

# LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

# jihō

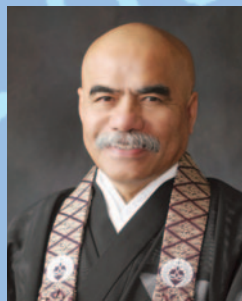
WWW

No. 484

May - June 2024

RIMBAN'S MESSAGE

## FOREGIVENESS AND BUDDHISM



**Rimbhan William  
Briones**

*"If one abuses you, there is a temptation to answer back, or to be revenged. One should be on guard against this natural reaction. It is like spitting against the wind, it harms no one but oneself. Misfortune always dogs the steps of one who gives way to the desire for revenge."*

Not too long ago Nobuko and I went to a fast food diner for breakfast. Upon our arrival we waited to be seated. But the hostess behind the counter was engaged in conversation with one of her coworkers. They seemed to be having a very serious conversation, "I'm all... she's all ...I'm like .... He's like...." After what seemed like a minute, I interrupted with a polite, "Excuse me." The expression on her face read, "Excuse me, I'm talking to my friend, do you mind?" She grabbed some menus and led us to a booth, tossed the menus on the table and walked back without a word. Needless to say I was so irritated by her lack of respect and her unprofessional manner. I was so upset that this set the tone for our breakfast and all I did was complain to Nobuko on how disrespectful this young generation is and when I was young ... blah blah blah.

The reading I began with is from the Dhammapada, where Shakyamuni Buddha spoke of the suffering and pain caused by the desire for revenge. And while the remedy for revenge is forgiveness, The Buddha rarely spoke directly on forgiveness. Unlike Christianity, forgiveness is the touch stone of Christianity.

I believe that in Buddhism in the strictest sense that there is no need for forgiveness. Spiritual awareness, by its very nature, includes the

practice of forgiveness.

In Buddhism forgiveness is not about turning the other cheek or letting someone continue getting away with behavior that is mean or heartless. Real forgiveness is about letting go. Buddhism teaches us that by becoming aware we are able to forgive and get on with our life. This awareness allows us to let go of holding on to resentment and the hurt. It is a way we can keep the energy of life draining away from us.

How many of us have gotten hurt, emotional or physical, angered, or betrayed, by someone ... friend or stranger? It is as simple as someone cutting you off on the freeway or some restaurant hostess or a waiter or waitress, or sales person with an attitude, or something as complicated as a friend or loved one betraying you.

Many times we refuse to let go of our anger or resentment. We, alone, carry the burden of our anger and resentment. By not letting go, by being attached to our anger and resentment, we have to suffer the pain over and over again every time we choose to remember and relive the experience in our mind.

Letting go is not about accepting bad behavior or making excuses for others. It means that we let go of the obsession we have with wrongs committed against us. In letting go, we neither pretend the past did not happen nor forget the past. We simply choose to live in the present.

By being hurt, angry, betrayed or feeling resentment, we're living in the past. These feelings are always about the past. But the way you feel is taking place in the present. Worst yet ... do you think the hostess knew or cared that I was having a miserable conversation with Nobuko? What a waste of time and energy.

*(continued on page 5)*

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## ONE COIN, ONE LIFE

by Rev. Hibiki Murakami



**Rev. Hibiki  
Murakami**

For this year's Spring Ohigan, Nishi Betsuin invited Rev. Blayne Higa from Kona Hongwanji in Hawaii. His talk inspired me in many ways. I was especially impressed by his ideas on inclusion which demonstrated the limitlessness of the Buddha Dharma.

This year, the Ohigan seminar was an all-day event, split into morning and afternoon sessions. In the afternoon session, Rev. Higa and our other guest, Rev. Shimizutani of the Tendai school, took part in a panel discussion. Both provided their respective opinions on the afternoon's discussion topic – "Living the Questions: Discovering the Meaning." Rev. Higa's point was relevant for those of us who wander this unpredictable world lacking absolute answers to life's questions. His position was really quite clear. We have to live out our questions and experience what comes. He pointed out that both Shakyamuni Buddha and Shinran Shonin carried fundamental and valuable questions by maintaining an attitude of simply continuously seeking to solve them. This continual learning and growing from life's experiences is the living Wisdom that enabled them – and now us - to live in the present moment.

