

Betsuin Jiho

No. 391

November-December, 2008

www.nishihongwanji-la.org

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

OUR EITAIKYO MEMORIAL SERVICE

by George T. Matsubayashi, Rimban

The month of November is when the temples in our BCA conduct Eitaikyo Memorial Services.

Eitaikyo means "chanting sutras in perpetuity," which is short for "chanting sutras in perpetuity in memory of those who have passed on before us." It is a service that we conduct in appreciation of those who have already passed on to the Pure Land, and to praise the Buddha's virtue and strengthen our ties with the teaching of Buddha-dharma.

Here at the Los Angeles Betsuin Buddhist Temple, we conduct three types of Eitaikyo Services:

- "Individual Eitaikyo Service" (*besshu eitaikyo hoyo*).
- "General Eitaikyo Service" (*so eitaikyo hoyo*).
- "Eitaikyo Service for Those Without Family Ties" (*muen eitaikyo hoyo*).

"Individual Eitaikyo Services" are held for individuals on the day of the month during which they passed away.

The "General Eitaikyo Service" is conducted once every year – on a date specified for that year – for all the individuals listed in our "Eitaikyo Kako Register," which number in the thousands.

Our Los Angeles Betsuin Buddhist Temple was founded during the year 1905, but records indicate that the beginning of what we now refer to as our "Eitaikyo Endowment Fund" began several years after that, during the year 1908. During the hundred years since then, donations have been made to that fund in the names of over 5,400 persons. What we refer to as our "General Eitaikyo Memorial Service" is the service that we conduct in the names of all those listed in our "Eitaikyo Kako Register."

Among the over 5,400 names listed in our "Eitaikyo Kako Register," the oldest is for a person named Mr. Shinichi Tsuboi, who passed away on October 30, 1879, 129 years ago. The *dharma* name he was given is *Shaku Rensho Jundo*. The Centennial Memorial Service for Mr. Shinichi Tsuboi, was conducted in the presence of his grandson, Mr. Enrin Tsuboi during the year 1979. What an extraordinary and truly heart-warming occasion that was!

As of September 22, 2008, our "Eitaikyo Kako Register" contained 16,175 names. This includes both the *dharma* names of the deceased and the names of those who have made donations in memory of those names.

In many cases, after several generations – three, four, five – great-grandchildren and even grandchildren, lose memory of their ancestors and no one is left to



sponsor memorial services for them. To keep the memories of such people alive, we at the Los Angeles Betsuin Buddhist Temple conduct a joint service every year during July for all such "people without family ties," as part of our *Obon* Service.

The above three types of Eitaikyo Services will be conducted generation after generation for as long as our temple exists.

Our 103rd "General Eitaikyo Service" will be conducted at our Los Angeles Betsuin Buddhist Temple this year. It will again be sponsored from monies from the Eitaikyo Endowment Fund, which has been a major factor in maintaining our temple, and keeping it a place where the precious teaching of the Dharma can be heard.

The sole desire of those sponsoring Eitaikyo Services is so that we who are so indebted to those who have preceded us in this world can continue hearing the dharma and accept the Buddha's pure mind and heart in continuing to live strongly and bravely in this imperfect world that we find ourselves in.

This pure mind and heart of the Buddha finds expression in his statement to all sentient being in the ten directions:

Please entrust your entire being within my Mind and Heart.

All who truly hear this desire of mine for you will be born in my

True Pure Land where you are guaranteed to become a Buddha.

That's what it means to be given an eternal life of "Immeasurable Light" and "Immeasurable Life."

If even a single person does not become a Buddha as a result of birth in my Pure Land, then I do not wish to become a Buddha myself.

This is the great Primal Vow that Amida Buddha established for all of us. Receiving this vow is what receiving *shinjin* is.

And after establishing this Primal Vow, Amida Buddha fulfilled all the conditions for its fruition in the form of "*Namo Amida Butsu*." That is his legacy to each of us, and why we are blessed to live within the "immeasurable light" (wisdom) and "immeasurable life" (compassion) of the *Nembutsu* ("*Namo Amida Butsu*"), and given life that is without end.

