

# LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

# jihō

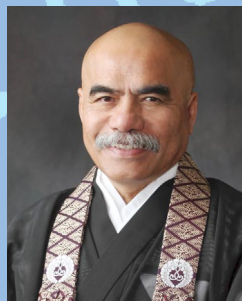
WWW

No. 475

November - December 2022

RIMBAN'S MESSAGE

## THOUGHTS ON PRACTICE AND COMPASSION



**Rimban William  
Briones**

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

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

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

When visitors come to the Betsuin inevitably the question most frequently asked is, "What is your practice?" For many Buddhist the obvious answer is the practice of "compassion." The Dalai Lama and the late Thich Nhat Hanh, the Vietnamese Zen monk, speak of this compassion. As Buddhists, our task is to manifest compassion in everyday life, beginning with members of our own family and extending it to all society. But when one really tries to practice compassion, expressing care, concern, empathy and love, one encounters a huge obstacle. That obstacle is never the other, but rather one's own self-centered ego. The awareness of our inconsistencies is the starting point of the Jodo Shinshu Buddhist path.

For other Buddhist traditions there are various

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

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

However, it is extremely difficult for one as a lay person and more so for priest and ministers with school, work and family obligations to fully live up to the high ideals as the paramitas. Nevertheless, the paramitas point us in the right direction and clarify the Buddhist ideals for us.

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

The passage in the beginning of this article is from the fourth chapter of the Tannisho. It tells about the difference between the practice of "path of the sages" such as bodhisattva's, monks and nuns and it tells of the path of Pure Land devotees like you and me. It's about other power vs. self power. It's about realizing our inability to attain enlightenment by means of doing good deeds or following the paramitas, because, based on Shinran's realization, all our good deeds are based on our ego and

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## NO DOUBTING

by Rev. Hibiki Murakami



**Rev. Hibiki  
Murakami**

As I looked back on 2022, I realize I had some nice experiences. I was able to participate in the summer Saishin Dojo program. I was able to travel to Japan to see my parents, the first time since before the pandemic. The most marked experience was being able to start Aikido, one of the Japanese martial arts. Aikido made a big impact on my life.

At the beginning of this past summer, I was almost stabbed by an individual with a screwdriver. That day, I was walking back to the temple on First street from the Japanese American National Museum. A man walked towards me. He spoke to me, but I ignored him and continued on. This appeared to have angered him and he told to me to stop. I noticed he was holding a screwdriver. I immediately knew I was in danger. Somehow, I got away. I was lucky not to have gotten injured. I knew then that I needed to learn how to protect myself.

This dangerous experience motivated me to take Aikido lessons. After several sessions, I realized how much I enjoy learning the deep philosophy of ancient Japanese combat. With Aikido, one never actively attacks opponents. "Ki" is important to defend against an attacker. Ki is the energy running through one's body. My Aikido sensei explained that once I've learned to use this energy stream, I would be able to neutralize opponents bigger than myself. This was unimaginable to me. He, then explained the energy of ki. Aikido techniques uses the opponent's power with added force to neutralize the opponent. This sounds like the science of physics. The founders of Aikido probably identified this physical momentum force, "ki."

Experiencing this, I recalled a debate about the power of chanting the nembutsu. In the Contemplation Sutra, even those who committed all sorts of evil can be born into the Pure Land if they recite the nembutsu. The disbeliever claimed that this was impossible. There was doubt that the power of the nembutsu could deliver anyone to the Pure Land. The response to this question is "Yes, it is possible." Since Amida Buddha's compassion was persistently completed, the nembutsu could deliver them as explained in the sutra. When Amida Buddha practiced for completing the nembutsu, the Buddha was perfectly mindful to remove every reason that fails the nembutsu. By this, the nembutsu can work as it was proclaimed.

Also, this debate points out that the cause of making us earn bad karma is all for our minds. For example, if we follow an incorrect belief, it will always lead us to a wrong

point. But that says once we discard and turn the incorrect belief and trust the nembutsu, the nembutsu naturally guides us as it should be. There is a saying in Kyogyoshinsho,

We have a tendency to want to doubt unless we know the logic and reason. An article about Aikido states that what the teacher and student must do in order to learn and teach, is to "trust one another." Because if one doesn't trust what is taught, one never improves one's skills. If the teacher doesn't trust the student, there is no growth. The combat theory of Aikido itself is sophisticated enough to neutralize the opponent but this lesson cannot be passed down unless there is trust. The nembutsu was originally taught by Shakyamuni Buddha. If this teaching is incorrect, what he conveyed was incorrect, too. How can we doubt what the Buddha said? Doubting makes us stumble and be dragged. Let us entrust ourselves to the nembutsu.

