

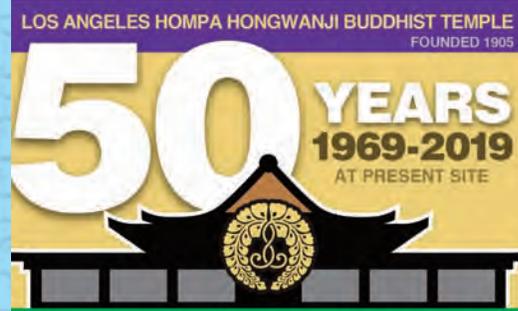
# LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

# jihō

WWW

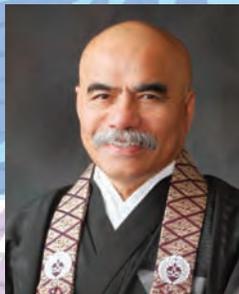
No. 427

November-December 2014



## RIMBAN'S MESSAGE

## THOUGHTS ON SHAKYAMUNI BUDDHA AND AMIDA BUDDHA



RIMBAN  
WILLIAM BRIONES

*"The sutra (Larger Sutra of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life) reveals that Shakyamuni appeared in this world and expounded the teachings of the way to enlightenment, seeking to save the multitudes of living beings by blessing them with this benefit that is true and real. Thus, to*

*teach the Tathagata's Primal Vow is the true intent of this sutra; the Name of the Buddha is its essence".*

—Chapter on Teaching, *KYOGYOSHINSHO*

It's that time of the year when college, high school and junior high school students come knocking on our doors (ringing the doorbell in our case). They've been assigned to do a comparative religious report. Their assignment is to interview a minister and /or attend a service which is not of their own religion and report their findings. I'm more than happy to answer any questions they have on Buddhism. More likely than not, they have no idea what Buddhism is about. So it never surprises me with some of the misconceptions many of the students have about Buddhism. Envariably, someone always asks about the "Fat Laughing

Buddha".

When I began my path in Buddhism over 45 years ago, I was also wondering "What's up with that fat laughing Buddha?" However, when I became a little bit more serious with Buddhism and Jodo Shinshu I was a bit confused about the historical Buddha, Shakyamuni and Amida Buddha, the Buddha that the Pure Land Buddhist revere as the main object of reverence. Shinran Shonin, the founder of the Jodo Shinshu Buddhist tradition, wrote in his magnum opus, *Kyogyoshinsho*, that Shakyamuni Buddha appeared in the world to tell us about Amida Buddha (see the opening quote).

Shakyamuni Buddha, whose life story is depicted on the murals in the hondo of the Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Betsuin is the historical Buddha that lived over 2500 years ago, almost 550 years before Jesus Christ was born. And at the age of 29 the prince gave up his worldly possessions, and set out on a long journey in search of a path that would lead to the end of suffering. For six long years he sought worthy teachers who might give him the answers. He followed the difficult disciplines, and when he took up ascetic practices it almost killed him. But all was in vain. He failed to find the means by which to liberate man

*(continued on page 11)*

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

TEL: 213.680.9130  
FAX: 213.680.2210

WEB: [nishihongwanji-la.org](http://nishihongwanji-la.org)

EMAIL: [info@nishihongwanji-la.org](mailto:info@nishihongwanji-la.org)

## HEARING THE BUDDHA-DHARMA

by Rev. Koho Takata



REV. KOHO TAKATA

While serving at Kapaa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple on the island of Kauai, Hawaii, I was once told by some members that they felt that it was necessary to attend the temple on Sundays because they were Buddhists and not Christians. I agreed with these members that attending the temple on a particular day was not a necessity.

Actually, I feel that it is important for us Buddhists to hear the teachings on an everyday basis rather than just on particular days of the week. This is the reason why Buddhist traditions do not choose a certain day for hearing the Buddha-dharma. Moreover, each moment is a precious opportunity for us to hear the Buddha-dharma in our daily lives.

The United States of America is a country where the majority of the population is Christian. Many customs and ideas are quite different from Buddhist traditions. Our Issei pioneers tried to incorporate American customs and followed the Christian ways by going to the temple on Sundays. I appreciate this. Though I do need to hear the teachings in my daily life, I tend to forget because of my busy schedules and various desires. I have services with my family on daily basis at home and morning services with the Nishi Center children at the temple, it is essential for me to calm down my feelings and reflect upon myself to appreciate the Truth of Oneness in the True and Real Life, *Namo-Amidabutsu* by hearing the teachings of Primal Vow at Primal Vow Temple (*hon-gwan-ji*) at least once a week.