We are continuously transforming despite our minds often being made up. How can we even begin to think that this "I" that we think we are is NOT changing? The concept of Nembutsu, or entrusting oneself to Amida Buddha (shinjin), is actually our path of reflection and transformation. Rev. Higa addressed the importance of embracing uncertainty and failure because they are part of life. Instead of being uncomfortable, he encouraged us to approach life with wonder. The questions that come up in our lives can guide our journeys towards relief and awakening. "How can I love myself and others more? How can I experience every moment of my life with an open heart and mind?" Living with questions, he said. This is the front door to entering those moments of awakening, guided by Amida Buddha's great Wisdom and Compassion.

How we can appreciate the challenges that we face in our own lives? We can look at each as an opportunity that become our teacher. And what happens if we come across situations that we really don't like? Can we still appreciate them as sources for our guidance? There is a Buddhist story that illustrates the situation. It teaches that good and bad are two sides of the same coin.

One day, a goddess of wealth visited a village man. "I bring wealth and good luck wherever I visit," she said. There were no reasons for the man to refuse her. He gave the goddess a warm welcome and treated her well. In the meantime, another goddess also came to visit him. In contrast to his other visitor, this goddess was the goddess of poverty. She too asked for his permission to stay in his house. The man didn't like the idea of being poor, so he declined her request. As the goddess of poverty turned to leave uttered words of warning. She said, "How foolish you are. Me and the goddess of wealth are sisters. Wherever she goes, we are always together. Wherever we visit, I may bring misfortune, but she gives fortune. If I bring something bad, she brings something good. When you respect me, she should do so to you." When the goddess of wealth and poverty walked off, both sisters actually disappeared.

Life brings us a variety of dramas. Sometimes they are good and sometimes not good. What Rev. Higa pointed out is that embracing even our failures, because they are part of our lives is essential to truly appreciating and accepting each moment and nourishing us on our paths. While we can be scared of misfortune, we should remember that Amida Buddha never abandons us. I, too, frequently meet new situations that I need to manage. When I encounter them, I remember a passage from Shoshinge,

*The person burdened with extreme evil should simply say the Name: although I too am within Amida's grasp, passions obstruct my eyes and I cannot see the light; nevertheless, great compassion is untiring and illumines me always. (CWS, page. 73)*



### ADOPT-AN-OBUTSUDAN

*Connect the family to the Buddha-Dharma*

*Donations would appreciated when adopting or donating an obutsudan.*



**BCA SOUTHERN DISTRICT  
OBON SCHEDULE**

<u>June 8</u>	Arizona
<u>June 22 &amp; 23</u>	Sun Valley
<u>June 29</u>	West Covina
<u>June 29 &amp; 30</u>	San Fernando
<u>July 6</u>	Senshin
<b><u>JULY 13 &amp; 14</u></b>	<b>L.A. BETSUIN</b>

*more continued in next issue*



**OBON**  
**BON ODORI  
& CARNIVAL**  
**JULY 13 & 14**

**HELP @ OBON?**

*Obon Committee*

Have you ever visited the Nishi Hongwanji Obon festival in the past? Have you ever thought, "Gee...Baachan and Jiichan use to take part in the activities at the temple..." or

"The camaraderie is of these folks working together is amazing."

"I'd like to be part of all that."

Preparations for the Obon 2024 festivities have begun. We want to get back to pre-pandemic level activities. However, just like everywhere else, we have a shortage of manpower.

This year, the Obon festivities will take place **July 13 & 14**. Help is needed with setting up, manning the booths, and take-down, and lead dancers for the inner dance circle...every facet...before and after... this weekend event.

We have set up an email address where you can contact our committee directly. Let us know that you wish to be a part of helping the festivities.

[helpnishiobon@gmail.com](mailto:helpnishiobon@gmail.com)

Check the temple website and the social media pages to see further information.

**Temple website:**

<https://www.nishihongwanji-la.org/>

**Facebook:**

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100091800679175>

**Instagram:**

[https://www.instagram.com/la\\_nishihongwanji/](https://www.instagram.com/la_nishihongwanji/)



**BON ODORI  
PRACTICE DATES**



**SUNDAYS**  
11-12:30 in Kaikan  
6/16, 6/23, & 7/7

**WEEKNIGHTS**  
7-8:30 in West Lot  
Thursday, 6/20  
Tuesday, 6/25  
Wednesday, 7/10

Call temple to confirm:  
213-680-9130





## DID YOU KNOW?

by Eiko Masuyama



*Center sections of panoramic photo of the 1931 Bestowing Betsuin Rank to  
Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple Commemorative Celebration*

