

Betsuin Jiho

No. 390

September-October, 2008

www.nishihongwanji-la.org

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“WE WILL STUMBLE IF WE LOOK ONLY IN THE DIRECTION WE WALK...”

Thoughts about our Fall Ohigan

by George T. Matsubayashi, Rimban

The Obon activities of July and August are now over, and with the coming of September, we approach the Fall *Ohigan* period. Traditionally in Japan, it has been said that “The heat of summer and cold of winter last only till *Ohigan*,” referring to the fact that *Ohigan* is celebrated during the Spring and Fall equinoxes when the days and nights are of equal length.

Ohigan activities are unique to Japan – they are not celebrated in either India, where Buddha-dharma began, nor in China. Records indicate that *Ohigan* was celebrated in Japan as early as the Heian Period (794-897 CE).

Ohigan is formally referred to as *to-higan* (“towards the other shore” – the “O” of *Ohigan* is an honorific), and comes from a Sanskrit word meaning “moving from this shore of delusion towards the other shore of Enlightenment.” All Japanese Buddhist denominations conduct services during this time of the year to “strive even further along the Buddhist path towards Enlightenment.”

The significance and the attitude with which we conduct *Ohigan* Services in our Jodo-Shinshu tradition, however, differ from that of other Japanese Buddhist denominations. Because we realize our limitations as human beings, in Jodo-Shinshu any effort we make falls short of reaching the goal of complete Enlightenment. That’s why we rely solely on Amida Buddha’s Primal Vow to reach that realm.

The founder of our Jodo-Shinshu teaching, the Venerable Master Shinran, pointed out that:

*The ocean of birth-and-death,
Of painful existence, has no bound;
Only by the ship of Amida’s Universal Vow
Can we, who have long been drowning,
Unfailingly be brought across it.*

We “ignorant beings filled with base passions” (*bombu*) have been floundering in the ocean of birth and death from beginningless beginning and continue floundering today, completely unable to escape it using our own efforts. And because we are such beings, the only way we can reach the realm of Enlightenment is by being carried on the ship of Amida Buddha’s Primal Vow – the only way we can cross over to the other shore of Enlightenment.

In other words, the Venerable Master’s deep insight is that striving to attain Enlightenment by following Buddhist religious practices using “self-centered effort” (*jiriki*) – however laudable – is impossible because human power is so imperfect.

The title I gave to this article comes from the following passage in “Heard and Recorded During Master Rennyō’s Lifetime” (*Rennyō*

Shonin Goichidai-ki Kikigaki):

We will stumble if we look only in the direction we are walking and not notice what is at our feet. Similarly, if we concern ourselves only about what others think and don’t reflect on our own nature, the results can be disastrous.

These words are not for others – they are solely for myself that I may walk in a way that makes my life significant.



This is rather embarrassing to relate, but I clearly remember something that happened when I graduated from middle school in Japan. The 65 students in my class and I went on a school excursion to celebrate. The excursion was to the cities of Kyoto, Osaka, and Kobe, and lasted five nights and six days.

We were raised in a rural area of Japan so the bustling streets of metropolitan Japan overwhelmed all our senses, particularly the neon signs that lighted up the streets so vividly. (This was, of course, not long after the privations of the Pacific War.) I was especially attracted to one sign advertising a patent headache medicine. This sign changed continually, like a brief movie. It first showed an elderly man tormented with a headache, then it showed him sipping the medicine, after which his expression changed, and ended with walking along briskly.

I was so taken in by this neon sign (I guess I must have looked like a country bumpkin to the people around me) that I accidentally stepped into an open manhole! My new shoes that my parents had purchased specially for this excursion and even the bottom of my trousers were covered with foul odor of the mud in manhole. Unable to remove my shoes and wash my feet then and there, I made my way back to the dormitory where our class was staying, smelling to high heaven. Even today, half a century later, I am unable to forget that foul odor... all because I forgot to look at what was immediately underfoot and concentrated on what was in front of me.

I often lose my way while on temple business so, for my birthday two years ago, my wife and children gave me a navigational device to install in my car. As those of you who have one know, this is a really amazing device. After entering the address that I want to get to, it tells me the streets to take and how long it will take to get there. It also tells me when to turn left or right at each intersection, and further, that the street will divide after so many miles so I should be prepared.