The founder of our Jodo-Shinshu teaching, the Venerable Master Shinran, expressed this in his Chapter on *Shinjin* of his major work, "Teaching, Practice, Shinjin, and Realization" (*Kyogyoshinsho*):

Great shinjin is our superlative means for attaining longevity and deathlessness.

We all live within the human condition, see RIMBAN/ page 4

KAIKAN

RENOVATIONS COMPLETED



Following several months of construction and renovations, the kaikan has celebrated its Grand Re-opening. The renovations included the addition of a handicapped restroom on the main floor level, new curtains for the stage, new lighting, new flooring, the painting of the walls and more.

THOUGHTS ON A WEDDING

by Rev. William Briones

On Sunday, September 14 of this year, I was privileged and honored to officiate over George Takei and Brad Altman's wedding ceremony at the National Center for the Preservation of Democracy in Downtown Los Angeles in Little Tokyo. Many of you know Mr. Takei as Sulu from the popular television and movie series, "Star Trek".



It was a beautiful and moving ceremony. George and Brad declared their commitment and love to one another as family and friends wept tears of joy. Best lady, Nichelle Nichols, AKA, *Uhura*, sobbed while best man Walter Koenig AKA, *Chekov*, looked on with teary eyes.

When Brad called me in June, he and George had just applied for their marriage license. Brad asked if I would do the honors and perform their wedding ceremony. I accepted without hesitation. However, it never crossed my mind that the wedding would attract national headlines.

Since the California Supreme Court issued a ruling granting gays the right to marry, I have been approached on several occasions and asked what the Buddhist stance on gender-neutral marriage is. My standard response is ... "no problemo."

Much of our social morals and ethical values are based on Judeo-Christian princi-

ples. Many of our beliefs that influence our opinion regarding social issues, such as abortion, stem research, euthanasia, evolution, global warming, racial equality and of course, sexual orientation have been determined by ancient scriptures that really do not address these issues realistically. Current issues have become much too complex to be addressed by simple black and white answers.

As Buddhist our primary concern is our own personal awakening to the spiritual truth of wisdom and compassion. In Buddhism we are taught that there are no black and white answers concerning ethical/moral matters that apply to all people see BRIONES/ page 2

RIMBAN MATSUBAYASHI'S RETIREMENT

Rimban George Matsubayashi's retirement from the Buddhist Churches of America will be effective on January 31, 2009.

His retirement banquet will be held on January 25, 2009 at the Quiet Cannon located in the Montebello golf course.

Further information and the reservation form can be found in the Japanese section of this issue of the *Jiho*. The deadline to reserve a seat is December 31, 2008.

BETSUIN SCHEDULE

EITAIKYO SERVICES

PERPETUAL MEMORIAL FOR THE DECEASED

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 15th
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 16th

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

NOVEMBER 16th

OSEIBO KANSHA

DECEMBER 21st

JOYA-E, YEAR-END SERVICE

DECEMBER 31st

SHUSHO-E, NEW YEAR'S DAY SERVICE

JANUARY 1st

KOHAKU UTAGASSEN

JANUARY 4th, 2008

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

OMOKAWA AND WATANABE: BWA SCHOLARSHIP ESSAYS

Last June, the LA Betsuin Buddhist Women's Association awarded Jonathan Omokawa and Kurtis Watanabe with the BWA Scholarship. The following are the essays they had submitted.

Jonathan Omokawa

What Jodo Shinshu Means To Me And How It Applies To My Everyday Living

Growing up in Pasadena and Glendora, I have been exposed to many religions, Catholicism, Christianity, Mormonism, of of course, Buddhism. through the years, I have been growing in my understanding of these religions. I attended Catholic school for two years and I now live in a predominantly Mormon city. But the one noticeable factor that I saw with each of these religions (Catholicism and Mormonism) is that they ask you to blindly believe in someone or something. Now, I am not saying that these religions are not credible. I am merely stating that these were not for me. This is where Jodo Shinshu Buddhism comes into play. If there is one major thing that I have learned from going to dharma school for 12 years, it's that Jodo shinshu is ever-changing and evolving. My understanding of the religion has changed throughout the years. As I grew older, Jodo Shinshu seemed to morph and help me go through my life. It is truly the lay person's religion. It does not ask you to be perfect; it does not ask you to believe in something that is intangible. As I head to college next year, I take the next step with nervousness and

