

# Betsuin Jiho

No. 387

March-April, 2008

www.nishihongwanji-la.org

Phone (213) 680-9130 • FAX (213) 680-2210

## LOS ANGELES BETSUIN FUJINKAI 90TH ANNIVERSARY

by George T. Matsubayashi, Rimban

*Congratulatory Service For The 90<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary Since Its Founding and  
Memorial Service For Those Who Passed On  
To The Pure Land Before Us*



During the year 2005, we celebrated the first centennial of the establishment of our Los Angeles *Betsuin* Buddhist Temple, which means, of course, that we began our activities in spreading the *dharma* during the year 1905. During that first year, there were three temples associated with the Nishi Hongwanji mother temple in Japan. These were the Southern California Buddhist Temple (*Nanka Bukkyo kai* – original *sangha* of Los Angeles *Betsuin*), Central Buddhist Temple (*Chuo Bukkyo-kai*), and the Los Angeles Buddhist Temple (*Rafu Bukkyo-kai*). Of these temples, the Southern California Temple and the Central Buddhist Temple merged during the year 1917, to form the *Hongwanji Bukkyokai* of Los Angeles.

During the period our temple was established, no distinctions were made between young or old, or male or female. Everyone helped in spreading the *dharma* in this region. In October of 1917, our Sunday school (*dharma* school) program was started and our Young Buddhist Association was organized during March of 1918. With the rapid development of our temple, the role of women became more and more necessary and the “Buddhist *Fujinkai*” (Buddhist Woman’s Association) was organized during June of 1918. The resident minister’s wife was installed as the first president of the *Fujinkai*. Records maintained in our temple indicate that the main activities during that time were *dharma* gatherings to listen and to learn the teaching of the *nembutsu*.

A gathering place called Yamato Hall was located in the area presently occupied by the headquarters of the Los Angeles Police Department. This hall was used for many different Japanese functions, including conducting Buddhist services, using a portable Buddhist altar. The altar installed in our newly constructed Wisteria Chapel was the altar used when services were held at the Yamato Hall.

With the increasing popularity of *Buddha-dharma*, the desire for a more permanent *dojo* to practice the *nembutsu* arose, until finally during 1925, a beautiful temple was constructed on the corner of First Street and Central Ave. This structure is presently used to house the Japanese-American National Museum.

With the construction of a new *dojo*-temple, even more people were attracted to the *nembutsu* teaching. Six years later – during 1931 – our Los Angeles Buddhist Temple was elevated to the status of “*Betsuin*,” which means that we have a special relationship with our mother temple in Japan. Ours was the very first in the United States mainland to be awarded this designation.

Our missionary activity continued increasing. We extend our efforts not only in the Los Angeles area, but also throughout the Southern

California area, and even to the state of Arizona. From about the end of 1930’s to the beginning of the 1940’s, our Los Angeles *Betsuin* Buddhist Temple developed programs suitable to persons of all ages. We developed programs for the Dharma School Parents Association, athletic programs, scout programs, and even cultural classes. Those organizations continue today, meeting the spiritual needs of all members of our temple.

But even among these very active organizations, the *Fujinkai* must be singled out for praise. As already indicated, when the *Fujinkai* was first organized, the resident minister’s wife took on the president’s responsibility. From about 1933, however, the president was elected from among *Fujinkai* members, and the minister’s wife acted in an advisory capacity. Since then, the *Fujinkai* members have taken the initiative in spreading the *nembutsu* teaching.

Throughout their 90-years of existence, *Fujinkai* members have always served for the Buddha, nurtured and raised their children who are the Buddha’s children, and in all ways helped in running our temple. It would not be overstating the case to say that our temple could not exist without them. I am truly grateful!

*Los Angeles Betsuin  
Buddhist Women’s Association  
Fujinkai  
90th Anniversary*

Lady Yoshiko Ohtani, the late wife of the 23rd *Monshu* of our Hongwanji, was the honorary president of the World Federation of the Buddhist Women’s Association (*Fujinkai*) for half a century. At the Tenth World *Fujinkai* Conference held in Anaheim during September of 1994, Lady Ohtani said that raising the Buddha’s children is not easy even in the Buddhist country of Japan, but that the sacred teaching of the *nembutsu* has transcended race and language, and is now available throughout the world.

