

RIMBAN'S MESSAGE

THOUGHTS ON FALLING INTO HELL



**Rimban William
Briones**

"I really do not know whether the Nembutsu may be the cause for my birth in the Pure Land, or the act that shall condemn me to hell. But I have nothing to regret, even if I should have been deceived by my teacher, and saying the Nembutsu, fall into hell.

The reason is that if I were capable of realizing Buddhahood by other religious practices and yet fell into hell for saying the Nembutsu, I might have dire regrets for having been deceived. But since I am absolutely incapable of any religious practice, hell is my only home."

—Tannisho: Chapter 2

As a member of the greater Los Angeles community, I am often invited to events that require me to be a representative of a Buddhist tradition. Whether interfaith gathering or meeting with a "special interest group", inevitably, I'm approached and asked about Buddhism. Some are silly questions like "what's up with that fat-laughing Buddha"? or "Does Richard Gere belong to your sect of Buddhism"? But some do ask some serious questions: If you don't believe in God what do you believe in? What happens when you die? Do you have a heaven? Do you have a hell? Needless to say this generates a lively conversation.

Our discussions are always friendly and people are generally interested in listening to a different view point. That's not always the case. I've been approached by some pretty hostile people that became enraged and began calling Buddhists heathens, devil worshipers, and that we would burn in hell if we didn't accept Jesus as our savior.

Within the western context when we do think

of hell we always think of the Dante's Inferno version of hell... with the devil, with pointed horns and the pitch fork, residing in deep underground fiery caves and this is where we go if we're really bad.

Of course, in Buddhism, our understanding of hell is our suffering here and now, in this life time.

In traditional Buddhism, this suffering is understood as this transmigration through this samaric world of sufferings by way of the six paths, know as the Six Realms of Existence, in Japanese Rokudo (the realms of heavenly beings, men, asuras (raging spirits), animals, hungry ghost and hell).

As for Jodo Shinshu, Shinran Shonin was influenced by Genshin, an 11th century religious teacher and writer. Genshin's writings made such a strong impression on Shinran that he named Genshin as one of the Seven Patriarchs through whom he traces the spiritual lineage of the Nembutsu teachings, back to Sakyamuni Buddha.

Genshin's major work was Ojoyoshu... "The Teachings Essential for Birth." It's somewhat like Dante's Inferno. Genshin gives graphic descriptions of the various levels of hell. Genshin's masterpiece portrays a man who is suffering and pleads for forgiveness of a demon. The demon's response is, "You created your own hell while you were still alive"

The journey begins at first and worst of the six paths which is hell itself. Within this first hell there are eight chambers, stacked below each other, each more horrific than the one above.

The first chamber is called the Hell of Revival. The sinner in this hell is repeatedly attacked with iron swords by hell wardens who hack, dis-

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**NEW
BETSUIN
COVID
UPDATE**
(see page 11)

Los Angeles
Hompa Hongwanji
Buddhist Temple
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Los Angeles, CA 90012

TEL: 213.680.9130
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WEB: nishihongwanji-la.org

EMAIL: info@nishihongwanji-la.org

GOD IS IN THE DETAILS

by Rev. Hibiki Murakami



**Rev. Hibiki
Murakami**

A decade ago, a Japanese song, Kamisama no Toire (God of Toilet) was trending. It was so popular that it was nominated by Kohaku Utagas-sen, which is a music competition produced by NHK. Singer-songwriter, Kana Uemura, created her song based on the time she spent with her grandmother. The chorus of the song is as follows:

...Grandma said this to me...

*In the toilet, there is a beautiful goddess.
If you clean the toilet beautifully everyday,
you'll become just as beautiful as the goddess.*

As Uemura-san grew, she spent less time with her grandmother. Eventually, her grandmother passed. At the end of the song, Uemura-san's wishing to, someday, be a good wife, decides to make the toilet shine, remembering her grandmother's words.

How do you treat your things? Do you take good care of them? During the time period of the Kamisama no Toire song, was trending, Danshari (decluttering) was also a buzzword in Japan. In a nutshell, Danshari made people aware of simple living. One can make do with "less stuff" to organize one's minds efficiently. It is a personal choice as to how much you want to keep. If, however, you see "stuff" scattered around and the claim is that it's all important, shouldn't it all be organized and well taken care of? Some may justify saving things with the thought of mottainai. In my own thinking, is it mottainai when you keep a packet of ketchup that has expired?