When I was in Hawaii, I had some opportunities to attend the Jr. YBA Federation meetings. I would like to share a very memorable activity about hearing the Buddha-dharma reported by an advisor. During an overnight event, the juniors had to place a stone on their pillow. Whenever their head hit the stone, they had to recite, “*Namo Amida Butsu.*”

This anecdote reminded me of the story of *Akao-no-Doshu* who had lived in my prefecture of Toyama.

*Akao-no-Doshu*, was a follower of Rennyō Shōnin, who had many wounds on his body. He was always hiding them and would not tell others about how he had gotten his wounds. One day, his neighbor secretly went to his home to find out. The neighbor found it strange to see a great deal of firewood stacked in his room. When the time came to sleep, *Akao-no-Doshu* started to line up the firewood. As he positioned each piece of wood, he recited the

*Nembutsu, “Namo-Amidabutsu.”*

*Akao-no-Doshu* had 21 rules. The first rule was, “*One’s after life is a matter of great importance. As long as I have a life, I must be always aware of it.*” Because of this, he always slept on the fire wood instead of a *futon*. He had 48 pieces of firewood because Amida Buddha established 48 vows to bring all beings to the realm of the Infinite Light and Life. He maintained his awareness of his rules and his appreciation of the compassionate working of Amida Buddha by sleeping on the 48 pieces of firewood. Each morning, when he woke up, he was always happy about receiving the Great Compassion of Amida Buddha. The wounds and pains from sleeping on the fire wood was his reminder to express his appreciation to Amida Buddha by saying *Namo-Amidabutsu* and how he was embraced by the Wisdom and Compassion of Amida Buddha.

About a month ago, I had an internment service at our temple columbarium, *Muryo-kojyu-do*. The son who had lost his mother told me that the reason why he purchased a niche at our temple was because he had heard that the ministers chant sutras in memory of the deceased at columbarium every morning. I explained to him that the chanting of sutra by ministers is not a petitionary prayer for the peaceful repose of his mother. The chanting is for him to hear the message from his mother who became a Buddha upon her death. Even though ministers chant sutras at the columbarium, it is pointless if the family members are not present to experience the chanting. The ministers, themselves, will experience the Buddha-dharma by chanting the sutras at columbarium, but it is of no benefit to the deceased.

A couple weeks later, the son came to temple to purchase a service book to chant before his family altar (*butsudan*) each morning so that he hears the calling voice of his mother. It is in appreciation for what his mother had done for him and to recognize the continuation of her influence of her compassionate working upon his life to realize the true and real life, *Namo-Amidabutsu*.

The word “*sutra*” is a Sanskrit term and literally means “*thread*.” It refers to words of Sakyamuni Buddha or the verses which convey the teachings of the Buddha. In essence, the intent of Sakyamuni Buddha’s numerous sermons and discourse was to expound Infinite Wisdom and Compassion of Amida Buddha. The Truth of the Buddha-Dharma embraces and sustains all beings and leads them to enlightenment which our loved ones have been realized upon their death.

(continued on page 6)

## BEYOND LIVING AND DYING HOW MUCH MAKES YOU FEEL ENOUGH?

by Rev. Kazuaki Nakata



REV. KAZ

personalities are, Nature adopts the same policy towards them.

*Natural death is not in the least mysterious, but it is understandable as birth itself. Both occurrences are part of a biological process that provides for a perpetual fountain of youth. Remarkable as human bodies are, Nature eventually discards them for fresh ones; and it ought not to be surprising if, remarkable as human*

— Corliss Lamont

“The Illusion of Immortality”, p73

This year, Indian Summer extended until the end of September here in Southern California. The high temperatures, had me thinking about the serious drought in California. I am hoping we'll get enough rain this Winter and next Spring to recover from this drought. I hope you have recovered from the hot summer. Oftentimes, the heat causes difficulty in sleeping at night. I have a solution for this issue. It's called, "Icy Pillow." It is like an ice pack/bag, but you actually do not have to put ice into the pillow. The pillow is filled with a chemical gel. Before use, it is stored in the freezer from the morning. By bedtime, it will be ready to cool you for 5 to 8 hours while you sleep. I usually wrap the pack with a hand towel and place it on my pillow. It is not only for the summer heat but also it is also useful for a fever. I keep a pack or two in my freezer throughout the year.