One of the main reasons it has done so, Lady Ohtani said, is because of the *Fujinkai* members who, as ladies, as wives, as mothers, left Japan for a foreign country with the *nembutsu* teaching deeply implanted in their minds and hearts. They planted the joy of the *nembutsu* among those who first language is English and other languages. I could not help but be grateful for her words, and a feeling of *mottai nai*, completely unworthy of her words, filled my entire being.

Speaking of which, it appears that the woman’s lib movement is making inroads even in the male-dominated society of Japan. What I mean by this is that some Japanese people have complained that the term “*fujin*” of “*fujinkai*” tends to look down on women because the *kanji* character for “*fu*” is a combination of the characters for “female” and “broom” (“*jin*” means “person”), implying that woman is the person to cleaning up.

see RIMBAN/ page 4



### 14 MINISTERS PARTICIPATE IN THE SHINRAN SHONIN 750<sup>th</sup> OMACHIUKE MEMORIAL SERVICE

FRONT LEFT: REV. MASAO KODANI, REV. SHOKI MOHRI, SOCHO KOSHIN OGUI, RIMBAN GEORGE MATSUBAYASHI, REV. SEIKAN FUKUMA, & REV. KOJU TERADA. BACK: REV. JOHN DOAMI, REV. KENN KOIZUMI, REV. KOJO KAKIHARA, REV. WILLIAM BRIONES, REV. TETSUNEN HIROTA, REV. SHINJI OKADA, REV. HAROLD ODA, & REV. KAKUYEI TADA.

## THOUGHTS ON THE ONENJU

by Rev. William Briones

“What is taught by Master Shinran and in his school is that faith is fundamental. For when we cast away the sundry practices and single-heartedly take refuge in Amida, birth in the Pure Land is assured by the Buddha through the inconceivable working of the Vow.”

Recently while Nobuko and I were dining out one evening, our waiter noticed that we were both wearing a wrist *nenju* (aka: *ojuzu*).

“You guys Buddhist?” he asked.

“Yes”, I replied.

“I don’t know too much about Buddhism” he said, “It’s about inner peace ... inner tranquility, isn’t it?”

I said, “Well something like that”

It was difficult to be so philosophical in a very noisy restaurant. I continued,

“It’s more about becoming more aware of yourself and your interconnection with everything around you and...”

“Yeah, okay, would you like LA finest water or bottled water?”

“Tap is fine”, I respond.

When he returned with our water he once again commented on our *nenju*.

“My girlfriend says that they have the power to improve your health, spirit and finances and stuff like that, depending on the stone.... Is that true?”

Now I really dislike proselytizing. I don’t appreciate it when some over zealous Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah’s Wit-ness, or some Fundamen-tal’s comes knocking on my door or approaches me in the street and preaches to me. As a Buddhist, I think proselytizing is avoided, it is considered not part of the Buddhist Way.

Likewise, I keep my own thoughts and revelations generally to myself in public. I really don’t consider myself as one who wears my



Buddhism on my sleeve. But since I do wear a *nenju* on my wrist and I am a minister, I felt obligated to enlighten our waiter on the purpose of my *nenju*.

I told him that the beads that I wear and those Buddhist in my tradition, have no such power. That for me, my beads serve as a subtle but effective daily reminder of my Buddhist path, it’s a reminder that even with all my shortcomings, my imperfect self, that I am embraced by the truth of the oneness of the world birth and death and enlightenment.

“Are you ready to order?” he asked. So much for my hand at proselytizing.

After returning from my studies in Japan several years ago, I was surprised to find that the latest craze of wearing the *nenju* had become a fashion statement. They were called power beads! I learned that this was the latest New Age craze. From Macy’s to the street vendors on Telegraph St. in Berkeley, power beads were selling like hotcakes. These bracelets were made of semi-precious stones that are thought to have certain powers depending on the color and stone.

I recently did a web search on the internet on power beads, and guess what? There are 127,570 sites for power beads and only 273 for *nenju*. Most of the sites that I checked were advertisements and some were on information on power beads. The advertisements usually boasted of the power the beads held. For example:

*The “Original Power Bead Bracelet”, Feel the power! For centuries, stones have been used for their healing powers. Celebrities and other believers have been sporting power beads on both coasts. Now you to can be a member of the “power club”. Enrich and take control of our life with a little help from your power bead bracelet. Combine different elements for even greater power. For example, wear*

see BRIONES/ page 4



## BETSUIN SCHEDULE

- **OHIGAN SEMINAR**  
MARCH 22nd
- **OHIGAN SERVICE**  
MARCH 23rd
- **HANAMATSURI**  
April 6th

Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple  
815 East First Street • Los Angeles, California 90012

Change Service Requested

Non Profit Organization  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
Los Angeles, California  
Permit No. 13897

## LA BETSUIN WELCOMES NEW MINISTER, REV. KOJO KAKIHARA

### INTERVIEW:



REV. KOJO KAKIHARA

**JIHO:** Where in Japan are you from?

**SENSEI:** I am from Onomichi city of Hiroshima Prefecture. Onomichi is a port town which has many Buddhist temples and slopes.