At our temple, there are some pre-owned obutsudan (home altars) are placed in the corridor by the Nokotsudo in hopes of finding new owners. They are all in good condition. Anyone wishing to have one of these valuable obutsudan can do so with a donation to the Betsuin. A new will would cost hundreds/thousands of dollars. After pulling the obutsudan out of the storage, I cleaned each of them by hand. They were all used to enshrine an image or a statue of Amida Buddha and held in reverence by the families as the heart of the household. Some of them are very old. I decided to create a place for them in order to increase the possibility of finding a new home instead of taking them apart for recycling. It is my wish to restore purpose of the obutsudan to connect a family to the Buddha Dharma.

As I was removing dust from the obutsudan, I was pondering the meaning of mottainai. It's defined as an expression of lament of items that still can be used that is wasted. From a different perspective, it could be said that that's not mottainai if something has fulfill its life/purpose. If this is the case, we will not hesitate to "let it go." How one views the universe may depend upon how you regard your things.

In Shinto, from long ago, it is believed that a god (kami) dwells in all things so they are kept for a long time. This is also the case for words. It is believed that some words have been transmitted by many generations becoming to have miraculous powers. These words are considered to have the power to realize as it's told like wizard spelling. Whether kami dwells in things or in words, we may want to listen to their silent voice. These hidden things can resonate and open our eyes. For example, the nembutsu brings us awareness of Amida Buddha's Primal Vow which is the cause to be born into the Pure Land. Like the nembutsu, everything takes forms to tell their messages. They have the power to perform as it is intended. I'm sure Uemura-san's grandmother did not believe that shining toilets would make her granddaughter beautiful. Her respect for the kami in the toilet shines Uemura-san beautifully from inside.

BETSUIN VEHICLE DONATION



**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.**



BETSUIN BOARD PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Pam Tabata

2022 is almost over and Toys R Us shops will be in Macy's stores! I thought Toys R Us was gone forever! It's just an amazing time to live. We have had to deal with so many changes, adapt to this new life where some of the changes will remain and others will go away. This is a truth about life, everything is changing.

Thank you very much for supporting our *Obon Drive-Thru* and thank you for your continued support all these years. Our budget remains about the same because we are now spending more money on security. There may be changes that are obvious and others that may not be noticeable at all, but we feel that it is very important for everyone to be as safe as possible when coming to the temple. Your support is very important to us and your donations are used with a lot of scrutiny.

You have received this about the time we start thinking of the cool evenings and the approaching holidays — Yes, family time. As I write this, the variants of COVID are not as serious, but are highly contagious and this is worrisome for those with underlying conditions. I have a new grandson and I smile at the idea that he has so much power over my decisions just so that I can see him. He doesn't even know that I exist and without a care in the world — He controls me. I am limiting my time being out of the house and things that I do, just for him.

Just like my grandson, you have also changed my thinking and how I behave and react. You have taught me so much and made me who I am today — good and bad. My interactions with you have made me rethink many of my ideas and thoughts. I am very grateful that you feel you can approach me with any thought or idea. Some I may not be able to change, and others give me pause.

In gassho

*When catching a cold, cough comes out.
Saichi caught a cold of Seeker and Dharma,
and cough of Nenbutsu comes out again and again.
— Asahara, Saichi*

かぜをひけば せきがでる
才市が 御ほうぎの かぜひいた
念仏のせきが でるでる
— 浅原才市

BETSUIN CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

- 04 Regular Service 10:00 am
- 05 Labor Day Betsuin closed
- 11 Regular Service 10:00 am
Dharma School Registration
Eitaikyo Shotsuki Hoyo 1:00 pm

FALL OHIGAN

- Speakers:
Rev. Candace Shibata (Eng)
Rev. Etsuko Mikame (Jpn)
- 17 **Fall Ohigan Seminar** 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
- 18 **Fall Ohigan Service** 10:00 am
- 25 Regular Service 10:00 am