The basis of this device is something called a GPS, which uses a satellite to continually locate my car. There are times, however, when the signal from satellite does not reach my car see RIMBAN/ page 3



The Betsuin lit up during the balmy Obon evening.

THOUGHTS ON THIS LABOR DAY HOLIDAY

by Rev. William Briones

“For those who make their living drawing nets or fishing in the seas and rivers, and those who sustain their lives hunting beast or taking fowl in the fields and mountains, and those who pass their lives conducting trade or cultivating fields and paddies, it is all the same. Under the influence of our karmic past we human beings will do anything”.

-- Tannisho – chapter 13

For most of us, Labor Day is seen as the last long weekend of the summer. It’s a time friends and families gather and clog the freeways, the beaches, the parks and their own back yards and bid farewell to summer.

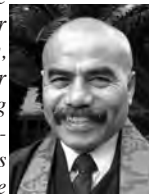
The observance of Labor Day began over 100 years ago. It was brought about by labor unions that wanted the government to recognize and acknowledge their contributions to the work force. This was a time when union labors and company bosses were at odds with each other, often resulting in violent strikes. It was in 1898 that workers in New York City took an unpaid day off and marched around Union Square in support of a holiday that would honor the working class. Almost as way to appease the union labors congress and the president signed a bill creating the Labor Day Holiday.

Now that over a century has passed Labor Day is seen as a time for big sales and picnics rather than a day for political organizing. In the 50’s nearly

50% of American workers belonged to unions, in 1995, less than 15 % belonged to Unions.

Be that as it may, what ever you may think or do on Labor Day, whether you like or dislike Unions, if you’re Union or non-union, or if you don’t what the heck a Union is ... we have all benefited in some form the victories of the Labor movement.

In my previous life many kalpas ago, I was employed at Syntex Pharmaceuticals in Palo Alto. I was a Research Biologist in the Department of Physiology. Our department was responsible for testing, both biochemical and physiological effects, of new drugs that



were in the development stage, on laboratory animals, and eventually for human use.

You might be familiar with one of our products the brand name, Aleve®, actually originally this drug was by prescription only, under chemical name, Naproxen®. However when our patient expired, Syntex and Proctor and Gamble joined together to produce an over the counter version under a new name Aleve®. Naproxen® was first synthesized back in 1968, just about the time I started at Syntex. I was on the original group that began testing the drug on laboratory animals. It is no exaggeration that for this one drug alone from the time it was synthesized to the time it made it’s way to Savon Drugs; tens of thousands of animals sacrificed their life so you wouldn’t have to suffer the pain of arthritis or sore muscles and aching joints after exercising.

Aleve® wasn’t the only drug that Syntex developed. I tested many of the oral contraception drug formulations of Norynel®, the first birth control pill on the market back in the early 60’s. Syntex and Upjohn, another pharmaceutical giant, were synonymous with the Pill. I can only guess that over 100 thousand laboratory animals sacrificed their life’s to prevent countless of pregnancies.

In the beginning I really never gave much thought on the moral and ethical implications that my occupation touched upon. In fact, as lofty and naïve as it sounds, I felt I was really contributing to benefit mankind.

I was doing a job that I enjoyed, and took great pride in my work, not only that, but it paid our mortgage, our four cars, ski vacations in the winter, and a beach house in the summer, and put our two daughters through college.

However, in hindsight, there are many, many incidences that I’m not very proud of. The experiments we conducted, the countless number of animals that were sacrificed needlessly, the callousness and disrespect I had towards these animals.

Needless to say there were a number of groups that objected to our research. The anti-see BRIONES/ page 4

BETSUIN SCHEDULE

OHIGAN SEMINAR

Saturday, September 20th

OHIGAN SERVICE

Sunday, September 21st

NOKOTSUDO SERVICE

Sunday, September 21st

ESHINNI-KO SERVICE

Sunday, October 5th

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

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A MESSAGE FROM THE OBON CHAIRMAN



Seibi Okita's ever-present smile...the happiest Obon Chairman in the world.

It was another great Obon festival....

As the *Betsuin Obon* chairman I want to thank all the temple members and temple friends for all the hard work and the cheerful attitudes.