**JIHO:** How old are you?

**SENSEI:** I am 29 years old.

**JIHO:** Are you from a temple family?

**SENSEI:** Yes. My home temple is Eisho-ji temple.

**JIHO:** Tell us about your family. Parents? Siblings?

**SENSEI:** I have my father, mother, grand father, grand mother, elder sister, and younger brother in Japan. My father, Kenjo, is the 15th resident minister. He is also a master of Japanese Ikebana (Ikenobo) and teaches Ikebana classes. My mother, Shigeko, is a steady and tender person. She was always busy in doing temple work, housework, and community work, but she always took care of me. My sister, Maya, married last October and now lives in Kyoto. We are good friends and have traveled India and Italy together. My brother, Daijo, is disabled with Down's syndrome and works at a local workshop for disabled people. He is very well, physically, and has joined the national track and field competition for disabled people. He is very kind and I have learned and been given a lot from him.

**JIHO:** Is the Los Angeles Betsuin your first assignment here in the United States? Did you spend any time ministering in Japan?

**SENSEI:** Yes. The LA Betsuin is my first assignment in the United States. I became a minister when I was 19 years old. Since that time, I have ministered at my home temple when I had returned home. I was also a temporary staff person at the Ohtani-Honryo (Hongwanji's Mausoleum) in Kyoto for one year.

**JIHO:** Where did you study?

**SENSEI:** I studied Buddhism and Jodo-shinshu at Chuo Bukkyo Gakuin in Kyoto.

**JIHO:** Why did you decide to become a minister? Have you worked at anything else besides at a temple?

**SENSEI:** Because I am a successor of my home temple, it was natural for me to become a minister. After graduation from the university, I was a trading company employee for three years in Tokyo. I was in the sales department of electronics.

There are no borders in religion. So I came here to share the Jodo-Shinshu's teachings.

**JIHO:** Do you have any hobbies...interests?

**SENSEI:** I like playing billiards very much. I have my own cues. I also like playing sports (volleyball, tennis, and skiing), making things myself, and traveling. I have made a leather bag and shelves to display books, and glasses which I am collecting. I have travelled to 16 countries. I also like tea ceremony and Ikebana.

**JIHO:** You speak English fairly well. Is this from studying English in Japan?

**SENSEI:** I have to get used to English some more. I graduated from Kobe City University of Foreign Studies. There were some English classes though my major was International affairs. During my time in the university, I spent 8 months in Great Britain to study English. I studied English at a pub every night.

## BETSUIN ACTIVITIES IN PIX

photos by Koichi Sayano and Glen Tao



### PHOTO CAPTIONS

1. Sutra chanting in the kaikan during the Oseibo service
2. Oseibo- Grant Saita and Rev. Briones catches up on news
3. Oseibo- Bon odori dances
4. Oseibo - Nishi Center stidemts dressed in yukata
5. Oseibo - Rimban and BWA sing with the Bon odori music
6. Oseibo- Sangha partaking on the pot luck organized by the Dharma School Parents group.
7. Oseibo - Jr. Y quartet
8. Jodo-e - Rimban tolling the New Year's Eve bonsho
9. BWA - Emiko Sasaki and Suzuko Nakamura taking a break from the New Year's preparations
10. BWA - Amy Miyakawa with kitchen preparations
11. Ernest Hida pours Joyce Tomita some sake in celebration of the New Year's Eve.
12. BWA - Fumiko Jinkawa preppares the fish for the New Year's traditional otoki
13. BWA - Nobuko Sayano, Mrs. Kay Matsubayashi, and Moruko Okita preparing for Ho-onko.
14. Jonathan Omokawa and Jonathan Kawasaki help prepare food for the Jr YBA hosted monthly Sunday breakfast.
15. Rev. Koizumi does the finishing touches by sprinkling sesame seeds on the onigiri
16. Hoonko - Behind the scenes - Rev. Kakihara and Rev. Koizumi assist Socho Ogui in getting dressed while Rev. Briones looks on.
17. Rev. Seikan Fukuma does a reading during the Shinran Shonin 750th Memorial Omachiuke service
18. New members of the Betsuin.
19. Rev. Kakihara and Rev. Koizumi flank Socho Ogui (seated) during the Shinran Shonin 750th Memorial Omachiuke service