perhaps not as much confidence as I would like. I am most afraid of the change, but a comforting hand on my back pushing me is Jodo Shinshu teachings; the teachings that teach us to not be afraid of change, but to accept it. this is probably the greatest teaching that I have ever been able to use in my life. Change alone is eternal, perpetual, and immortal. We are constantly changing. As Rev. Mas Kodani would say, "We live each moment like that" (as he slaps his hand on the table repeatedly). And it's true. As we live every moment, every second, every minute, we change constantly. As we change, we also develop an understanding of the teachings as we are able to use more and more of them in everyday life.

Kurtis Watanabe

"Jodo Shinshu and Me"

Almost every Sunday I am at Nishi. And almost every time I learn something I did not know before. I obtain information just by sitting down in the hondo. Often, when I am struggling with some hardship in my life, I look toward Jodo Shinshu ideals to help me along.

Jodo Shinshu believes that when you die, you go to the Pure Land. It teaches that just through the recitation of "Namu Amida Butsu," it will grant one's entrance into enlightenment. The Nembutsu is an extremely important practice. It represents trust in Amida Buddha. It is also a phrase giving thanks. This was a revolutionary idea for its time because



Jonathan Omokawa and his parents pictured on the left. Kurtis Watanabe and his parents on the right. Also pictured are Rev. Kakihara, left; Rimbun Matsubayashi, center; and Rev. Koizumi, right.

even the lowliest of people could attain enlightenment like in the Primal Vow. All sentient beings have the power to become a Buddha. the Buddhist way of life is guided by the belief in the Four Noble Truths. We can enhance our life by following the Eightfold Noble Path.

One major concept is the reality of change. Nothing is ever going to be the same. If you are happy one moment, you can be depressed the next. Once we are born, we continue to die until we actually do. Although this might seem pessimistic to some, it is impermanence and it is a fact of life. We must live in the moment to get the most out of our lives and live them to the fullest.

Compassion is another major aspect of Jodo Shinshu. One must have sensitivity and understanding toward all other people and be sympathetic to their problems. We should not be judgmental or discriminatory to anyone for any reason. Each person has his strengths and weaknesses and it is important to be aware of them. Be alert to another's suffering and be willing to do some-

thing about it. Everything in life is interdependent. We rely on one another to survive, and one cannot truly be able to go through life on their own. It is a relationship that we all have with each other. Every action that we take makes a "Ripple Effect" and, in turn, affects somebody or something else.

At some point in each day, I use my Buddhist beliefs. I must have compassion when somebody makes a seemingly incorrect decision. I might not think it to be the right one, but he might be thinking to accomplish a different goal. It just depends on how you view it. When some unfortunate event comes upon me, I try and tell myself that time goes on and either I could dwell upon it or move on. Situations are ever changing. I am careful of what I say and do because I do not want to cause a chain reaction of misfortune to anyone. Buddhism is deep within me. Sometimes I forget it is there, but Jodo Shinshu keeps guiding me to make the best decisions in life.

BRIONES

(continued from page 1)

and all circumstances. As Buddhist we are encouraged to think for ourselves in arriving at our own conclusion based upon our own spiritual insights. The teachings are not about one's adherence to a rigid moral set of absolute right and wrong. Shakyamuni Buddha said that he himself was only a teacher ... simply someone who shows the way. He did not insist that he had any right to enforce on others what they should do.

A Buddhist does not discuss issues of right and wrong, nor should we be judgmental of others. In Buddhism there are no doctrinal grounds that exist for a judgmental attitude by others. Buddha encouraged people to be reflective and find truth for themselves... even it meant disregarding the teachings. Shakyamuni Buddha said,

"Do not believe in anything simply because you have heard it. Do not believe in anything simply because it is spoken and rumored by many. Do not believe in anything simply because it is found written in your religious books. So not believe in anything merely on the authority of your teachers and elders. Do not believe in traditions because they have been handed down for many generations. But after observations and analysis, when you find that anything agrees with reason and is conducive to the good and benefit of one

and all, then accept it and live up to it".