There are so many people that I need to thank....

Thank you...

... to my co-chairs, **Ray Fukumoto** and **Vance Ikkan-da** for organizing the whole event.

...**Karen Escano** and **Cindy Nakamura**. What a wonderful entertainment program. And thanks, also, to the ministers for participating in the "Truth or Dare."

...to **Ron Nakamura** for making the *kaikan* bleachers portable so that they could be moved to the parking lot. With these bleachers, many were able to sit comfortably and enjoy the *Obon* dancing. The *Betsuin* is probably the only temple around that has a "grand stand" for the *Bon Odori* audience.

...**Rimban Matsubayashi** and the ministers for conducting the service at the *yagura* before the beginning of the *Bon odori*. The service reminds us all that *Obon* is a religious observance and should take place as a regular part of the program.

...**Kory Quon** who kept an eye on the parking lot gate. He directed people in an out and also let me know who needed help. I was able to accompany some seniors to their cars and a young mother with two small children who had parked all the way over by the freeway.

...**Ryan Taketomo**--without my even asking for help, like a shadow, he would magically appear and offer his services when he saw that I was carrying trash, boxes, and anything else.

Unfortunately, I cannot list everyone--- thank you ALL.

The 2008 *Obon* was Rev. Kakahara's first U.S. *Obon*. He was impressed at how so many people had come to help for so many days and for so many hours.

I, personally, witnessed the tremendous spirit in the efforts of everyone at the *Betsuin*. It was evident that they were all working towards a common goal--supporting the temple.

My personal joy in being the *Obon* chairman is to be able to witness, year after year, **everyone** working hard and helping each other -- working hard and chatting with each other -- working hard and laughing together. What better event--what happier event can *Obon* be? If only the people of the world could be like those we have here at the *Nishi Betsuin*! I love you all!

Gassho, *Namo Amida Butsu*
Seibi

BETSUIN OBON 2008



Betsuin ministers conduct a service before the Obon dancing.



Okinawa Association Uta Sanshin group provide live music during the Obon dancing.



Rimban Matsubayashi introduces LA Councilwoman Jan Perry.



Richard Odagawa served as MC during the stage entertainment.



Nishi Center Kids



Denise Nakamura (left) belts out a song while Eric Quon croons for the audience.



Rev. Kakahara's 1st US Obon... "kakko ii!"



Paparazzo photographing actress Tamlyn Tomita.



Tamlyn Tomita laughs at Rev. Briones' "Truth or Dare" assignment.



Rev. Mas Kodani with Kinnara Taiko



Nippon Minyo Imoto Hoshuju Kai.



Jerry Kamei & Friends provide some jazz



LA Matsuri Daiko



BWA deftly shaping kurimanju for Obon.



Rimban Matsubayashi with the Obon Raffle winner, Doris Kato



Shredding kalua pork



Tea Ceremony



Betsuin moms cutting meat

Obon photos by:
Koichi Sayano,
Glen Tao, &
Kelly Fukumoto



Betsuin president, Gary Kawaguchi dons an apron and cap and wields a knife.



Kangi-e:
A Gathering of Joy



Betsuin dads toiling over a hot grill cooking chicken and beef.



The LA City skyline at dusk to the west during the Obon evening.

THANKS FOR THE 50-PLUS YEARS...

by Eiko Masuyama

Sunday School, later and presently called Dharma School, has been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. It was like I was born into Sunday School...my father was a Sunday School teacher (a student before that, and later, a sometime bus driver), probably from its inception at the Los Angeles Nishi Hongwanji Buddhist Temple (Sunday School established in 1917).

How fortunate have I been, to be allowed, to listen to the Buddha-Dharma for these years!

How fortunate have I been, to be allowed, to walk the path with fellow travelers in the Dharma school organization for these years!

Recognition for 50 years of service as a Dharma school teacher belongs, not to me, but to the Sangha, all those around me, who sustained and nourished me with their patience, understanding, friendship and support. I do not recall my first Sunday School teachers, but I suspect my father, Eizo Masuyama, was my first Dharma teacher; my last teachers, in the Senior class, were Ben Jinkawa and Mas Okino; in between are Teruyo Yamamoto Yoshimura, who was recently honored for 50 years of service, and is on the 2008 teaching staff at the Los Angeles Betsuin; and Dorothy Takata Lord and Aiko Kiyohara; and Clara Yoshimi Hara, come to mind! The first minister that I remember speaking to us was Rev. Giko Yamamoto.