## DO YOU NEED AN OBUTSUDAN?

In the September-October issue of the Betsuin Jiho, Murakami Sensei wrote about several pre-owned obutsudan, in good condition, being stored at the temple. He had, meticulously, cleaned them up and they are all in search of new homes. Sensei noted that a new obutsudan can be very costly.

Sensei's hope is to have these obutsudan find a place in the heart of a household and connect the family to the Buddha-Dharma.



## ADOPT-AN-OBUTSUDAN

*Connect the family to the Buddha-Dharma*

*A donation of \$100+ would be appreciated.*

## BETSUIN BOARD PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



**Pam Tabata**

The annual Eitaikyo service is a major service at the Los Angeles Betsuin. I remember when it was a service with many in attendance.

The history of Eitaikyo for this temple is very important. After the construction of the temple in 1925 on Central Avenue, the temple was in dire financial distress — near insolvency. The temple appealed to Honzan

(the mother temple in Kyoto) for help. Honzan gave our temple “Betsuin” status and gave authorization for the temple to issue “ingo”, which is a way to recognize major contributors. Those names are entered into the Eitaikyo registry on the date of their passing which are the large books on the altar. Everyday, a service is conducted for all those that have passed away on that specific date. If your past loved ones have Ingo, you or another family member receives a postcard from the Betsuin – Years 1, 3, 7, 13, 17, 23, etc. (This information is on our website.)

In Buddhism, the day of death is year one (1) Confusing? Yes, it is for me, too. However, we have our monthly Eitaikyo service where you and/or family can come to the temple on the designated Sunday and share your service with others even though it is not for that special year.

All donations designated for the Eitaikyo Fund goes to an account separate from the general account. The principal for the Eitaikyo fund is designated to recover from cata-

strophic damage, which is its only use. This fund is a collection of many past and present donations. When donating to the Eitaikyo Fund, it must be written as such, either on the check or attached to the check. As with all donations to the temple, it must be clear what your intention is so that it can be handled correctly at the temple.

I would like to wish you and families a happy and healthy 2023 and look forward to seeing you soon.

*In gassho*

## BETSUIN CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### NOVEMBER

- 06 Regular Service 10:00 am  
Betsuin General Sokai Meeting 12:00 am
- 13 Regular Service 10:00 am  
Eitaikyo Shotsuki Hoyo 1:00 pm
- 24/25 Holiday (Betsuin Closed)
- 27 Regular Service 10:00 am

### DECEMBER

- 04 General Temple Clean-Up 8:00 am
- 11 Bodhi Day Service/Jodo-E 10:00 am  
Eitaikyo Shotsuki Hoyo 1:00 pm
- 18 Oseibo Kansha Service/Taikai 10:00 am
- 24/25 Thanksgiving Holiday (Betsuin Closed)
- 31 Year-End Service/Joya-E 6:00 pm

### JANUARY

- 01 New Year Service/Shusho-E 10:00 am
- 08 Regular Service 10:00 am  
Eitaikyo Shotsuki Hoyo 1:00 pm

In order to access any of these services via Zoom, contact the Betsuin for information:

**213-680-9130** or

**[NishiDharmaCenter@gmail.com](mailto:NishiDharmaCenter@gmail.com)**



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**Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji  
Buddhist Temple**



## DID YOU KNOW?

by Eiko Masuyama

### **BCA Vol I, 75 year History 1899-1974, pp 104-106; “History of the Young Buddhist Association (YBA)”**

As a coordinated body, today's Young Buddhist Association (YBA), can be traced back to the 1920s. On January 15-16, 1926, the League of Young Men's Buddhist Associations of North America (YMBA) was formed in San Francisco with Rev. Tansai Terakawa as the first president.

The following year on July 27, 1927, at White Point in San Pedro, California, the young Buddhist women held their annual summer session. It was at this gathering, with 52 delegates, when the North American Federation of Young Women's Buddhist Association League (YWBA) was organized. Kazuko Matsumura was elected its first president.

Though the names of both leagues encompassed, geographically, a large continent, they were mainly confined to the state of California. Both leagues were divided into five districts: Bay, Coast, Northern California, Central California, and Southern California [including the South Central Coast].