*Center: Rev. H. Seki (?), Rev. J. Ono, Rev. S. Naito, Mr. Soji Fukui, Rev. R. Saruhashi (?), Bishop K. Masuyama, Rev. D. Kanda (?), Rev. H. Kuwabara (Shimizu), Mr. Tadazo Harada*

**Mrs. Kiyo Kyogoku**, wife of Rev Itsuzo Kyogoku (1919-1922), wrote in an earlier issue of the JIHO of the young men who drove the temple car to pick up students for the newly established Sunday School at Yamato Hall in the early 1920s. One of these men mentioned, Mr. S. Kami, a young man in his early twenties, believed to be **Shizuichi Kami**.

Around 1912, Shizuichi Kami, son of Benzaemon and Kai Okimoto, left Hiroshima at the age of around 15, to join his eldest brother, Yoneji Okimoto, in California. He left behind his parents and siblings, including sister, Kazume, and brother, Tutae. Shizuichi was adopted (yoshi) by the Kami family (in name only, according to daughter, **Masako Kami Hollowell**). In the early 1920s, he married Kameyo Nakamura, who died in 1934, leaving him with children, Sachiko Kami (Ida), Chieko Kami (Higashi), Seiji Kami, and Mieko Kami (Kuramoto).

Mr. Kami witnessed the temple grow and move from Yamato Hall (1917-1924), on Jackson Street, to the Central Avenue location (1925-1969) and rise to the betsuin status in June of 1931. Rev. Kenju Masuyama, bishop (socho) of the Buddhist Mission of North American (to later become BCA) was appointed acting rimban\*. He commuted from San Francisco for two years until a full time rimban was appointed. In 1933 a former bishop, **Rev Hosho Sasaki**, was appointed by Homba Hongwanji headquarters (hon-

zan) in Kyoto to be the first rimban of the temple, now called a betsuin\*\*. He served until 1935. **Rev. Jokatsu Yukawa** was appointed the second rimban (1935 – 1940). He was a young minister with much energy and established a great rapport with young people and during his term the Sunday school enrollment increased greatly as did the YBA groups. The third rimban was Rev. Jokai Kow (1940 – 1954), who endured the uncertainties and stresses of the war (1941 – 1945) and post war years.

Mr. Kami eventually ran a market in Eagle Rock and purchased a home in Glendale. He was a writer, contributing his works in the Hokubei Mainichi for several years and with his wife, writing and publishing their haiku.

Mr. Kami and the temple experienced the hard times of the depression. With the rest of the country, the temple managed to struggle along on a day-to-day basis. In 1939, the headquarters in Kyoto singled out **Soji Fukui** for his leadership and conferred on him the title of “Honzan Kanjo.” He had led the betsuin through some of its most trying years. It was a period when daily meetings were held to scrape up the following day’s subsistence funds.

**Mrs. Tsune Tokunaga** of Nishi Fujinkai (Buddhist Women’s Association, BWA) was also honored by Honzan for her contributions during this time. She was the first lay member to be president of the Fujinkai (1918). Prior years

*(continued on page 7)*

## NISHI CENTER NEWS

The Nishi Center students and staff had a field trip the the California Science Center. They were able to catch the Metro E Line Train from the newly built Little To-kyo/Arts District Metro Station and take it directly to Exposition Park.

Having spent the morning exploring various exhibits, they had lunch outside the Science Center. Then they made their way back to Nishi Center via the train trip back for a well earned nap.



If you are interested in the Nishi Hongwanji Child Development Center please call:

213-687-4585 or

email: [nishicenter815@gmail.com](mailto:nishicenter815@gmail.com)

## NISHI BOY SCOUT



### CELEBRATE MOTHERS' DAY

Sunday, May 12, 2024

8 AM - 10 AM Betsuin Kaikan

Donation: \$12<sup>00</sup> /plate

Pre-orders due by May 5th or until sold out.

Pre-order forms in temple office or

<https://forms.gle/bxZhbsA3gmb3rYzo6>

For more information, contact:

Yumi Yoshida: [nishitroop738@gmail.com](mailto:nishitroop738@gmail.com)



## HATSUMAIRI

### INFANT PRESENTATION SERVICE

*Hatsumairi* is translated as the "First Visitation" and is often referred to as the **Infant Presentation Service**.