Beginning teaching in 1957, as an assistant, with me, were Mitsue Kato Oshita, Mitsuyo Takemura Tanaka, Kuni Kow Odama,



Eiko Masuyama received a plaque from BCA for her services as a dharma school teacher for 50 years.

Margaret Kubota Funatsu, Jeanne Saeki Kawaguchi, ..., under the guidance of superintendent, Iku Shiroyama Mayeda. The minister who advised the teachers with so much energy and new ideas was Rev. Masami Nakagaki. My first teaching assignment was the nursery class with students Margie Nakamoto, David Nakamoto, Nancy Hori, among many others... we loved to sing "Buddha Loves You". I cannot forget the eighth grade class with fellow teacher, John Iwihara, and students Wayne Sasaki and Tabo Mohri...need I say more! Ilene Otani and Elaine Hatakeyama Fukumoto remind me that they were former students.

Along the way, paths crossed, allowing meetings with many special travelers, to mention a few, Miyo Yoshimoto (San Mateo), Etsuko Steimetz (Berkeley), Joyce Teague (San Diego), ..., and Rev. Arthur Takemoto.

Thank you ALL -- remembered and not remembered, named and not named, in the past and in the present, teachers and students, ministers and laypersons, all fellow travelers on the path of the Nembutsu ... for giving me the opportunity to listen and study the Buddha-Dharma these past 50+ years...

Namo Amida Butsu

ESHINNI -KAKUSHINNI MEMORIAL

The following was excerpted from "Hongwanji History's Unsung Heroines" a message given on April 25, 2004 by Chihoko Yosemite, Honorary President of Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii Federation of Buddhist Women's Associations

The observance of "Eshinni Memorial" was established in 1978 at the 6th World Buddhist Women's Convention and "Kakushinni Memorial" was created at the 13th World BWA Convention in Brazil. The recognition of both these significant women in Jodo Shinshu has since been combined into "The Eshinni-Kakushinni Memorial."

Eshinni was the wife and Kakushinni was the daughter of Shinran. These facts were not officially accepted by people until the early 20th century. In 1921, Professor Washio Kyodo discovered ten letters in the archives of Honpa Hongwanji in Kyoto and found that these letters were written by Shinran's wife, Eshinni, to her daughter, Kakushinni. These letters confirmed Shinran's marriage and validated the existence of his wife, Eshinni.

Prior to the discovery of Eshinni's letters, there were those in Japan who discounted Shinran's marriage, the existence of his wife, or even the existence of Shinran himself. It was Eshinni's letter that clarified all the disbeliefs.

Eshinni's letters revealed important facts of Shinran's personal life as well as his spiritual journey. Eshinni wrote about Shinran's break

from the Tendai Order; when Shinran experienced religious anxiety and dissatisfaction and left Mt. Hiei and entered the Rokkakudo in Kyoto. Later, Shinran became a disciple of Honen and found the way of liberation through the Nembutsu. He found that the assurance of complete enlightenment could occur to anyone through Shinjin, the spiritual transformation.

Between Shinran and Eshinni, they had six children and Kakushinni was their youngest daughter.

When Shinran died in 1263, he was virtually unknown in the Buddhist context in Kyoto. After his death, Kakushinni wanted to keep Shinran's teaching alive and perpetuated it for his followers. She built a temple enshrining an image of Shinran. As a result, the Nembutsu teaching began to reach more people. About 50 years later, this mausoleum became an official temple and was named the "Hongwanji." The Hongwanji temple has developed into the Jodo Shinshu school as one of the largest and most powerful Buddhist schools in Japan. Kakushinni's foresight and deep appreciation towards the Nembutsu teaching saved Shinran's work and established the foundation of Jodoshinshu.