### **Pan-Pacific Buddhist Conference (1930 in Honolulu and 1934 in Tokyo)**

... the League of YMBAs in North America was holding its Fourth Annual Conference at the Fresno Buddhist Church on May 31, 1929. According to Rev. Konen Tsunemitsu of Japan, ... he had concluded a five-month tour of Hawaii. He and the young Buddhists of Hawaii came upon the idea of having a huge convention involving young Buddhists from Japan, Hawaii, and the mainland U.S.

It was to the delegates of the Fresno conference of March 31, 1929, that Rev. Tsunemitsu conveyed the feelings of the young Buddhists of Hawaii. The delegates assembled also agreed. Immediately, the project was pursued by the three groups.

The First General Conference of the Pan-Pacific Federation of Young Buddhist Leagues met in Honolulu from July 21 to 31, 1930. Over 200 delegates gathered, representing Japan, Hawaii and the mainland US. The Buddhist Mission of North American's (BMNA to become BCA after WWII) delegation left San Francisco on July 16, aboard the ship "Ventura." The group was led by Rev. Tansai Terakawa. Those in the group were Morey Asanuma, John Hirohata, Hajime Kondo, Hideo Miwa, Masao Murata, Frank Sakamoto, Kikuo Taira, Mamoru Taoka and Noboru Tsunoda.

The Second General Conference of the Pan-Pacific Federation of Young Buddhist Leagues met in Japan from July



**1941 CYBL Conference,  
Parade to City Hall along E.1st St. near San Pedro St., led by  
the Hompa Hongwanji L.A. Betsuin YBA**

17 to 23, 1934, to commemorate the 2,500 years since the birth of Sakyamuni Buddha. The major portion of the conference was at the Tsukiji Hongwanji in Tokyo, and moved to other areas, such as Kyoto and Osaka. The proceedings are recorded in "The Second General Conference of Pan-Pacific Young Buddhists Associations" compiled by the Federation of All YBAs of Japan, 1935.

The Buddhist Mission of North America delegation was again led by Rev. Tansai Terakawa and assisted by Shigeru Kosakura. The two played a major role in the conference. Sixty-nine delegates left by boat and were joined by 22 who were already in Japan to make a total representation of 90.

### **Canada-Hawaii-America Conference, 1932 in San Francisco**

From July 22 to 26, 1932, the first Canada-Hawaii-America Conference of young Buddhists was held in San Francisco. Over 400 delegates, majority from California, representing 36 churches, met for the five days. The purpose of this gathering was the following: (1) to promote the unity of Young Buddhist Association; (2) to exchange opinions and further mutual co-operation; (3) to supplement the Pan-Pacific YBA Conference; (4) to provide the opportunity for the intellectual advancement of Buddhism; and (5) to deliberate other necessary cooperative activities. The conference committee, through "The Kyodan Times" [official publication of BMNA] July 22, 1932, stated:

*"Ever since its organization, the YMWBA leagues have never undertaken a great project as this con-*

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(KNOW? - continued from page 4)

*ference. It involves the largest number of delegates. The conference is, as we deem, one of the most timely conferences, as a stepping stone, for the creation of American Buddhism, the Buddhism derived from the American culture. American culture, the crystal of all races and civilizations, may have much room for additions, especially that of the elements of the Oriental background. We believe it is our responsibility to contribute these elements."*

Kikuo Taira was the chairman for the conference.

In 1935, at the 9th YWBA Conference, the first oratorical contest was held for both YMBA and YWBA members. Soon afterwards, the Nisei started to take over the YBA leadership. The first thing they did was to combine the YMBA and YWBA leagues as one body, and organized the California Young Buddhist League (CYBL, later after WWII, to become the Western Young Buddhist League, WYBL). The CYBL had its first conference in 1937, in Sacramento. This conference showed a tremendous increase of delegates, with more than 800 attending as compared to about 200 in the past. A nationwide federation for young Buddhists called the "Young Buddhist Federation of North America" was created at this gathering with CYBL...

The first cabinet consisted of Masaru Harada of Seattle, President; Henry Miwa of Bakersfield, Vice-president; Yoshiye Takagi of Alameda, Secretary; and William Teramoto of Sacramento, Treasurer.

Records for 1938 and 1939 have been lost. In 1940, Takeo Yoshihara of Tacoma, was elected president and was succeeded by Manabu Fukuda of Fresno in 1941.