OCTOBER

- 02 Eshinni-Kakushinni Service 10:00 am
- 09 Regular Service 10:00 am
Eitaikyo Shotsuki Hoyo 1:00 pm
- 16 Regular Service 10:00 am
- 23 Regular Service 10:00 am
- 30 Regular Service 10:00 am

NOVEMBER

- 06 Betsuin General Meeting
- 13 Regular Service 10:00 am
Eitaikyo Shotsuki Hoyo 1:00 pm

In order to access any of these events virtually, contact the Betsuin for information:

213-680-9130 or

NishiDharmaCenter@gmail.com



DID YOU KNOW?

by Eiko Masuyama

**(BCA) BUDDHIST newsletter,
National Headquarters, San Francisco,
April, 1965, "METAMORPHOSIS of the
WYABL to WABL,
Tad Yamashiro-New President"**

Mr. Tad Yamashiro of Penryn was elected to the presidency of the newly renamed Western Adult Buddhist League at the 17th Annual Western Young Adult Buddhist League Conference which convened under the theme "Gratitude" at our Palo Alto Buddhist Church on February 6 and 7, 1965. He succeeds **Mr. Yoshio Shibata** of Los Angeles.



1964 — President, Yosh Shibata (center), presents WABL check of \$625 to Sunday School Department Treasurer, Rev. J. Tsumura (left), and \$1000 check to Buddhist Education Director, Rev. T. Tsuji

During the conference business session, the body voted to drop the "young" from the title Western Young Buddhist League and adopted Western Adult Buddhist League as the official nomenclature.

The Rev. Haruo Yamaoka of Oakland, the latest of the BCA scholarship students to be assigned to BCA, gave the keynote address. His stirring message was well received by all of the delegates in attendance.

The highlight of the conference was the group discussions. Group I discussed "Buddhism 1975" with Rev. Giko Abiko and **Dr. Ryo Munekata** as the principal resource speakers. Rev. Masami Fujitani acted as the chairman for this group. Group II "Buddhism and World Citizenship" was chaired by Mr. Cal Steinmetz and featured Mr. Walter Wimalachandra of Ceylon, a Judge Advocate on tour of duty in the United States, as the resource speaker. His profound knowledge and outstanding personal qualities deeply impressed those attending this discussion group. Group III "Problems of Faith" was directed towards the Japanese speaking delegates and had Professor Kakue Miyaji, who is on temporary duty as lecturer at the Univer-

sity of California at Santa Barbara, as the resource speaker. The group was chaired by Rev. Shoko Masunaga. Group IV "Role of Adults in Youth Development" called upon the authoritative views of Mr. Yori Wada of the California Youth Authority to stir the group into discussion. Rev Hogen Fujimoto acted as chairman for the group.....

* * * *

**(BCA) Buddhist newsletter,
National Headquarters, San Francisco, Nov 1965,
"First Southern District Buddhist Life Basketball
League Concluded, Oxnard Wins AYE Division"**

The only serious trouble Oxnard encountered was in their game with favored L.A. Betsuin. In what was the most exciting game of the season, the two teams battled on even terms from the opening whistle through two overtime periods before Ron Kato's two point basket in the sudden death period gave Oxnard the game 43-41, and with it the league crown.



Proudly holding the divisional championship trophies presented by the Southern League Buddhist Life Basketball League are the championship team captains. They are: Front row L to R: Irene Watanabe, Los Angeles, Bee League; Clyde Iwata, Los Angeles, Cee League; Karen Sone, Los Angeles, Aye League. Back row: Stanley Shirai and Richard Nakamura, Los Angeles, Bee League; Ron Kato, Oxnard, Aye League.

The members of the champion Oxnard team are: Ken Kanamori, Ted Kanamori, Larry Kawada, Al Miyamoto, Ron Kato, Glen Matsui, Carl Tanaka, Paul Miyamoto, John

(continued on page 5)



(KNOW? - continued from page 4)

Miyamoto.

The teams entered in the Aye Division were Oxnard, L.A. Betsuin, West Los Angeles, Venice, Gardena, and Pasadena.