In the previous issue of the JIHO, there was a brief article announcing my graduation. After four years of extensive research and study, I was able to complete my masters degree in business administration. It was not only from my efforts to earn the degree, but also that of my family, especially my wife's help and support. Because of my family's efforts made it possible, I took my family to attend the commencement in Washington DC. My older daughter, Kanon, was so impressed with my commencement attire and the ceremony, she wanted to attend a graduate school, though she just started first grade. I was surprised to be presented with a generous gift from the Nishi Betsuin board of directors. I wrote a letter of appreciation. Because the gift from the board is a gift from everyone in the Betsuin sangha, I would like to share what I wrote in the letter.

*“Thank you so much for your generous gift on the*

*graduation of my Master of Business Administration Degree. I am so honored and pleased to accept your gift, because I realized that our Nishi board members consider and understand the importance of the minister's continuing education...”*

I announced at the September board of director's meeting that I had begun my studies at the University of the West, graduate school of Religious Studies (Buddhist Studies Concentration) in Rosemead. The university was founded by a Taiwanese Zen Temple and many Taiwanese Buddhists provide financial support to run the university. Why am I in school again? The idea to further pursue Buddhist studies originally came up when Rev. Briones became "Rimban" Briones. Within our Nishi ministerial staff, we had discussed how we could provide better experiences of Buddhist education to the Betsuin members. We came up the idea of the Nishi Buddhist Study Center. Consequently, the idea became a part of the 50th Anniversary projects. We have already been offering Buddhist education seminars and study classes both in English and Japanese formats, but they were not well organized. There was no continuity. When-ever Betsuin ministers transferred to other temples, their classes would disband and their ideas/concepts would cease. Once we understood history of the Buddhist education at the Betsuin and received input from the Betsuin members, we decided to establish a structured educational system like that of an academic institution.

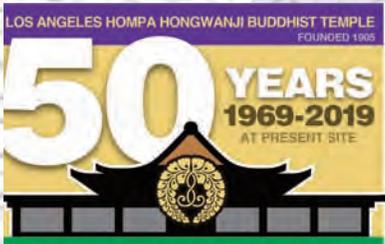
A question then arose. Who would be able to provide and support the academic credence to such a study center? If we were to gain accreditation, who could be the administrator? With Rimban Briones being actively engaged as the head minister and Rev. Takata supporting him as his right hand, the responsibility would have to be mine.

Two years ago, I was appointed as the ministerial advisor to the Federation of Dharma School Teachers. It was at this point when I decided to further my studies in Buddhism for the sake of both the dharma school and the Betsuin. I proposed my eight-year university study plan to Rimban Briones and Rev. Takata. They both understood my plan and Rimban gave the "go ahead." The BCA headquarters also acknowledged my intent and showed their support by providing me with a scholarship to further my education.

I am currently studying Sanskrit, Research Methodology,

*(continued on page 10)*

## “50 YEARS” UPDATE REPORT



As we move forward with the preparation of the 50th Year Commemoration of the LA Betsuin at its current location in 2019, there will be other anniversary's of the temple and affiliated organizations to be commemorated as follows:

**2015:** 110th Anniversary of the Betsuin (1905-2015)

10th Anniversary of the Muryokoju-do / Nokotsudo (2005-2015)

**2016:** 85th Anniversary of Betsuin Status (1931-2016)

60th Anniversary of ABA (1956-2016)

**2017:** 100th Anniversary of Dharma School (1917-2017)

**2018:** 100th Anniversary of Sr. YBA and BWA (1918-2018)

**2019:** 50th Anniversary of Boy Scouts (1969-2019)

The next five years will be filled with a number of anniversaries, which reflects the substantial history of the Betsuin. It indicates the support and dedication of its members.

The Betsuin board of directors has approved the restoration of the *onaijin* which will take place following the Hoonko Service in 2016 with the shipping of the *onaijin* articles to Kyoto where all the work will take place. It will require some 9-10 months to complete the project. During this period, a temporary *onaijin* will be used in the *hondo*.