**L.A. BETSUIN**  
**"TELEPHONE DHARMA MESSAGE"**  
 ENG: 213-680-2038  
 JPN: 213-680-2080

**FUNDRAISER**  
 FOR BETSUIN BUILDING RENOVATIONS  
**"DAY AT MARIE CALLENDER'S"**

MARIE CALLENDER'S WILL DONATE 20% OF ANY FOOD, BEVERAGE, TAKE-OUT, AND WHOLE PIE PURCHASES ON:

**APRIL 19, 2008**  
**9:00 TO 9:30 PM**

PARTICIPATING LOCATIONS:  
**MONTEBELLO**  
 MONTEBELLO TOWN CENTER

<b>CITY OF INDUSTRY</b> PUENTE HILLS EAST	<b>WEST WHITTIER</b> WASHINGTON BLVD.
<b>WEST LOS ANGELES</b> NATIONAL BLVD.	<b>LA HABRA</b> WHITTIER BLVD

TO PARTICIPATE, ENCLOSED FLYER MUST BE PRESENTED TO THE SERVER. FLYERS ARE AVAILABLE AT THE BETSUIN AND MAY BE DUPLICATED.



**SPRING OHIGAN SEMINAR**

**JODO SHINSHU**  
**IN EVERYDAY LIVING**

ARE YOU LISTENING?

Saturday, March 22, 2008 9:00 am- 4:00 pm

GUEST SPEAKERS:

<b>ENGLISH</b> Rev. Fumiaki Usuki WLA Buddhist Temple	<b>JAPANESE</b> Rev. Kojo Kakihara LA Betsuin
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Registration Fee: \$10 Includes Obento Lunch  
 To reserve a seat and to order a bento lunch, please send in your name & check payable to:  
 LA Hampa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple.

LA Betsuin Higan Seminar 815 E. 1st St. Los Angeles, CA 90012 by March 16th

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

## INTERVIEW:

### SEIBI OKITA ABOUT HIS FATHER, REV. MIYOSHI OKITA, PART IV

by Elaine Fukumoto

This is the fifth and final installment in the series of parts of an interview where Seibi Okita speaks of his father, Rev. Miyoshi Okita and his own life. This interview was part of a research project that compiled stories told by offsprings of detainees who were deemed as "Dangerous Enemy Aliens" at the Santa Fe internment camp. This final installment ends with the brief story of the controversial killings at Lordsburg for which Rev. Okita gave an affidavit on behalf of one of the victims.

This is an edited version of the interview. The complete interview can be viewed/heard on the internet at:

<http://manymountains.org/family-histories/okita/media/index.php>

In the previous installment, Seibi spoke of the home he had been living in for 19 years.

**MM: So, at this time you were working produce?**

**Seibi:** No, I was cooking at a cafeteria. After the cafeteria, I was drafted to go into the army and I was cooking again.

**MM: Where were you stationed?**

**Seibi:** Ford Ord. Ford Ord is in Monterey. I stayed there two years and then I came back and I went back to the same cafeteria. I didn't want to work in the cafeteria. They had a restaurant so I asked to work in the restaurant in Torrance. So I was working in the restaurant.

After that I went to work in Japanese town. They used to have a restaurant called Eigiku and they wanted to open up a coffee shop. I was running the coffee shop. They called it "The Pig House." [Due to business being slow] I ended up working all day--16-17 hour days. One of my friends said a lady's sister's husband was working at a market. He said I was going to get sick working that many hours. He got me a job at the market since then, I've been working at the market. I've been working at that market for 37 years. I'm still working there.

**MM: You're still working? Where is it?**

**Seibi:** Right now, I'm working in Westlake Village in Thousand Oaks. I live in Van Nuys.

**MM: How many children do you have?**

**Seibi:** I have three -- two boys and one girl.

**MM: What are there names and what are they doing?**

**Seibi:** The oldest one is Issei. He graduated from UC Irvine and went to Japan. He found a girl there and got married. She didn't speak English and he didn't want her parents to worry, so he found a job there and stayed. It's already been six, seven years had he has two kids -- a girl and a boy.