L.A. swept the other divisions in the Buddhist Life League, capturing the Bee and Cee flags, and the Girls' Aye and Bee championships.

In the Bee Division, L.A. handily went through the season undefeated with wins over Orange County, Gardena, Pasadena, and West Los Angeles. The L.A. squad members are: **Eddie Sasaki, David Ozaki, Lance Aratani, Mitchell Ouchi, Harry Nakano, Stanley Shirai, Richard Nakamura, and Nelson Itatani.**

In romping through their Cee League opponents, Los Angeles served notice that their strength in depth will prove to be a powerful weapon next year throughout all the divisions. L.A. Wanji won over Gardena and Pasadena easily to post a 3-0 season mark. The Wanji members are: **Ken Watanabe, Clyde Iwata, Gene Sugimoto, Glenn Nakano, Gary Miyatake, Melvin Hara, Keith Sakaniwa, Dean Nagamoto.**

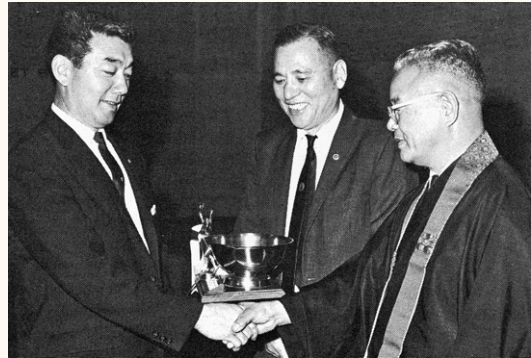
A powerful Los Angeles sextet continued L.A.'s near monopoly by crushing the opposition for a 6-0 record in the Girls Aye League. Gardena, Venice, and West Los Angeles rounded out the division. The girls on the L.A. squad are: **Eiko Sakaniwa, Karen Sone, Sharon Miyakawa, Georgia Inouye, Jo Anne Tambara, Dianne Tanaka, Dianne Kudow, May Kondo, Sandy Nishikawa.**

In the two team Girls Bee League, Los Angeles playing as the "Dana" came out on top with 2-1 season mark. The other team in the league was Pasadena. The Dana players are: **Michi Kamei, Sharon Tanaka, Teri-Jean Miyakawa, Faith Sakaniwa, April Aratani, Susan Furuto, Susan Yamada, Machi Kamei, Irene Watanabe, Linda Katase, Janet Shimizu, and Christine Hatashita.**

In accord with efforts to encourage living the Buddhist life in every way, the most inspirational player of each division was honored. They are: Aye League (girls), Amy Fukuzaki, Gardena; Bee (girls), Sharon Tanaka, Los Angeles; Aye (boys), Gary Hankawa, WLA; Bee (boys), Richard Hara, Orange County, and Cee (boys), Clyde Iwata, Los Angeles.

A special award was presented to Basketball Commissioner **Mits Sakaniwa** by the L.A. Hompa Hongwanji Betsuin for his "devotion and outstanding service in developing youth activity programs these past many years."

* * * * *



Basketball Commissioner Mits Sakaniwa of the Buddhist Life Basketball League is shown receiving a special award presented by the Los Angeles Hompa Hongwanji Betsuin for his "devotion and outstanding service in developing youth activity programs these past many years." Making the presentation are L.A. Betsuin Rimban Ryuei Masuoka and LA Betsuin Board Chairman Kyuji Hozaki.

**Betsuin Jiho, November 1, 1965,
"FOR THE PERSON WHO HAS
EVERYTHING ELSE!"**

For new ideas in gifts, contact the Los Angeles Betsuin Sunday School Sales Department. Something in every price range for everyone, assuming he or she is a

Buddhist. Some examples follow:

Large Obutsudan	\$75.00
Portable Obutsudan	28.00
Ihai	7.50
Uchi shiki	1.25
Buddhist Autograph Book (for weddings, etc.)	1.00
Horin (for necklace/lapel)	2.85+
Ojuzu (adults)	1.35+
Ojuzu (children)	.20+
Books (even the non-Buddhists might appreciate)	

* * * * *

"Farewell and Welcome"

In the month of October, we will have bid farewell (at least for a while) to **Rev. Seiko Okahashi** and welcome to **Revs. Sensho Hida** and **Sensho Inouye.**

Rev. Okahashi, as you all know, has been in charge of the Hollywood branch temple of the Betsuin. She will have gone to Japan on the 16th of October, in order to take care of family and ministerial matters. It is not as yet certain when she will return.