Things that were held to be right and true, in time change. For example, for generations, racial discrimination was an accepted part of American society. When African-Americans and those sympathetic to their cause began to express opposition to discrimination, there was a great deal of resistance. It took many years for people's view to change. Yet now, racial social norms that were taken for granted only a few decades ago, such as the illegality of interracial marriages or segregation, seem immoral today.

In the *Tannisho* it is written that Shinran said, "All beings have been fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, in the timeless process of

birth and death. When I attain Buddhahood in the next birth, each and everyone will be saved." In other words we are all karmic bound, our lives are interconnected. All beings are equally embraced by Amida Buddha...every one is included everyone.

As a Jodo Shinshu Buddhist, our goal is to awaken to this spiritual truth of interdependency and equality. And if one truly awakens to the reality of *Nembutsu*, one cannot help but share the awareness and joy derived from the teachings.

I believe it is this awareness that lead our BCA Ministers to pass a resolution during the National Council meeting in 2004, supporting gender-neutral weddings. The resolution

see BRIONES/ page 4



Tsuruko Iwihara and Yoshie Ishigame make kurimanju with BWA for the "Nihonmachi, the Place to Be" musical.



Rev. Nobuko Miyoshi, of Higashi Honganji, was a guest speaker at the Fall Ohigan Seminar and Service.

BETSUIN CALENDAR

NOVEMBER

EITAIKYO SERVICES

15 ENGLISH/JAPANESE 1:30 PM
ENGLISH: REV. WILLIAM BRIONES
JPN: RIMBAN GEORGE MATSUBAYASHI

16 10 AM SERVICE
ENGLISH: SOCHO KOSHIN OGUI
JPN: REV. KOJO KAKIHARA
1:30 PM SERVICE
SOCHO KOSHIN OGUI

16 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING 3:00 PM

23 THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY (BETSUIN CLOSED)

DECEMBER

7 TEMPLE CLEAN-UP

14 BODHI DAY SERVICE (Jodo-e)

21 OSEIBO KANSHA
APPRECIATION SERVICE & PROGRAM 10:00 AM

25 CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY (BETSUIN CLOSED)

31 JOYA-E (NEW YEAR'S EVE SERVICE) 6:00 PM

JANUARY

1 SHUSHO-E (NEW YEAR'S DAY SERVICE) 10:00 AM.

2 BETSUIN CLOSED

4 38th KOHAKU UTAGASSEN 12:30P.M.

11 HO-ONKO

25 RIMBAN MATSUBAYASHI FAREWELL BANQUET
(see reservation form in the Japanese section)

38TH ANNUAL

KOHAKU UTAGASSEN



JANUARY 4TH, 2009 @ 12:30 PM

BETSUIN KAIKAN

Buddhist Churches of America
JODO SHINSHU CENTER

The 21st Century

GRAND RAFFLE

FIRST PRIZE - \$12,000

Second Prize \$4,000 Third Prize \$1,500
Fourth Prize \$1,000 Fifth Prize \$500

Drawing Saturday, February 28, 2009 at the
BCA National Council Meeting in Irvine, CA

The raffle ticket donation will support the Buddhist Churches of America Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley, California as it reaffirmed and refined its core mission to promote the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, as well as to propagate the Jodo Shinshu teachings. BCA's vision for the future calls for Jodo Shinshu Buddhism to stand forward as a major religious tradition in the United States - with the Jodo Shinshu Center now in full operation, that will be recognized by the general public and embraced by a multi-ethnic Sangha.

-Winner need not be present-

A donation of \$20 per ticket is requested.

Raffle tickets are available at the Betsuin office.