**MM: What area does he work?**

**Seibi:** Nagoya. He's working for a university. He's not a teacher. He does administration at the university. It's an international relationship type of school.

He takes students to the Philippines. He makes arrangements for the students to stay there for maybe two weeks or so. This is to help the international relationship--helping the Filipino people.

The second son--his name is Mamoru. He's in the Navy,

stationed in San Diego. He hasn't done combat in the war, but he's already been in for six years. While in the Navy he has training for five months on a ship every year. He's leaving at the end of June to go to the Middle East for training--not for the war. I'm not worried. He's a sonar engineer. He's at the front of a battleship to detect submarines to protect the whole fleet.

The last one is Lina, my daughter. She's going to Long Beach State to become a dietician. She's the one who just won a speech contest in Japanese school. She's going to Japan the same day my son is going to training at the end of June.



Group photo of Buddhist ministers imprisoned at Santa Fe, New Mexico around 1943. Rev. Okita is the third minister from the left.

**MM: How long was your dad in Brawley?**

**Seibi:** In Brawley? I don't remember.... maybe a year.

**MM: Do you know about the shooting incident at Lordsburg?**

**Seibi:** No....

**MM: There were two people who were killed when they got off the train as they walked toward the camp. One of them was from Brawley. During the court martial, it was said that these two men were sick. One had tuberculosis and one was crippled but they were accused of running away. The guard said that he had shot them because they were running away. It turns out they were shot with a shot guns. According to the guard, he shot from across the road as they were running in the middle of the night. It was a full moon and it was light. He shot them with a shotgun with nine pellets.**

**The cursory autopsy found all nine pellets were in the men so it was at close range. They accused the men of running away. But, in Lordsburg there's nowhere to run. It's just mountains--and these men couldn't walk very well.**

**Your father [Miyoshi Okita] spoke on behalf of the man from Brawley. He had said that he didn't think he'd run away. He was a good man. He was known to be honest. Some of the Issei testified on their behalf. But, according to the Army they were rightfully shot.**

*This concludes the five part series of the interview of Seibi Okita.*

## DID YOU KNOW?...

by Eiko Masuyama

Hongwanji Family #18390 entered Santa Anita (Race Track, CA) Assembly Center on May 9, 1942. Reverend Newton Ishiura, Reverend Reichi Mohri, and Yutaka Shinohara were the heads of this family. Leader Rev. Ishiura became ill, so Rev. Mohri and Mr. Shinohara, as heads of this family, then took the group to Heart Mountain (Wyoming) Relocation Center on September 9, 1942. Rev. Mohri went on to establish the Nishi Hongwanji Buddhist Church in April, 1943.

This large family was formed when the wives of the ministers at the Los Angeles Betsuin expressed concern about their future...staying together as a group and attempting to not be sent to Manzanar Relocation Center. Their husbands, all Japan born ministers, had been arrested immediately after Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941, hence their fear of what was to become of them and their families.

**Members of Hongwanji Family #18390:**

**Mrs. Asae Kow**, wife of Rimban Jokai Kow (Fukuoka) arrived in the United States on July, 1925. Rev. and Mrs. Kow arrived in Los Angeles in 1940 with children Mie Helen Nishimura (who was to graduate from Roosevelt in 1942), Takao (graduated from Belmont High School), Morio (graduated from Roosevelt), and Kuniye Odama (graduated from Roosevelt High School). Kuni recalls "snow" in Heart Mountain and not knowing her father when he was reassigned to Heart Mountain after over two years separation from his family. The family returned to Los Angeles in 1945. Rimban returned early to get the temple in order for returnees, and assisted many in



**Hongwanji Family #18390** (ministers' wives and families) in front of the Betsuin office.

Front: (children) Koki Abiko, Yoshitaka Mohri, Seibi Okita, Kuniye Kow Odama. 2nd row: (children) Hiroshi Ohno Reiko Mohri Ishihara, Morio Kow, Takao Kow; adults Rev. Newton Ishiura, Helen Mie Kow Nishimura (behind), Mrs. Kiyoka Ohno with Junko, Mrs. Myoko Hayashina, Hiroshi with Mrs. Hiroko Abiko, Mrs. Hanayo Mohri, Mrs. Chiyoko Okita, & Mrs. Asae Kow.

relocating issues of residence and jobs.