Rev. Sensho Hida will have arrived here on the 6th of October, from Hawaii via San Francisco. He has been a min-

(continued on page 10)





AN EVENING CONCERT BY NISHI ABA

by Joanne Nakamura



ABASonic Band Performing

Hooray for the red, white and blue!

On the eve of Independence Day, the Nishi ABA sponsored an evening of fun, music and games. Adhering to the Betsuin's COVID regulations including proof of vaccination or negative COVID test, the celebration event was held outdoors in the Nishi Hon-gwanji West Lot.

In attendance were 180 guests, including friends and family, Venice Hongwanji, Gardena and WLA temple members.

The evening began with attendees dining on their own picnic meals followed by Bingo and raffle drawings. A plethora of prizes were awarded. This was followed by the soulful sounds of the ABA-Sonics Band. Their melodious songs captivated everyone by the rapture of their music. Special guest singer was Ken Kawa-saki. His rendition of songs by Frank Sinatra and Elvis were exceptional.

A tremendous and heartfelt "Thank You" to Lonny Quon for his visionary quest, tenacity and countless hours of organizing this concert. It was a successful and fun evening for all who attended this patriotic celebration.

Nishi ABA supports our temples activities and new members are always welcomed.



An audience of 180 listening to the soulful sounds of the ABASonics



Eric Quon, Thomas Mochizuki, & Denise Nakamura Otani serenading their audience on Independence Day eve.



(Rimban - continued from page 1)

member, and scatter them. After awhile the pieces are re-assembled and they are brought back to life only for the process to be repeated over and over. You might ask, "What did this person do to deserve such a help?" Well, this hell results from committing the slightest evil like killing fish or chickens.

The eighth chamber is called the Unremitting Hell. In this hell, molten metal is poured into the sinner's mouth, dissolving their insides with foxes with flaming jaws consume them, and so on.

The good news is that these hells are not an eternal punishment. When, one goes through required number of cosmic eons, the sufferer's evil is requited and he passes on to another of the six paths. Those being heavenly beings, men, asuras, animals, hungry ghost and hell.

You might recall that the story of Obon, it is Mogallana's mother who ends up in the Hell of the Hungry Ghost. Those who are jealous and envious are reborn in this path. Here, the people are depicted as lurking about seeking to feed upon corpses, excrement, and grave offerings, but are unsuccessful because though their bodies are bloated, their mouths are as small as the eye of a needle or because the food turns to flame, burning them.

The whole point of Genshin's metaphoric descriptions of hell was the awaking to one's own suffering, awoken to our falling in to hell as being the very condition essential for birth in the Pure Land.

Within our tradition of Jodo Shinshu, when we awaken, when we truly realize the depth of our foolish-ignorant self... that self that suffers in hell, we are then able to experience the very joy that we are going to the Pure Land, that spiritual realm of reality from which the workings of compassion are manifested.

The reading I began with is from chapter two of the Tan-nisho. The last line reads, "*I am absolutely incapable of any religious practice, hell is my only home.*"

There are many layers of meaning within this chapter, but for me, I can appreciate Shinran Shonin's words, "Hell is my only home" in that he wasn't only thinking about his future life, but he was reflecting on his actions of this present life too. In Buddhism, hell is not viewed as something that is completely separate from one's actions. It is inevitably linked with one's karma that we are constantly creating.

In our metaphorical transmigration within the Six Realms of Suffering, where will we find ourselves next? To generally answer this question, a sutra states,

When Shinran says, "Hell is my only home," Shinran looks

(continued on next column)

CUB SCOUT NEWS

by Noemi Garcia Tagorda

Cub Scouts ended the season with the Rain-gutter Regatta. The scouts built and decorated their boats and then raced them down the "rain gutter." As cub scouts progress through the program, they gain additional skills to improve their boats each year. Two of our webelos scouts, Liam Barnhart and Elijah Tagorda, completed the program and have now transitioned to Boy Scout Troop 738.