Note: There are only a limited number of raffle tickets available.
All tickets must be purchased within the state of California

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:

NOVEMBER 15, 2008
9:00 TO 9:30 PM

PARTICIPATING LOCATIONS:

MONTEBELLO
MONTEBELLO TOWN CENTER

CITY OF INDUSTRY
PUENTE HILLS EAST

WEST WHITTIER
WASHINGTON BLVD.

WEST LOS ANGELES
NATIONAL BLVD.

LA HABRA
WHITTIER BLVD

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

HIDEO IZUMO NISEI WEEK PIONEER

During the last Nisei Week festivities, LA Betsuin member, **Hideo Izumo** was honored as one of the five pioneers who have gone above and beyond and have represented the best of the greater Los Angeles Japanese American community. They were honored at a special 2008 Pioneers Luncheon that was held at the Kyoto Grand Hotel & Gardens and were also a part of the Nisei Week Grand Parade.



Hideo Izumo, nominated by the Hollywood JACL Community Center

Hideo Izumo was born in 1920 in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo district. He is the youngest of three children whose parents emigrated from Hiroshima, Japan. When he was four, the family moved to East L.A., where he attended local schools and daily Japanese school, and eventually UCLA. He joined Boy Scout Troop 197 in 1932 and became Scoutmaster in 1941. He enjoyed sports and was a member of a local team called the 'Cougars.'

In 1942, his family was interned in Poston, Arizona. He was permitted to leave the camp in early 1943 to work on farms in Utah and Idaho. After learning of a position, Izumo moved to Detroit in October 1943 to become an accountant. While in Detroit, his military classification was changed to "enlisted reserve," meaning he could be called to active duty. He immediately quit his job and returned to Poston to marry his sweetheart, Kay Ishikawa. He was inducted soon after their marriage.

Izumo was assigned to the Military Intelligence Service Language School in Minneapolis, Minnesota. His intensive nine-month program ended just as the war ended and in late August, he was shipped to the Philippines. After several months in Manila, he joined General MacArthur's Occupation Forces in Japan. He worked in the MIS until his discharge in August 1947. He remained in Tokyo as a civil servant for the U.S. Army until returning to Los Angeles in 1948 and joining his brother's accounting firm.

Izumo moved into his current home in the Silver Lake area in 1953 and became

active in the community. Since 1952 he has been involved with the Nishi Hongwanji Buddhist Temple and its branch, the Hollywood Buddhist Temple. He served on the board of directors, administrative committee, and as treasurer. In addition, he was the Hollywood Buddhist Temple president for two years and treasurer for five years. In 1954 Izumo also served on the board of directors and as treasurer of "Shonien," an orphanage for Japanese children that opened a new Silver Lake facility. In addition, after his two sons joined Boy Scout Troop 90 in 1957, he joined the Parents Committee, becoming its president in 1962.

When Izumo joined the Hollywood JACL in 1960 and became president in 1965, he organized and was general manager of the first Hollywood Dodgers baseball and basketball teams—mainly to avoid driving his sons to team practices and games across town. Boys in the Hollywood area participated in the Japanese American Optimist Club's baseball and basketball leagues, which later combined with other groups to become the Community Youth Council.



Hideo Izumo in the Nisei Week Grand Parade along with son, Robert and his two grandchildren.

DID YOU KNOW?..

by Eiko Masuyama

Elementary Sunday School Parents Association Bulletin, Issue 1, May, 1961

ESSPA OPENED TO NEW MEMBERS

by James Miyasaki

Across section of Sunday school parents attended the initial meeting to formulate plans for a new organization, a subsidiary of YBA, on Friday night (Apr. 28th) at the Betsuin Institute.

Elementary Sunday School Parent's Association was selected as the new group's name. The ESSPA is still in the drawing board stage, but we are confident that with all the enthusiastic response shown, this organization will be a strong successful group.

The goal of the ESSPA is: "Our Children's Future" and giving our children a strong understanding of our religion. Plans for family togetherness was strongly stressed.

Living under the current so called, "fast pace of life", the upsurge of juvenile delinquency is prevalent to the shocking point that our *Sanseis* are now making the local headlines. We, the parents, must realize that this grave situation exists and must take special interest in this important issue. We must take a firm stand now while our children are still under our guidance. This group's hope is that with these types of activities for children, we will achieve our goal with your cooperation.