**Mrs. Hiroko Abiko** (Kyoto), wife of Rev. Giko Abiko, both are presently residing in Sebastopol, CA. Mrs. Abiko arrived in the United States in October, 1937. Rev. and Mrs. Abiko arrived in Los Angeles in 1938 with son Koki; son, Hiroshi was born in 1941 and is a BCA minister presently assigned to the San Francisco Buddhist Temple. The Abiko family left Heart Mountain for Tule Lake (CA), then to Santa Fe (NM), and then to Japan in 1945. The family returned to the United States in 1954.

**Mrs. Myoko Hayashina** (Hokkaido), wife of Rev. Daitetsu Hayashina, arrived

together, assigned to Los Angeles, in 1937. Rev. and Mrs. Hayashina left Heart Mountain for Rohwer, AR in 1944, then back to Los Angeles in 1945. Rev. Hayashina became Rimban in 1956, retired in 1962 and returned to Japan.

**Rev. Reichi and Mrs. Hanayo Mohri** (Hiroshima) arrived with the family in the United States in 1937. The family included Yoshitaka and Reiko Mohri Ishihara. Rev. Mohri was assigned to Los Angeles in 1941. The Mohri family left Heart Mountain for Tule Lake (CA) in 1943, then returned to Japan in 1945.

**Mrs. Kiyoka Hine Ono** (Kyoto), wife of Rev. Jotetsu Ono, arrived with second son Hiroshi in December, 1940. They arrived in Los Angeles in 1941. Mrs. Ono with Hiroshi and daughter Junko, probably went from Heart Mountain to Tule Lake, then returned to Japan in 1945. Mrs. Ono with son Hiroshi returned to United States in 1952.

**Mrs. Chiyoko Okita** (living in Kumamoto), wife of Rev. Miyoshi Okita, arrived in the Los Angeles in October, 1938. Son Seibi was born in Los Angeles. Son Masazumi was born in Heart Mountain. From Heart Mountain, Mrs. Okita and 2 children then joined Rev. Okita in Crystal City (TX) in 1944 where third son Yoshikuni was born. The family returned to Japan in 1945. Fourth son Yoshimi, born in Japan, took over family temple in Kumamoto. Mrs. Okita resides with son and family in Kumamoto.

**Rev. Newton Ishiura**, born in Kauai, Hawaii, was reassigned from Bakersfield (CA) to Los Angeles in 1942 at the outbreak of World War II. Rev. Ishiura went from Santa Anita Assembly Center to see DID YOU KNOW?/ page 4

## BETSUIN CALENDAR

### MARCH

1 SURF 'N TURF FUNDRAISER

### OHIGAN

SPEAKERS:

ENG: Rev. Fumiaki Usuki (WLA Buddhist Temple)

JPN: Rev. Kojo Kakihara (LA Betsuin)

22 SEMINAR 9 am - 4 pm

"JODO SHINSHU AND EVERYDAY LIVING"

23 SERVICE &

RIMBAN MEMORIAL SERVICE 10:00 A.M

### APRIL

6 BETSUIN HANAMATSURI SERVICE 10 am

13 BUTSUREN HANAMATSURI

@ Koyasan Buddhist Temple 11 am

19 "DAY @ MARIE CALLENDER'S" FUNDRAISER (see information on page 2)

26 BETSUIN BWA 90TH ANNIVERSARY 10 am Memorial Service

ENG: Rev. Tetsuo Unno (Pasadena Buddhist Temple)

JPN: Rimban George Matsubayashi (LA Betsuin)

1:30 pm Celebration Service

ENG: Rev. John Iwohara (Venice Hongwanji)

JPN: Rev. Seikan Fukuma (BCA Minister Emeritus)

### MAY

11 MOTHER'S DAY SERVICE BOY SCOUT PANCAKE BREAKFAST

## NISHI CENTER

WISH LIST:

(new or used....)

Toaster

Electric Skillet

Microwave

Oven



Nishi Center children standing outside the bus that took them on their field trip to the Bob Baker Marionette Theatre. The bus was provided for free by Councilwoman Jan Perry.

## HATSUMAIRI, INFANT PRESENTATION SERVICE

*Hatsumairi* or *Shosan-shiki* is defined as the "First Visitation" and is often referred to as the *Infant Presentation Service*. During this ceremony, parents bring their child before the Amida Buddha and the *sangha* to pledge a commitment to raising the child with the *nembutsu*. The *sangha* community's presence is to witness the ceremony and to support the parents' endeavor.