Included with the *onaijin* restoration is the replacement of its ceiling panels with Buddhist floral panels. Please refer to the article, on this page, by Shoichi Sayano, 50th Anniversary Projects Committee Chairman, explaining about this ceiling panel project.

Koichi Sayano, dharma school superintendent, stated that the dharma school students will be participating in the 50th Anniversary Fundraising Campaign with their own fundraising program. It is encouraging to know that the students want to be a part of the Betsuin's efforts to raise funds for the 50th Anniversary Programs and Projects.

With all this, let us continue to put our hearts and minds together for a successful 50th Anniversary of the Betsuin at its current location in 2019.

*Gassho,*

Ernest Hida

50th Anniversary Chairman

## ONAIJIN CEILING PANELS TO BE INSCRIBED WITH DONOR NAMES

*by Shoichi Sayano*

I sincerely hope that this notice finds you in good health and in the joy of the O-Nembutsu, Namo-Amidabutsu.

In the year 2019, our present Betsuin building and *onaijin* (temple altar) will be 50 years old. It is customary for an *onaijin* to be restored every 50 years. As the Betsuin *onaijin* items will be restored in 2016, plans are being made to repair the roof above the *onaijin* and to repair and replace the water-damaged walls and ceiling panels.

The ceiling will be replaced by new panels with floral images that are associated with the Hongwanji and its teachings. On the reverse side of these ceiling tiles 50th Anniversary donor names will be inscribed.

The donor names will be inscribed onto the tiles in Japan before they are shipped here to Los Angeles. For this reason, the deadline for the donor names to be inscribed onto the ceiling panels will be July 31, 2016.

If you wish to have your name inscribed onto the back of the new ceiling panel, please submit your donation or pledge before the deadline date.

Thank you for your cooperation and support.

*In gassho,*

Shoichi Sayano

Chairman, 50th Anniversary Projects Committee



*The two floral image designs that will be placed on the panels that will be installed in the ceiling above the onaijin.*

*(Additional 50th Anniversary reports on next page)*

## DHARMA SCHOOL PENNY-A-DAY PROGRAM

*by Koichi Sayano*

The dharma school Penny-A-Day program (also called the Building Fund) dates back almost 50 years to the major fundraising effort that was undertaken as the Betsuin prepared to build a new temple to move from the First St. and Central Ave. location in the late 1960's. Contributions were collected in each class every week that dharma school was in session. This became the dharma school students' contribution to the fundraising effort to help raise the roughly \$1.5 million (in then-dollars) needed to build

the new facility. The dharma school has continued this collection since then, which has been used for building improvements and maintenance projects over the years.

As the 50th Anniversary fundraising gets underway, collections into this fund will be directed towards the improvement projects that the temple will be starting, including the onajin and hondo restoration.

## LA HOMPA HONGWANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE ESTABLISHMENT OF BUDDHIST STUDY CENTER

The Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple was established in 1905 as a Nembutsu Dojo, a place for listening to and practicing the Buddha-Dharma by countless dedicated Nembutsu followers. The flourish and growth of the Nembutsu is verified by the dedication of the present temple in 1969. Since then, many additional constructions and projects were carried out by dedicated members and ministers for the past 45 years.

As we welcome the 50th anniversary of our temple facilities at the present location, we would like to establish the Buddhist Study Center at the Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple as one of its commemoration projects. We would like Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple to be not only a center of administrative roles for the Southern District temples but also a center of Buddhist Education.

The primary purpose of a religious organization and significance of having a temple is to learn its teachings. We think as a ways and means to learn the teachings, it is necessary to enhance our positive attitudes to the Buddha and the teachings for nurturing ourselves through Buddhist education programs. The establishment of the Buddhist Study Center will initiate the opportunity to formulate the strong Buddhist values that are the foundation of the Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple.