Yoshio Shibata, President of the YABA, and Nob Ishitani were present as guests at the meeting. Next meeting was set for May 19, 1961 at: Betsuin Institute 240 No. Breed St., Los Angeles, 33, CA, Time: 7:30 p.m.

We are asking to have families bring

their children to the meeting. The children will be under the supervision of one of the members. Everyone interested is invited to attend this get together.

WANJI SR. WINS 30-27

Paced by Wesley Ozaki's hot shooting, the Wanji Srs. won a very fast and well played game 30-27. The score was close but this team, coached by Dick Miyakawa, had the game well in hand after the first few minutes of the game.

NEW BUDDHISTS

Mr. & Mrs. Kats Okino:

Baby Boy - April 3, 1961

Mr. & Mrs. Kaz Shimizu:

Boy (first son) - Apr. 18, 1961

KARUNAS by Eiko Sakaniwa and May Kondo

Here at the Los Angeles Nishi Hongwanji church we have a club for girls between the ages of 12 to 14. It is called Karunas, which means companions. We are trying to establish companionship with girls of this age level ... getting better acquainted with one another or meeting girls of the same age from other churches.

OH MY ACHING ?????

Polar Palace Ice Skating Rink was visited by the Kiku girls class on Sunday April 23rd, under the supervision of Mrs. Tootsie Yoshinura their very capable teacher.

This was the first time most of the girls ever had a pair of ice skates on but they were skating around the rink very well after just a few times.

The girls had a very enjoyable time and

The Nishi Hongwanji Child Development Center will have been in operation for 25 years as of December of 2008. In an early celebration of this milestone, a reunion was held this past summer. Families of students of the center's first years as well as families of recent and present students were in attendance. There were well over a hundred attendees to the celebration.

Nearly three decades ago, there was a vision at the Betsuin, of a school which would provide an unique approach in the Nikkei/Buddhist community to early childhood education. This envisioned school would go beyond the simple daycare facility and, 1) provide a preschool education that would prepare the child academically and emotionally for entry into the elementary school system, and 2) cultivate a sense of appreciation of and familiarity with the Buddhist teachings.

In 1980, visions of the Nishi Hongwanji Child Development Center, (better known as "Nishi Center"), began to take hold under the leadership of Mr. Tetsujiro Nakamura. In 1982, Mr. Kaoru Inouye succeeded Mr. Nakamura as the chairperson, and was ultimately followed by Ms. Sami Kushida who brought the project to fruition.

Ms. Kushida and her committee, along with Rev. Russell Hamada, were able to access two resources, Ms. Janice Onami and Ms. Donna Onagaki. These two individuals were instrumental in acquiring the necessary licenses with the state and county and were also knowledgeable of the preschool curriculums.

In December of 1983, the Nishi Hongwanji Child Development Center officially opened its doors to its first six students with its two teachers. Two years later, a kindergarten class was also created.

Today, Nishi Center consists of two preschool classrooms and a kindergarten classroom with a total of 45 students. Today, there is a school director with three teachers and seven assistants.

Over the years, Nishi Center has been able to develop a well-rounded, comprehensive, curriculum that has well prepared hundreds of students going into both public and private elementary schools. Each classroom is equipped with a computer to which the young children have access. In recent years art and music classes have been included into the curriculum. There are also two volunteers—one who teaches Japanese to the kindergartners and one who teaches Japanese dance to those children who are interested.

most of the girls wanted to know if the class could go again in the future.

Mrs. Tootsie Yoshimura is one of the better teachers in our Sunday school, who devotes all her time to teach Buddhism...

SANGHA, LA YBA, July, 1955

COUNSELORS' COOK-OUT

Enjoying a beautiful day at Griffith Park on June 12th, during a cook-out, were the counselors for the LABCC Summer Camp for Sunday school children.

The purpose of this cook-out was to demonstrate the different methods of outdoor cooking.