The LA Betsuin will conduct its annual *Hatsumairi* Service on **Sunday, May 18th** in conjunction with the *Gotan-ye* Service which is the observance of the birth of the *Jodo Shinshu* founder, Shinran Shonin.

The ministers and the *dharma* school teachers will be conducting the *Hatsumairi* Service for any infant up to one (1) year of age. Participating families will receive certificates including the infants' footprints and and photographs. To those who are interested in participating in the *Hatsumairi*, please submit the registration form below by May 4th, 2008.



## HATSUMAIRI REGISTRATION FORM

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

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

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

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

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

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

PLEASE SUBMIT THIS FORM TO THE BETSUIN OFFICE BY: MAY 4, 2008

## TOKUBETSU DONATIONS

## RIMBAN

(continued from page 1)

Regarding this interpretation of the character “fu,” Rev. Daijo Toyohara in his collection of dharma talks titled “*Survey of the Mind and Heart*” (*Kokoro no Fukei*), points out that rather than meaning “broom,” the “fu” character is actually a combination of “female” and a character referring to women who purify bundles of miscanthus – a straw-like plant – with *sake*. This is sacred religious function that not everyone can be assigned to do. Rev. Toyohara adds that the person who are considered the parents of the *Fujinkai* in Japan, “the wife of the 22nd Monshu (Spiritual Leader) of the Hongwanji, Lady Kazuko Ohtani and his sister, Lady Takeko Kujo who very likely devised the term “Buddhist *Fujinkai*,” could not have selected a more suitable term to refer to the organization of Buddhist women (pg. 94).

Similarly, in Japanese, Jodo-Shinshu ministers are referred to as “*kaikyoshi*.” This term is also used by the other Japanese Buddhist organizations in the United States, but there is a difference in how this term is written. In other Japanese Buddhist organizations, the term “*shi*” of “*kaikyoshi*” is written with a character meaning “master,” as in “master in spreading the teaching.” In our Jodo-Shinshu teaching, however, the “*shi*” character used means “transmitter,” as in “transmitter of the *nembutsu*.” This character expresses the fundamental trait of Jodo-Shinshu ministers whose primary function is to assist others in experiencing the joy of the *nembutsu*.

This is exactly in keeping with the attitude of the founder of Jodo-Shinshu, Venerable Master Shinran. Master Rennyō quoted the words of the Venerable Master: “[The late master said], (I) Shinran, do not have even a single disciple. The reason for this is that when I expound the *tathagata dharma* to sentient beings in the ten directions, I am only speaking as the *tathagata*’s representative. (I) ...do not propagate any new dharma at all; I entrust myself to the *tathagata*’s *dharma* and simply teach that to others.”<sup>1</sup>

The Jodo-Shinshu teaching begins and ends with accepting the *tathagata*’s teaching and sharing and transmitting the joy of being embraced by the *nembutsu* with others. That is also the sole reason for the existence of our Buddhist *sangha*, *Fujinkai*. That is how both ministers and laypersons put into practice “experiencing (the *nembutsu*) and sharing the joy of that experience with others” (*jishin kyoninshin*).

Deeply grateful for the nourishment that the Los Angeles Betsuin Buddhist Temple *Fujinkai* has provided our temple, we will conduct a Memorial Service for *Fujinkai* members who have passed on to the Pure Land this coming April 27 (Sunday) from 10:00 AM. Our speakers will be Reverend Tetsuo Unno (in English) and Rimban George T. Matsubayashi (in Japanese).

In the afternoon of that same day, starting at 1:30PM, we will conduct a congratulatory service marking the 90th year of the establishment of the *Betsuin Fujinkai*. The English speaker will be Reverend John Iwohara, and the Japanese speaker will be Reverend Seikan Fukuma. After this service, starting at 3:30PM, a banquet will be offered in our *Betsuin Kaikan* Multi-Purpose Hall. A program of light entertainment is also planned. Ministers, their spouses and *Fujinkai* members from the other southern district Buddhist temples will also attend. I invite all of you to attend these most significant services.

Gassho

<sup>1</sup> Rennyō: the Second Founder of Shin Buddhism, Minor L. and Ann T. Rogers. Asian Humanities Press, Berkeley, California, 1991, pg. 142.

## 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

## BRIONES

(continued from page 1)

“*Aventurine Stone for success, with rose quartz for love: and get your heart’s desire. Have fun and remember-you’ve got the power!*”

I don’t how you feel about it, but I think this represents really the dark side of commercialism. Luckily I think this power bead craze has peaked and it’s run its course.