### GOAL:

**To** strengthen Buddhist Education in daily life

### OBJECTIVES:

**To** increase individual participation in temple activities

**To** attract future leaders of the temple

**To** strengthen and deepen understanding of Buddhism and Jodo Shinshu

**To** relate and apply Buddhist education in daily life

### OUTCOME:

**To** increase membership in temple

**To** increase participation in temple activities

**To** be comfortable in discussing Buddhist concepts in various communities

### SCHEDULES for 2015

Winter Semester: January to March

Spring Semester: April to June

Fall semester: September to November

**TUITION:** Tuition is dependent on each course. Tuition is nonrefundable

### Winter 2015 (January to March)

#### Understanding Shinran Shonin

Monday, 7:00-8:30PM

Rev. Koho Takata

January 26, February 2, 9, 16, 23, March 2 (6 week class: \$60)

#### Jodo Shinshu Buddhism Guide

To be a good listener

Tuesday, 7:00-8:30PM

Rev. Ryuta Furumoto

January 20, 27, February 3, 17, 24, March 3 (6 week class: \$60)

#### Life of Sakyamuni Buddha

Wednesday, 7:00-8:30 PM

Rimban William Briones

*(continued on page 10)*

## SOUTHERN DISTRICT BEC HOSTS SEMINAR: “THE DHARMA IN FAMILY LIFE...”



**Pieper Toyama**

The Southern District Buddhist Education Com-mittee is sponsoring a seminar entitled, “*The Dharma in Family Life: Lessons from Pacific Buddhist Academy.*”

The guest speaker will be Pieper Toyama who is the Head Master emeritus of the Pacific Buddhist Academy in Hawaii.

The school is an independent college preparatory high school located in Honolulu, and is part of a coordinated system of Buddhist education ranging from pre-kindergarten through grade 12. Founded in 2003, the school is the only Jōdo Shinshū Buddhist high school in North America.

The seminar will be divided into two sessions. In the first session, Toyama will share his knowledge and experiences about youth education and development that were acquired in his work at the academy. He will focus on how Buddhist teachings were used in developing youth who are motivated by Shin Buddhist values. The shared information is particularly relevant to parents of pre-teen and teenaged children and adults who work with youth in their temple programs. He will also explore and share parenting practices inspired by Shin Buddhist values, practices, and perspectives.

In the second session, Toyama will explain the philosophy, history, and practices that make the academy uniquely a Shin Buddhist school. He will also touch upon how the school interacts with BWA units and other Hawaii Kyodan organizations and how the school is beginning to affect the future of Shin Buddhism in Hawaii. He will conclude

Southern District Buddhist Education Committee

### THE DHARMA IN FAMILY LIFE: LESSONS FROM PACIFIC BUDDHIST ACADEMY

Saturday, November 8, 2014

@ LA Betsuin 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Guest Speaker:

**PIEPER TOYAMA**

Head master emeritus of the  
Pacific Buddhist Academy

President of Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii

Registration - \$10 includes lunch

Contact Betsuin @ 213-680-9130 to register

his presentation by describing the school's signature Peace Education mission and its plans for the future.

The cost to register for the seminar is \$10 which will include lunch. Call the Betsuin office at 213.680.9130 to register.

### *Takata - continued from page 2)*

As we welcome the *Eitai-kyo Sangha Memorial Service* during the month of November, let us realize the true meaning of “*Eitai-Dokkyo*,” which means perpetual chanting in memory of the deceased. It is not our petitionary prayer for our loved ones but solely for us to hear the silent voice of our loved ones, their dharma messages. Let us also reflect upon the true significance of observing the Eitai-kyo Service, of why our loved ones made tremendous financial sacrifices to build a *nembutsu dojo* to hand down the precious gift, the Buddha-dharma, from generation to generation. It is solely for us to awaken to the Truth of

Oneness and live in the True and Real Life, Namo-Ami-dabutsu, which sustains our lives even after our lives end. Let us all hear the Buddha-dharma not only on Sundays but also in our daily lives.

“The word ‘hear’ in the passage from the Larger Sutra means that sentient beings, having heard how the Buddha’s Vow arose-its origin and fulfillment-are altogether free of doubt. This is to hear.”

—The Collected Works of Shinran: P.112, #65

## EITAIKYO SERVICE (SANGHA MEMORIAL)

The members of Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple and their families are invited to attend the annual Eitaikyo Sangha Memorial Service, which is one of the Six Major Services in the Pure Land Shin Buddhism to be held on as follows:

Saturday, November 15 at 1:30pm

English Speaker: Rimban William Briones

Japanese Speaker: Rev. Koho Takata

Sunday, November 16 at 10:00am

English Speaker: Rimban William Briones

Japanese Speaker: Rev. Koho Takata

Sunday, November 16 at 1:30pm

English Speaker: Rimban William Briones

Japanese Speaker: Rev. Kaz Nakata

The spiritual origin to this observance goes back to a few centuries after the historical Buddha entered Nirvana. At this time the lay followers practiced many types of offerings, including the building of stupa and offerings of services for the maintenance of temple and their compounds. The purpose was to accumulate religious virtues to be directed to the deceased or for themselves.