...The First National YBA and Third CYBL Conference was held at San Francisco and Treasure Island from March 31-April 3, 1939. Nine hundred and 61 delegates including those from Seattle, Tacoma, White River, Portland and Arizona attended this conference. The main attraction was the "Buddhist Day," Sunday, April 2, at the Golden Gate International Exposition which was held at the nearby Treasure Island. For the first time in the YBA history, and as a prelude to the "Buddhist Day" events, a colorful Buddhist parade was held Friday night, starting from the Buddhist Church of San Francisco to the Japanese town. The conference entailed religious rites and observances, discussions on the problems of the Nisei, sports events, ondo dances, entertainment, and as a finale, a sayonara dance.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Hompa Hongwanji Besuin JIHO, March 1, 1941,  
"C.Y.B.L. by Sanford A. Sato"**

The natural outcome of the establishment of Buddhism in

America is the development and guidance of the youthful followers of the Blessed One. Shortly after the arrival of Buddhist priests in this country at the turn of the century, the gathering of the youths led to the formation of the first young Buddhists' club.

After 30 years of various types of organization, the young Buddhist groups in California culminated in the founding of the California Young Buddhists' League in 1937. Creating greater solidarity among the clubs in the Golden State, the C.Y.B.L. now sweeps into its fifth year with the statewide convention in Los Angeles the last week in March. From the peaceful orchard land of Sacramento Valley to the verdant winter garden of Imperial Valley, young Buddhists in the league number over 4500 members. The eyes of these people point to Los Angeles in anticipation of a convention that will long remain vividly in their memories.

.....to be continued.....

\* \* \* \* \*

Special thanks to Thomas Shiraga for donation of photos (panoramas) to the Nishi archives.

## A VISIT FROM REV. BLAYNE HIGA



(l-r): Rev. Murakami, Rimban Briones, & Rev. Higa

Rev. Higa is the resident minister at Kona Hongwanji on the Big Island of Hawaii. His article, "'We' is Greater Than 'I': Why I Got Vaccinated" was included in the Nov-Dec 2021 issue of the Betsuin Jiho.



## NISHI BOY SCOUT TROOP 738 EAGLE SCOUTS



*The Nishi Scout Troop 738 at L.A. Betsuin recently recognized eight young men who earned scouting's highest rank, Eagle Scout.*



**Andrew Shinpei Alexander**, age 20, is the son of Rie



Fujie Hashimoto and Randy Alexander. He is a junior at the University of California, Riverside. He started scouting when he joined Cub Scout pack 738. For his Eagle Project, with the help of friends, family, and the troop, he built portable soccer goals, painted parking lines, fun games, and directional arrows and held a soccer clinic for the students at Nishi Center. He is very passionate about sports and working out. He is very grateful he was able to teach soccer to the students.

ate about sports and working out. He is very grateful he was able to teach soccer to the students.

**Takeshi Chavez** is 17 years old and the son of Michi and



Matthew Chavez. He is currently a freshman at University of Ha-waii. His journey as a scout started when he joined the Cub Scouts and later went on to become a member of Nishi Boy Scout Troop 738. His Eagle Project was creating eight signs for the Nishi Hongwanji Buddhist Temple to help visitors navigate the parking lots and facilities. He always wanted to do his Eagle

project for his temple because the members have done so much for him.

**Justin Tadashi Chu** is 18 years old, and is the son of Cliff



Chu and Janet Hasegawa-Chu. He is a freshman at Oregon State University. Justin first joined scouting with Cub Scout Pack 738. Due to restrictions during the pandemic, his Eagle Project was done nearly entirely online. By using photos taken during daily activities and from past classes at the Nishi Child Development Center, some photo editing,

and a lot of time spent on conference calls, he and his team created an orientation presentation for the school. With the pandemic making in-person meetings impossible, he wanted to give Nishi Center a way to give prospective parents a glimpse of what Nishi Center is like and what they do. He would like to thank everyone who was a part of his scouting journey, especially his troop guides, patrol members, and everyone who helped him with his Eagle Project.

**Kurtis Kenji Kato** is the 18 year old son of Kristen and



Keith Kato. He is currently a freshman at the University of Oregon. He first joined the Nishi Cub Scout Pack 738 where he earned the Arrow of Light and bridged over to Nishi Scout Troop 738. For his Eagle Project, with the assistance of friends, family, adult leaders and fellow scouts, Kurtis designed and built shelving for The Assistance League of Arcadia, a not-for-profit

organization that provides school supplies to underprivileged children. He is grateful for all of the support and guidance provided by Scout leaders, Scout parents and his family throughout his Scouting career and his path to Eagle Scout.