Like our waiter, I am sure many non-Buddhist and even Buddhist do not know the significance of the *nenju* that they wear on their wrist. One thing, for sure the *nenju* holds no power to give wealth, health or love. They hold no power to keep misfortune from our lives.

The reading that I began with is from Rennyō Shonin Letters: Fascicle 5 Letter 10. Rennyō writes.

“*When we cast away sundry practices and single heartedly take refuge in Amida, birth in the Pure Land is assured ...*”

What does Rennyō mean by “*sundry practices*?” He means, good luck charms, *omamori*, fortune tellers, horoscopes, superstitions.

Jodo Shinshu firmly rejects any use of its teachings to gain worldly or secular benefits. The Jodo Shinshu Preamble says,

“*Understanding fully the principle of causality, we shall not conduct petitionary prayers for secular benefits or magical acts, and shall not rely on fortune telling and other superstitious acts.*”

This lasting dislike for such acts supports Shinran’s stance against using religion to gain worldly benefits.

In contrast, there are many temples of other schools in Japan today that actively foster benefits. If you’ve ever visited Japan I’m sure you’ve seen fortune papers tied to tree branches seeking everything from success in university entrance exams to household prosperity and longevity. In front of many business you can see a cone of salt on the ground near the entrance.

These requests or practices are certainly not evil in the secular sense, but they go against the Buddhist principle (second Noble Truth) that desire is the cause of suffering. Shinran was, strongly against such practices.

The Buddha, Shinran and Rennyō, warned us of relying on such things as powerbeads to find health, wealth or love. The Buddha said:

“*It is wrong to think that misfortunes come from the east or from the west; they originate within one’s own mind. Therefore, it is foolish to guard against misfortunes from the external world and leave the inner mind uncontrolled.*”

Rennyō thought it was important enough to write a letter on the subject entitled “*Juzu*” (Fascicle 2 Letter 5).

“*...There is indeed no sign of anyone having undergone a decisive settling of the faith of Other Power. The reason for this is that there is no one who even carries a juzu. It is as if they grasped the Buddha with bare hands.*”

Yet Rennyō continues.... Even if you don’t carry them, you are still assured birth in the Pure Land if you entrust yourself to the Vow.

Our *nenju* has a long history and though these bracelets of beads have been modified and the use has varied through out the centuries there is one common theme ... that is the devotion to and reverence for Buddha and His teachings.

Our *nenju* has no special power. We don’t wear or carry it around for good luck nor to keep misfortune from our lives.

The true power lies within the vow of the Buddha that assures us of birth at the moment we entrust in Buddha’s Vow. This is the Other Power of Amida.

Namoamida Butsu

## DID YOU KNOW?

(continued from page 3)

Hillcrest Sanatorium to Gila River (AZ) Relocation Center in 1943. He then went to Yale University as a Japanese language instructor and was the Executive Director for the Eastern YBL. During the war, he assisted Midwest and New York Buddhist Churches.

## Other Members of Family #18390

Kinzuchi Kimoto, Alice Kimoto, and Hayato; Masao Tasaki, Masako Tasaki, Tsuneo and Yoshio; Mrs. Teruyo Kimura; Mrs. Seiko Roku; Tatsuo and Toshime Nakamura; Mr. and Mrs. Susumo Kawamoto

## Betsuin YBA Gyotoku Kai members:

Tadayoshi Sera, Tsutomu Sera, Mrs. Kimiko Hirano Shiota, Yutaka Shinohara (president)

The above information was from an interview with Mr. Yutaka Shinohara, January, 2002 and BCA, A Legacy of the First 100 Years, 1998.

If you have additions and / or corrections to above information, please leave message for Eiko Masuyama in Betsuin office, 213-680-9130. JIHOs from the pre-2000 are needed. Please leave at Betsuin office if you would like to donate copies.

Thank you to Mrs. Yukiko Kimura of San Fernando for 1962 Rafu Shimpō Japanese article about the activities of the *Betsuin*, regarding acquired hall on Breed Street, orphanage, apartment, and branch temple homes in Orange County, Long Beach, and Venice. The hall (*kaikan*), orphanage, and apartment buildings were sold to partially finance the new temple on First and Vignes Street.

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Sunday 12:50 PM Dharma Message

Betsuin Jiho

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