The Hongwanji started with very humble beginnings. It is clearly known that Shinran was the true founder of the Hongwanji-ha Jodo Shinshu School. However, because of Eshinni and Kakushinni's vision, tremendous efforts, see ESHINNI/ page 4



ESHINNI



BWA Scholarship Recipients
Jonathan Omokawa (4th from left) and Kurtis Watanabe (8th from left) pictured with their parents, BWA presidents and Betsuin ministers.



Rev. Henry Tanaka, retired minister of Hawaii Betsuin, spoke at the Betsuin. The author of "Jodo Shinshu 24/7" came for a "Talk Story" and spoke of how he lives his life of gratitude. He shared his experience of having veered away from Jodo Shinshu and subsequently returning.



Dharma School Attendance Award Recipients

DID YOU KNOW?..

by Eiko Masuyama

"A slender beauty with delicate features, Miss Miyoko Komori came to this country[U.S.] in 1964 prior to the Olympic Games in Tokyo to introduce the "Olympic Dance" [Tokyo Gorin Ondo] under the auspices of King Record Co."... article taken from Fifth Anniversary Performance Booklet celebrating Ms. Komori's achievements, dated 1972.

One of the dances at Obon 2008 will again list Tokyo Gorin Ondo (Olympic Dance), choreographed by Komori Sensei, who was honored last year by the Southern District Dharma School Teachers and the City of Los Angeles for her efforts over the years. Komori Sensei has choreographed many dances which have been danced with joy and enthusiasm these past forty plus years.

Buddhist Children's Dances, Choreography by Miyoko Komori, was published by BCA Sunday School Department, 1975. Some of the dances listed, accompany gathas, "Nobiyo Nobiyo", "Church Bells", "When We See the Golden Sun", "Tsuki Ga Deta", and "Amida's Paradise".

Thank you, Komori Sensei.

JiHO, May 10, 1970...

TROOP 738 EAGLE SCOUT COURT OF HONOR

The Eagle Court of Honor program for the Betsuin sponsored Boy Scout Troop 738 was held on April 17, 1970, at the Betsuin Chapel with Dr. Masayoshi Itatani, Institutional Representative, chairing the entire ritual.

The highlight of the Court of Honor was the Eagle Investiture Ceremony at which time the Eagle rank in scouting was awarded to Scouters Glen Nakao, son of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Nakao, and to John Shimoda, son of Mr. and Mrs. Hiroshi Shimoda, by Dr. Richard Iwata, Assistant Advancement Chairman, El Camino District.

Others receiving awards were:
Tenderfoot Recognition: Victor Honda, Dennis Kimura, Kevin Kozai, Terry Murakami, Glenn Ochi, Tadashi Okumoto and Kenneth Ozawa.
Star Scout Recognition: Ronnie Hatakeyama
Sangha Award First Stage: Glen Nakao, John

RIMBAN

(continued from page 1)

(or perhaps the signal from my car does not reach the satellite), in which case it does not know my location, and therefore is unable to provide precise information on how I should proceed.

And that's the problem. Even though I have this magnificent device which is the product of great technological research, it is often unable to provide me with the information I need because it does not know exactly where I am at the moment although I still do know where I want to go.

The same is true in life. We are able to live and know our purpose in living only when we know exactly where we are right now (what our true nature is). If we do not know what we truly are, even the greatest teaching (navigational device) will not be of any value.

That's why Master Renny is quoted in the same "Heard and Recorded During Master Renny's Lifetime" as saying:

Many seem to earnestly listen to Dharma Talks, but few wish to receive shinjin. Similarly, although many others wish to be born in the Pure Land of Ultimate Joy because of the pleasures they hear are to be experienced there, that is not enough to become Buddha.

BETSUIN PHOTOS

by Koichi Sayano



BWA, Takeko Shimizu & Jean Kondo, prepare eggs for the Betsuin's monthly breakfast

Shimoda
Merit Badges: Ronnie Hatakeyama (Personal Fitness and Citizenship in Home), Glen Nakao (Automotive Safety and Athletic), John Shimoda (Citizenship in Home, Art and Citizenship in the Community and Safety)

JiHO, May 10, 1970...