The luncheon included toast, corn, baked sweet potato, cantaloupe, hamburgers, ring tum diddy, and salad. The toasts were strung on wire coat hangers and toasted over hot charcoals, the corn and sweet potatoes wrapped in foil and baked among the coals, and the hamburgers were cooked on a hobo stove. All in all, the lunch was very delicious.

Instrumental in the preparation of the lunch were Terry Odate (Higashi); Tats Minami and Ethel Yoshida (Senshin); Tamiko Tani and Kiku Toyota (Zenshuji); Joanne Hirata, Ben Jinkawa, Harry Shibata, Joe Watari and Sats Yoshida (Nishi); and Miss Esther Bristol, the camp director (Campfire Girls).



Many generations of Nishi Center families

Nishi Center Reunion Photos by Glen Tao



Nishi Center director, Susan Mukai stands between Class of '87 students, Lisa Hida and Todd Sato.



Nishi Center Class of '91 reunion after 17 years: CJ Tolentino, Ito Wakefield, Brady Fukumoto, and Jonathan Maki.

The Nishi Center advisory board consists of temple members who have volunteered their services from the very beginning of the school's onset. Bessie Tanaka, June Kondo, both now-retired teachers, and Bruce Shinohara, who manages the financial accounting. New to the board is Susan Saita, who is a teacher. A former member of the advisory board is school principal Lonny Quon.

NISHI CENTER GREEN BAGS

With the ban of the plastic carry out bags increasing in cities throughout the country -- including the city of Los Angeles in 2010--Nishi Center is selling reusable shopping bags to help clean up the environment.



Invited guests were Ryo and Chiyo Kasai and Roy Nakawatase.

ICE SKATING PARTY

With the strains of Obon Odori music in their ears and a delicious luncheon, prepared by the LAYBA girls, in our stomach, a group left to go ice skating at the Polar Palace on June 26th.

Early birds seen skating were Ruby Yoshimoto, Terry Fujizawa and Tak Nomura. Skating like "pros" were Eiko Hamasaki, Minako Nishikawa, and Harry Shibata. Harry claims he's been ice skating only four times.

A bunch of so-called beginners were Agnes Nishida, Tad Matoi, Toshi Kusumoto and Nancy Naito.

Coming from out San Fernando way, Betty Sakamoto and her brother were skating while Mrs. Evelyn Motoyama was watching from the sidelines.

There were a few who seemed to have had some experience at ice skating or looked as if they had. Included in this class were Fumi Nakahara, Dorothy Hayashida and Tom Butsumyo. Tom said he can roller skate better. (Used to do it a lot in the past.)

Late-comers were George Nomi and Sho Koyama who refused to put skates on giving the excuse that they came to see how things were.

see KNOW?/ page 4

TOKUBETSU DONATIONS

as of September 26, 2008

BWA DONATIONS

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

2008 MEMBERSHIP

A "member" of the L.A. Betsuin is one who has donated to the annual membership.

The following is a list additional members who have submitted their membership during the July 31 through September 30, 2008. Your continuing support of the temple is greatly appreciated.

RIMBAN

(continued from page 1)

and none of us can prevent our physical existence from coming to an end. That's what it means for the "ignorant who are filled with base passions" (*bombu*) to die. And that is how we are all reluctantly resigned to end our lives.

The Venerable Master Shinran, however, taught us that although we remain "ignorant and filled with base passions," because of Amida Buddha's Primal Vow, "death" is just the end of our physical being and that "birth in the Pure Land" (*oyo*) is really our entry into "eternal life."

We are allowed to be born and are allowed to live. Life is what we give to children and grandchildren, and what lasts in perpetuity. We are only the last in a long, long line of lives that preceded us, and which will continue after we are gone.

My family and I recently took a trip to Japan in search of that most "marvelously mysterious" line of lives that is almost like a dream. This summer - from August 11 to August 25 - my children and grandchildren, and my wife and I (a total of 14 people) first visited the Headquarters Temple of our Nishi Hongwanji denomination of Jodo-Shinshu, and then the temples in Japan with which my family is closely associated: Fukusen Temple, Anraku Temple, Saikyo Temple and Kyosho Temple.