Nishi Cub Scouts welcomes children between the ages of five and ten to join our pack. We plan to restart meetings in September. Our focus is on having fun! Like us on Facebook to keep up with our activities:

[fb.com/nishicubscouts](https://www.facebook.com/nishicubscouts)



Jake Clingerman "pushes" his boat in the Rain Gutter Regatta

2022 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Valid from January 1 through December 31, 2022

\$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 **2022**

inward to realize the depth of his ignorance, his bonno to truly know himself.

Those who do not really see hell interwoven into their lives will not be able to realize the Pure Land. In other words, those who do not see hell in the depths of their own minds are really falling into it.

Buddhism does not judge who will be rewarded or who will be punished like the Christian religions. In Buddhism, at the end of life, no one really knows what happens, hell, heaven ... Pure Land. No one knows. However, our falling into hell, the realization of our ignorant self, is crucial to awaken in this life, here and now, at this very moment.

Namo Amida Butsu



OBON DRIVE-THRU 2022

With dealing with the COVID pandemic for three years, the LA Bet-suin has managed another successful Drive-Thru Fund Raiser thanks to the planning and organizational efforts of chairperson **Christine Furusawa**.

From the customers' perspectives everything ran like clockwork and everyone was able to enjoy a wonderful meal.



left: Christine Furusawa (Obon Chair) and Pam Tabata (Temple President) greeting food pick-up arrivals



Ken Kawasaki (back to camera) oversees car arriving for food pick-up



Control Central —The organization of the distributions of all the pre-ordered food items.



Jean Kawakami (L) looks on as Junie Obi mans Control Central



June (left) and sister, Reiko Kondo checking bags of food to be distributed.



Cutting and boxing huli huli chicken.



...directing cars coming for food pick-up...



Siblings, Chris and Michelle Obi delivering orders into cars.



Boxes and boxes of Huli Huli chicken



Rev. Murakami and Eiko Masuyama bidding "farewell and thank you" to departing cars while Reiko Ikkanda (seated) and Linda Inagaki (hidden behind Eiko) are handling raffle tickets.





BETSUIN 2022 MINI-BON ODORI

photos by Glen Tao

Due to continuing concerns about COVID issues, the Betsuin opted for a mini-bon odori for the year 2022.

The mini-bon odori was held in the shade of the large trees in the parking lot which provided a fairly comfortable spot for the observers and dancers.

What was wonderful was that there were dancers who normally aren't able to participate in the bon odori because they are busy working for/at/in a carnival booth.



A handful of booths provided refreshments/snacks for the mini-bon odori attendees.



The Betsuin's young bon daiko players: (L-R) Matthew Hayashi, Samantha Hayashi, Karlee Itomura, Sarah Kamiya, & Michelle Itomura.



The 2022 Betsuin Mini-Bon Odori begins with the rousing sounds of taiko by the Betsuin's Taiko Ichiza.



Seibi Okita



Kyle Tomita leading a group of little girls



Nobuko Sayano



Dancing under the comfortable shade of the large trees.

Photo by Koichi Sayano



Odori leaders (L-R) Mitsuyo Tanaka, Elaine Fukumoto & Eiko Masuyama,



Rev. George Matsubayashi & Susan Oiwake



(more Bon Odori photos on page 10)





MORE BETSUIN 2022 MINI-BON ODORI



Reiko Ikkanda (L) & Suzy Saita dancing with the bell tower in the background.



Jean Kawakami



(L-R) Family: Sherry Watanabe, Michelle & Terrie Itomura



Rev. Murakami, Pam Tabata (board president), & Rimban Briones



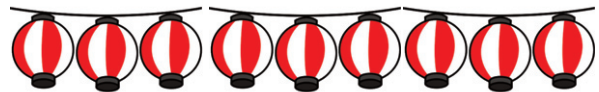
Lisa Kawasaki



Mrs. Kay Matsubayashi



Ernest Hida



(KNOW? - continued from page 5)

ister in Hawaii for a number of years, and this will be his first mainland assignment. His family will accompany him here.