NISHI HONGWANJI JUDO YONENS NOSED OUT IN FINALS

The 20th Anniversary Judo Tournament sponsored by the Venice Judo Club at the local high school gym in March, drew entries from 23 judo clubs in the southland. The Nishi Hongwanji Judo Club, Yonen Division, defeated Orange County in the quarterfinals 3 to 1. In the semifinals the strong Nishi team blanked the Norwalk team 5 to 0. In the finals the championship contending Nishi team was nosed out by the Compton team 3 to 2.

The Nishi Yonen runner-up team members are Randy Matsuno, Ricky Kanamoto, Ronald Yamamoto, Robert Lazo, David Okino, Gregory Fukui and Michael Tatsui.

The Los Angeles Choir, under the directorship of Miss Lillian Yamada and Mrs. Kimi Ishii, accompanist, sang "Yube no Uta", "Climb the Path with Gladness", "Merry-Go-Round Broke Down", and "Madame Jeanette" at the W.Y.B.L. Choir Festival on March 7, 1953, 1:30 p.m. at the Nishi Hongwanji Temple, Los Angeles...

Music hath charms to soothe a savage beast, To soften rocks, or bend a knotted oak...Congreve

----From program donated by Kiyoteramaye

* * * * *

Thank you to Ms. Kiyoteramaye for photos and articles on the Y.B.A. of the 1950's. Thank you to family of Mrs. Masako Tanaka for books, booklets, JiHOs, and miscellaneous items from our history.

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. Archives are still requesting old copies of the JiHOs, pre-2000.

Only those who accept shinjin from Amida and leave everything up to him, will be born in his Pure Land and become a Buddha.

The Venerable Master Shinran taught us that becoming aware of Amida Buddha's Primal Vow based on "Buddha-centered power" is the cause of our birth there and our resulting Buddhahood. But that is not the only benefit we receive. He wrote:

When we ignorant beings Filled with base passions in this world Of birth and death, Hear the Compassionate Vow that transcends this world, Our minds and heart are allowed To play in the Pure Land, Though our bodies remain just as base as before.

What this means is that our birth on the "other shore" (higan) of Enlightenment is absolutely guaranteed at the very moment we receive shinjin. This is referred to as "the benefit of being in the group (of those guaranteed to be born in the Pure Land) while still in this world" (gensho shojaku no yaku). Our lives are colored with both joy and sorrow, with suffering and pleasure. But, when we are "taken in, never to be abandoned" by the Nembutsu based on Amida Buddha's Primal Vow, we are absolutely assured that we are on the way to the other shore, and are completely untroubled by any anxiety whatsoever. This is exactly where I am taken into at this moment in this life.

Here at our Nishi Hongwanji Betsuin Buddhist Temple, we will conduct our Fall Ohigan Seminar on September 20 (Saturday), starting from 9:00 AM. Our Ohigan Service will be held next day, the 21st (Sunday), starting at 10:00 AM. Our speakers will be Reverend Chugan Briones in English, and Reverend Briones' wife, Reverend Nobuko Miyoshi of the Higashi Hongwanji, in Japanese. I invite all of you to participate in both of these activities with your families and friends. Let us follow the Way of Ohigan in appreciation of being enveloped within Amida Buddha's Compassionate Primal Vow.

Gassho

EITAIKYO DONATIONS

as of July 30, 2008

ADDED EITAIKYO DONATIONS

TOKUBETSU DONATIONS

as of July 30, 2008

BWA DONATIONS

BRIONES

(continued from page 1)

mal rights activists and the pro-life groups to name a few. They protested and advocated boycotts of products that contributed to this inhumane treatment to animals and disregard of human life (in the case of birth control).

They protested just as I protested or boycotted companies back in the 60's and 70's that contributed to the war effort in Viet Nam. Companies like Dow Chemicals, Livermore Laboratory.

Now a days, I despise logging companies that cut trees down with disregard for the environment or Nuclear power plants that have the potential to create the ultimate contamination. What kind of people work for these despicable companies.

However, if you really reflect upon this, they are regular "Joe Blows" that worked at these companies And just like me their jobs put food on the table, a roof over their head and put their kids through college.

The opening reading is from the 13th chapter of the Tannisho, here the author, Yuien-bo, covers a lot ground. The gist of the chapter is that Shinran places great emphasis on the role of karma in human behavior. He explains that all our acts, whether good or bad, are the outcome of past karma. So it really doesn't matter how good we think we are, because we really have no good deeds to be proud of nor are our evil deeds an obstruction to Amida's Primal Vow.