The LA Betsuin will hold a Hatsumairi Service on **Sunday, May 19th** in conjunction with the **Gotan-ye Service** which is the observance of the birth of the Jodo Shinshu founder, Shinran Shonin.



The ministers and the dharma school teachers will be conducting the Hatsumairi Service.

To those who are interested in participating in the Hatsumairi, please contact the Betsuin office or submit the form below.

The registration form can be found on **page 9**. The deadline to register is May 5th. If the deadline has past, please call the temple office to see if arrangements can be made.



*(Rimban - continued from page 1)*

Letting go is a choice that must be freely made if the act is to mean anything. It is not meant to be an act of kindness to the person who is forgiven, but to the person who is doing the letting go. It's for me. It's an act of kindness to myself.

Letting go of the anger, the hurt, the betrayal is difficult. There are times we nurse wounds that are so deep that we feel that will never heal. There are times we want to move on but feel paralyzed, uncertain not wanting to get hurt again. Letting go occurs when we want to let go. This why it takes so long.

When I got home that day, I immediately wrote a letter to the restaurants headquarters and complained about the service. Weeks later I received a letter of an apology and they assured me that they would look into the matter. Victory was mine! Or was it? Is that spit on my face?

*Namo Amida Butsu*

**TAI CHI/QI GONG CLASS**



The LA Betsuin Buddhist Women’s Association (BWA) sponsored Tai Chi / Qigong Class for adults and seniors is offered virtually on Zoom, every Friday from 10 to 11:30 a.m. The sessions are taught by Traditional Chinese Martial Arts Grand Master Jason Tsou.

The purpose of this class is to improve and maintain physical and mental health. Topics covered include techniques and exercises that focus on balance, movement, flexibility, strength, endurance, proper breathing, using imagery, promoting mind-body awareness, positive thinking, and pain reduction. This class is supported by a Keiro grant, aimed at improving the quality of life of older adults and caregivers in the Southern California Japanese American and Japanese community. The reduced fee for the class is \$7 per person per class attended. We welcome you to join at any time.

The following is a link to a pre-pandemic Keiro article about the class. <https://www.keiro.org/features/los-angeles-hompa-hongwanji-buddhist-temple-tai-chi-qi-gong-class>

If interested in joining the class, please contact the temple and leave your name and email address or telephone number and information will be forwarded to the contact person.

**Tel: 213-680-9130**

**Email: info@nishihongwanji-la.org**

**Betsuin Jiho**

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

**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

January 16, 2024 - March 15, 2024

**January 2024**

- 20 Carol Mitsuko\* Nakano
- 22 Sawae Iwamoto
- 25 Wallace Toshio Sumimoto

- 13 Shigeto Uradomo
- 15 Ichiro Shiozaki
- 17 Kinya Tatsumi
- 19 Ichiko Masuda
- 21 George Masanobu Tamura

**February 2024**

- 01 George Joji Yamauchi
- 01 Joyce Sakaye Takeda
- 02 Sunaye Sakamoto
- 05 Hiroshi Okumoto
- 06 Masako Oshiro
- 11 Midori Goto

- 23 Toshihiko Makino
- 24 Fujiko Yoshikawa

**March 2024**

- 03 George Sasaki
- 09 Irene Sachiko Fujikawa
- 12 Mitsuye Oda

**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.*

**2024 MEMBERSHIP**

Valid from January 1 through December 31, 2024

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

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



(Know? - continued from page 4)

saw the minister's wife being the leader of the group.

Yet, through it all, in the 1930s, the ministers were able to help outlying areas and communities organize Buddhist groups. With approximately 1,500 members, the temple's operating budget for 1934 was about \$14,000. The temple sent ministers on regular schedules to groups within a radius of one hundred miles...San Fernando, Canoga Park, Pacoima, Lancaster, Burbank, Glendale, San Gabriel, Sierra Madre, Puente, South Pasadena, Hollywood, Compton, Riverside, Sawtelle, Montebello, Long Beach, Senshin, Bangle, Talbot, Alpine, Terminal Island, Dominguez Hills, Gardena, San Pedro, Santa Monica, Keystone, Downey, Norwalk, Anaheim, Hawthorne, Venice, El Segundo, Costa Mesa, Lakeview, Corona Del Mar, Garden Grove, El Monte, Watts, WALTERIA, Baldwin Park, 10th Street,... With the Nisei coming of age, it was a time of growth under the leadership of its ministers and lay leaders.