**Matthew David Mayemura** is a senior at Chapman Uni-



versity. He joined Nishi Cub Scouts as a Tiger Cub in the first grade and bridged over to the Boy Scout troop along with his fellow Webelos. He was fortunate enough to experience many things while being a member of the troop, and one of his favorite memories has to be a part of a 12-day trek on the Philmont Scout Ranch. His Eagle Project involved building modular shelving for the

Nishi Child Development Center. The modular shelving for the storage room to allow the school to store all their equipment while still allowing access to the piping and electrical equipment in the room. He is extremely grateful to everyone who helped him on his scouting journey.

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(Eagle Scouts - continued from page 6)

**Saiah A. Montoya** is 19 years old and the son of Noriko Kajiwara and Mark Montoya. He is currently a sophomore at California State University Long Beach where he is majoring in computer science. He began scouting in first grade when he joined Cub Scout Pack 738 as a Tiger Cub and later advanced to Boy Scout Troop 738. Saiah's Eagle Project was to create a mobile front desk for Nishi Child Development Center and building cabinets for the school's lost and found.



**Ryuichiro Nonomura** is 17 years old and the son of Chikaki Kanto and Soichiro Nonomura. He is currently a senior attending Eagle Rock High School in Los Angeles. He started scouting when he first joined Cub Scouts at the age of five. For his Eagle Project, he planted and worked on building benches for the nonprofit organization, Asian Pacific Counseling & Treatment Centers. He was supported by his friends, scouts, and parents to have successfully completed the project. He is grateful for all the people who helped guide him to who he is now. He is happy that his benches are being used for good use benefiting people daily.



**Bradley Kenji Tashiro** is currently a sophomore at University of California, Santa Cruz majoring in electrical engineering. He joined scouting in the first grade as a Tiger Cub and later advanced to Troop 738 as a Boy Scout. His Eagle Project was to renovate two classrooms at the Nishi Hongwanji Child Development Center. He led the two-day project which included sanding and painting the upper and lower cabinets and the cubby units

in two classrooms. He's grateful to have been able to give back by planning and implementing this project. He's thankful for the help of the volunteers and the entire Troop for their dedication and hard work in completing the project. He's especially grateful for years of help and guidance he received throughout his entire scouting journey from the ASMs and Scoutmaster.



## CUB SCOUT NEWS

by Noemi Garcia Tagorda



The Nishi Cub Scouts held their first meeting of the year in September. We focused on being helpful and safe. Each Cub Scout prepared a first aid kit. As you may know, a first aid kit is one of the ten essentials Cub Scouts should keep with them to be prepared! Cub Scouts are meeting in person at Nishi on the 1st and 3rd Fridays of the month. We will be holding our first fundraiser soon. We hope you will support us. Please follow us on facebook to learn more about our activities.

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

# 2023

# MEMBERSHIP

Valid from January 1 through December 31, 2023

**\$250 FOR EACH ADULT FAMILY MEMBER**

CHECKS ARE PAYABLE TO:

**L.A. HOMPA HONGWANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE**

Payments may be made in full or by installments throughout the year of **2023**





*Rev. Hibiki Murakami (left) and Rimban William Briones chanting in the onaijin.*

## BETSUIN VEHICLE DONATION



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

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

### Betsuin Jiho

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

(Rimban - continued from page 1)

self-centeredness — we expect to receive rewards from our good actions. In contrast, the Pure Land Way makes us aware of our human limitations and frailties. It reveals our motives and actions as ego-centered and evil.

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

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

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

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

*Namo Amida Butsu*

### 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 2022

30 Yasuko Tashima  
30 Nancy Asako Hori

12 Yayoi Judy Uehara  
25 Minako Alice Iseda  
25 Yoshio Kozono  
30 Tetsuro Ted Tanabe

#### August 2022

2 Bessie Kameko Kurisu  
3 Gang Chon (Kam) Chu  
4 Pearl Midori Takayama  
5 Yeouren Houng  
8 Tsuki Kimura  
11 Akiko Yamamoto

#### September 2022

1 Sachiye Yoshihara  
2 Haruso Ida  
7 George Joji Nomura  
8 Amy Miyakawa  
9 Tomiko Saita