It is well known that before and during Shinran's time, social status was based on ones occupation. Therefore farmers, hunters, fisherman, merchants were considered the lower class. Not only were these groups looked down upon, but it was understood during this time, that the salvation was uncertain for this group of workers.

Shinran might have been the first to address these social undesirables. He understood that these workers were born into this occupation and/or social standing and they had absolutely no control over their lives. Shinran understood that we all have our needs and desires that dictate behavior and create inconsistencies in what we believe and how we live our life.

The Jodo Shinshu teachings are deeply rooted in the Law of Cause and Effect, also known as Karma. There is no judge and no judgment. There is no right and no wrong, good or evil. There is only the effects of our thoughts, words and actions. These effects exist as the consequences of what we think, say and do. And, how we respond to these effects, determines what our next moment shall be. It determines what type of human being I shall become.

Many people think what I did as an occupation was despicable. Yet we eat McDonalds without thinking that a 10's of thousands of cows are slaughtered methodically and systematically every day so you could get a quick, inexpensive meal.

Higher up on the food chain.... The taking of human life is condemned by most religions. Meaning, it is wrong to kill another human being. On one extreme, this is what we are taught. On the other hand, we are also told that it's permissible to kill under certain circumstances such as war, criminal executions or abortions. With such contradictions, it is no wonder that we are confused, and religion is often accused of being hypocritical.

Jodo Shinshu does not place a good or bad label upon an action. Depending on the circumstances, we must all make the best decision at that moment.

For Shinran, faith, is a faith beyond good and evil, because of our human limitations, our biases, and our prejudices are incapable of knowing what truly constitutes good and evil. Therefore, on the social level, no one can judge who will or will not be saved. No one has the right to stand judgment on anyone else.

The awakening of the individual goes beyond the dualistic nature of extremes. Our life, our karma is unique, therefore our own awakening will be unique and it doesn't matter what we are told is good, bad, right or wrong. Jodo Shinshu's concern is showing us our true natures in the light of the Nembutsu and less concern in telling us how we should be living our lives.

ESHINNI

(continued from page 3)

and devotion in supporting Shinran and his teachings, the Hongwanji has grown to what it is today.

Each year, in October, the LA Betsuin BWA has the "Eshinni and Kakushinni Memorial" recognize their great efforts.

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*

BETSUIN CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER

1 LABOR DAY (Betsuin closed)

7 DHARMA SCHOOL REGISTRATION

OHIGAN:

SPEAKERS:

ENG: REV. WILLIAM BRIONES (LA BETSUIN)

JPN: REV. NOBUKO MIYOSHI (HIGASHI HONGANJI)

20 OHIGAN SEMINAR 9 am - 4 pm

"JODO SHINSHU IN EVERYDAY LIVING...
...Are you listening?"

21 OHIGAN SERVICE 10:00 am

21 NOKOTSUDO INURNMENT SERVICE 1:30 pm

OCTOBER

5 ESSHIN-NI / KAKUSHINNI

MEMORIAL SERVICE

GUEST SPEAKER: REV. SHINJI OKADA

(PASADENA BUDDHIST TEMPLE)

NOVEMBER

EITAIKYO SERVICES

15 ENGLISH/JAPANESE: 1:30 PM

16 ENGLISH: 10 AM

JAPANESE: 1:30 PM

16 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING 3:30 PM

FALL OHIGAN SEMINAR

JODO SHINSHU IN EVERYDAY LIVING

ARE YOU LISTENING?

Saturday, September 20, 2008
9:00 AM- 4:00 PM

GUEST SPEAKERS:

ENGLISH
Rev. William Briones
LA Betsuin

JAPANESE
Rev. Nobuko Miyoshi
Higashi Honganji

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 Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple

LA Betsuin Higan Seminar
815 E. 1st St. Los Angeles, CA 90012
by September 16, 2007

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

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

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 June 1 through July 30, 2008. Your continuing support of the temple is greatly appreciated.

L.A. BETSUIN

"TELEPHONE DHARMA MESSAGE"

ENG: 213-680-2038 JPN: 213-680-2080

Betsuin Jiho

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