The ministers who served the Betsuin in the 1930s and up to World War II were Reverends J. Yukawa\*, H. Sasaki\*, M. Washioka, S. Nagatomi, K. Saiki, H. Fujikado, S. Sanada, K. Yamaguchi, G. Nishii, T. Tsuruyama, B. Kuwatsuki, M. Okita, D. Hayashima\*, G. Abiko, K. Iwao, K. Ogura, R. Saruhashi, G. Noda, E. Hayashi, S. Naito, H. Kuwahara, H. Seki, D. Kanda, Y. Iwanaga, Z. Toyota, K. Owcho, T. Shirakawa, K. Maehara, G. Yamamoto, K. Kumata, and J. Kow\*. The lay leaders were led by board presidents Soji Fukui (1927-1931), Fujiso Yano (1932-1935), Shinnosuke Tamari (1936-1937), Kinya Mayeda (1938-1939), Kurakichi Kaneko (1940), and Ukitaro Aratani (1941).

(to be continued)

\*rimban – head minister of a betsuin temple appointed by Honzan (Kyoto headquarters)

\*\*betsuin – temple with large congregation in centrally located area, appointed by Honzan.



*Shizuichi Kami family, Manzanar, 1943? Shizuichi and Matsuye Kami, Masako (holding doll) on lap of mother, Kiyoko in front of father, Frank Nobuo in the middle; standing in the back Chieko Kami and Mieko Kami*

\* \* \* \* \*

Wanted: photos of Rev. Gyosho Noda, Rev. Shoho Suginari, Rev. Keiya Yamaguchi, Rev. Jiitsuyo Okabe, and presidents, Mr. Torazo Okamoto (1926), Mr. Kinya Mayeda (1938-1939), ?1951. Contact temple office, leave message/number for Eiko.



## BETSUIN CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### MAY

- 05 Regular Service (10:00 am)  
Eitaikyo Shotsuki Hoyo (1:00 pm)
- 12 Mothers' Day Service (10:00 am)
- 19 Gotan-ye/Hatsumairi Service (10:00 am)
- 26 Memorial Day Service

### JUNE

- 02 Regular Service (10:00 am)
- 09 Regular Service (10:00 am)  
Eitaikyo Shotsuki Hoyo (1:00 pm)
- 16 Fathers' Day Service (10:00 am)  
Bon Odori Practice in Kaikan (11:00 am)
- 20 Bon Odori Practice (7:00 pm)
- 23 Graduation & Attendance Recognition Service  
(10:00 am)  
Bon Odori Practice in Kaikan (11:00 am)
- 25 Bon Odori Practice (7:00 pm)

### JULY

- 07 Regular Service (10:00 am)  
Bon Odori Practice in Kaikan (11:00 am)  
Eitaikyo Shotsuki Hoyo 1 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)

BETSUIN PHOTOS



**OHIGAN SERVICE**

*I-r front: Rev. Matsubayashi, Rimban Briones, Rev. Fukuma back: Minister Asst. Di Giglio, Rev. Higa (guest speaker), Rev. Murakami, & Rev. Miyaji (guest speaker)*



*Former Betsuin president, Pam Tabata and current president Ken Kawasaki present flowers and pour sweet tea at the Hanamatsuri Service.*



**Hanamatsuri**

*Betsuin ministers chanting before the Hanamido with the "baby Buddha."*



*Scout Sunday Service - Nishi Scout Troop 738*



*Girl Scout Sunday Service - Nishi Girl Scout Troop 12135*



*Shigeo Yoshida, Nishi Scout, earns BCA Sangha Award after 72 hours of study over two years.*



*Ms. June Kondo helps dharma school student with Valentine's Day cupcakes provided by the Dharma School Parents*



*front: Kay Kami, Masako Kami Hollowell (see article on page 4) back: Nancy Fukumoto, Rev George and Mrs. Kay Matsubayashi, Eiko Masuyama*



**HATSUMAIRI**  
**May 19, 2024**  
**REGISTRATION FORM**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

***PLEASE SUBMIT THIS FORM TO THE BETSUIN OFFICE BY: MAY 5, 2022***

LA Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple  
815 E. 1st St.  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Tel: 213-680-9130      Email: [info@nishihongwanji-la.org](mailto:info@nishihongwanji-la.org)