Rev. Sensho Inouye will have arrived here in early October. Previous to his assignment here, he was the resident minister of Placer Buddhist Church. In between that assignment and his assignment here, that is, about three months ago, he returned to Japan for a brief visit.

On Sunday, October 10, from three o'clock. there will have been a farewell and welcome party for the three ministers in the downstairs hall of the Betsuin.

* * * * *

Thank you, Irene Kuromiya, for donations to library and archives of books, pamphlets, programs, and memorabilia (commemorative pin, Jr YBA happi and BWA monto shikisho)

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*

May 2022

- 17 Yaeko Ritchie
- 24 Tommy Takenori Tanaka
- 25 Dorothy Akiko* Kajiki
- 31 Gorden Kui-un Yanagi

- 28 Fujiko Mukai
- 30 Douglas Masato Kanegawa

July 2022

- 1 Thomas Masazumi Okita
- 5 Robert Hideo Tsuchida
- 6 Wade Taro Shimada
- 8 Gosato Hanaoka
- 12 Yosuke Ichikawa

June 2022

- 1 Ruth Shizuyu Nishimoto
- 22 Toshiko Shimobe White
- 24 Nobuko Kozono

Betsuin Jiho

Editor-in-Chief: Rimban William Briones

English Editor: Elaine Fukumoto

Photos: Koichi Sayano



COVID NEWS:**LA BETSUIN RE-OPENS - UPDATE IN GUIDELINES**

Dear Nishi Members, Affiliate Organizations, and Office Staff/Volunteers,

The COVID Committee met on Tuesday evening to discuss updating the Temple guidelines with regards to COVID. Over the course of almost 3 years now, we have seen the ravaging effects of COVID; however, we have also learned the best methods to protect ourselves based on science and data, including vaccinations, boosters, facemasks, handwashing, and social distancing. We thank everyone for their cooperation and compliance with the Temple requirements throughout this entire time.

Currently, we enter a new phase where the number of positive cases is decreasing even in the midst of the County and State re-opening businesses and resuming indoor activities including shopping, eating, drinking, and socializing, all without the requirement of having to wear facemasks. New variants are continuously being watched in America and abroad. New boosters are also being developed by Pfizer and Moderna to address the Omicron subvariants to continue providing as much protection as possible to everyone. The World continues to do what it can so we can "live" with COVID. Travel has resumed on plane, rail, and bus, and while facemasks are still required on any public transit in LA County, it may not be the case outside of LA. There are also only a few places of business that require facemasks, including health care facilities and long-term care, nursing homes.

With that in mind, the LA Betsuin will be re-opening our doors to everyone, while abiding by the LA County Guidelines. Facemasks are still recommended whenever possible, and anyone feeling ill is asked to stay home, but social distancing and maximum capacity reductions have been lifted. Additionally, the LA County does not restrict indoor dining so we will resume refreshments and food for anyone comfortable in partaking. We encourage everyone to continue exercising personal choices, whatever is best for one's comfort level and health.

Contact tracing is no longer required. Because of the Rapid Test, the County Health Department is not necessarily contacted when someone tests positive. If anyone should test positive, it is hoped that they will contact the people that they may have exposed, making them aware that they should monitor themselves. For Sunday Services, funerals, and memorial services, proof of vaccination and a sign-in sheet will no longer be required.

Meanwhile, the Betsuin will be offering a flu shot clinic on October 9th, from 11:30-1:00 for all members and friends of Nishi. In addition to the flu shot, COVID vaccine and boosters will be offered. Pending emergency authorization expected in September, we hope the new bi-valent vaccination will offer better protection against the various Omicron viruses. If you sign-up for the flu shot and have health insurance, please have the information ready for processing. The flu shot will also accept cash payments.

Should anyone have any questions, please feel free to reach out to any committee member for clarification. We thank you for your ongoing support, and concern for safety with regards to yourselves, family, friends, and members.

Respectfully,

The COVID Committee



**FLU SHOTS &
COVID
VACCINES/BOOSTERS**

(Insurance will be processed)

**Sign-Ups Required:
jean@kilotango.me**

DATE: Sunday, October 9, 2022
TIME: 11:30 am - 1:00 pm
PLACE: Nishi Kaikan

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