Worshiping in the Somido main worship hall of the Headquarters Temple, my entire family could literally hear Amida Buddha's calling voice. It aroused a feeling of unworthiness and gratitude that cannot be expressed in words. Our heads all bowed instinctively before a power that can only be described as "marvelously mysterious," and which will remain with us for the rest of our lives.

And then in the oppressive heat and humidity of summer in Japan, we continued our journey to the *haka* graves of our ancestors maintained by temples with which my family is intimately associated. Standing before the graves of ten and even twenty generations of those who came into this world solely to allow us to be given life, my children and grandchildren could only exclaim: "Wow! This is awesome! It's truly awesome!"

That was how they expressed how impressed they were at seeing with their own eyes the flow of the sacred lives of those who were their ancestors, and who were born and died dozens and even hundreds of years ago.

The stark recognition of the lives ten and twenty generations in the past - with which they were until then completely unaware that they were so intimately connected, and which began far, far away in the strange land of Japan that lay across the wide Pacific Ocean that used to take weeks to travel by ship - made a great impression on my sansei and yonsei children and grandchildren. I am sure it was a most meaningful occasion for them.

As for my wife and me, our trip was a joy and source of happiness that cannot be described, and which we could only express by placing our hands together in *gassho* before the Buddha.

That is the reason for our Eitaikyo Services - to allow each of us to individually express thanks and gratitude for the life with which we have been so blessed.

Here at our Los Angeles Betsuin Buddhist Temple, we will conduct an Eitaikyo Service over two days: November 15 (Saturday) and 16 (Sunday). The first day of the service (November 15), starting at 1:30 pm, the dharma talk will be given in Japanese by Rimban Matsubayashi, and in English by Reverend Briones. The second day (November 16), starting at 10:00 am, the dharma talk in English will be by the *Socho* of the BCA, Koshin Ogui, and in Japanese by Reverend Kakihara. The second Eitaikyo Service that day will be held starting from 1:30 pm. The speaker for both English and Japanese will be Socho Koshin Ogui. I invite all of you, your family, and friends to attend these most important services.

Gassho

BRIONES

(continued from page 2)

reads:

"Where as there is no negative judgment of homosexuality in the Buddhist Religion,

Where as, a number of BCA ministers have been performing same sex weddings for a period of at least thirty years,

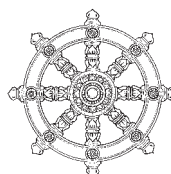
Whereas, we wish to affirm the worthiness of all persons independent of his or her sexual orientation.

Now therefore be it resolved, that the Ministers Association of the Buddhist Churches of America oppose any prohibition of same sex marriage"

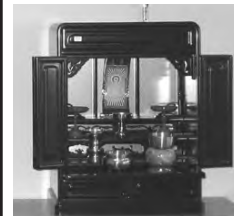
Time has a way of

changing things, and just as a former generation of Americans came to believe differently about the issue of race, so the hearts and minds of this generation seem to be changing with respect to gay people. We have discovered we are part of those families. It is because most Americans do not like seeing their friends, relatives, or neighbors mistreated.

Namo Amida Butsu



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For further information, leave a message for Eiko Masuyama at the Betsuin office: 213-680-9130

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KNOW?

(continued from page 3)

By closing time, everyone was skating like "pros" and complaining about sore ankles. But all in all, fun was had by all.

Thank you to the Okada family for donations of books to Nishi's library. Special thanks to Mrs. Masayo Koizumi, for putting the Japanese books in the library in order, and entering them in the computer. Kayo Uno has been working on entering the English collection in the computer. Michi Matsu-

nami continues scanning older copies of the JIHO into the computer. Thanks to all. Thank you to Mrs. Mitzi Imanishi for donating old copies of the JIHO. Thank you also to Mrs. Takako Shinohara for sharing the music sheet of "Nisei Koshinkyoku".

If you have information or would like to share experiences of the past of the activities or members of the temple, please submit to office or leave message for Eiko at the temple office (213) 860-9130