This spirit has been carried with the Buddhist tradition as Buddhism spread into China and Japan and this practice of making offerings in the form of sutra chanting and rituals has become a part of the life of the people.

Here in Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple, *Eitaikyo* or *Sangha Memorial Service* is observed not as a means of accumulating virtues to be directed to others but taken as a solemn occasion to express one's dedication to the sangha. Sutra chanting, rituals, and donations done by Sangha in the service are symbolic expressions of their dedication and appreciation.

The term *Eitaikyo*, an abridgement of *eitai-dokkyo*, means the perpetual chanting of the sutra in memory of the deceased, signifying that all those who have passed away lived in the teachings of the Buddha. This signification gives each of us a chance to affirm our own understanding of Buddhism because of the guidance of the Buddha through our loved ones. Such affirmation gives us the precious opportunity to see how the dharma has helped in our lives and to realize oneness of life. It means we are all connected. Acknowledging our dharma connection to those who have passed away empowers us to further pursue the path of the Buddha, dharma, and sangha, which have been our spiritual treasures. The great virtue that may be accumulated in Jodo Shinshu Buddhism is through the practice of the dharma in our daily lives.

## BODHI DAY SERVICE (BUDDHA'S ENLIGHTENMENT)

The members of Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple and their families are invited to attend the annual Bodhi Day Service, which is the observance of Buddha's Enlightened Day to be held on Sunday, December 14, 2014.

The number "8" is very significant for Buddhists. On April 8th, we celebrate the birth of the historical Buddha. On December 8th, we celebrate the attainment of Enlightenment of Shakyamuni Buddha. And, Shakyamuni Buddha showed us the Eightfold (8) Path to end the life of sufferings.

We have four basic sufferings - birth, aging, illness, and dying. We also have four additional sufferings - separation from loved one, having to live with someone or some situation one does not like, non-fulfillment of one's most cherished desires, and physical and mental limitation.

What is the cause of those sufferings? The cause of suffering is "I" (our ignorance). We human always carry the mind of greed, anger, and hatred. Although we do not want to have such minds, they come upon us one after another to distress us. However, Shakyamuni Buddha showed us how to end the suffering by practicing the Eightfold Path.

Our life can be filled with light in sharing life with others. It is a simple truth to learn, but a difficult practice to fully realize. We, Buddhists, have precious opportunities to share with our Sangha the true meaning of life as experienced in the practice of the Nembutsu teachings. If each of us realizes the true meaning of life taught by Shakyamuni Buddha, it certainly could be a cause that could change our self-centered society of disharmony to happy, harmonious, and peaceful world. Let us practice the teachings of the Buddha in our daily lives and realize our ignorance and oneness of all life.



*Bodhi Leaf*

## SAVE THE DATE

JANUARY 2015

- 1 SHUSHO-E  
NEW YEAR'S DAY SERVICE  
10:00 AM.
- 4 44th KOHAKU UTAGASSEN

## DID YOU KNOW?

by Eiko Masuyama



**HOMPA HONGWANJI  
LOS ANGELES BETSUIN  
DEDICATION  
Nov 14,15,16, 1969  
815 East First Street,  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
New Temple Project, Part 4**

In June, 1967, the Building Committee met and unanimously approved the recommendation of the Building Research Committee to select Mr. Tom Makino as the architect for our temple. Approval of the Betsuin Board later in the month made the decision official.

September, 1967, saw the first of several drafts drawn up by Mr. Makino. The building silhouette and floor plans went through several changes. Although all the plans were drawn to include a multipurpose gymnasium, it was decided to postpone its actual construction until after the sale of the present temple property. Various factors entered into the decision—shortage of ready funds, inadequate parking facilities, etc. Ironically, when the new temple project was first under discussion, a proposal, later overruled, was introduced to give priority to the construction of a gymnasium.

In September, 1968, the first architectural plans were approved. Collins and McPherson, one of five firms bidding for the job, was chosen to construct our new temple. Construction was to start in a month with the completion date scheduled for July, 1969.

As of December 31, 1968, 1,103 donors had pledged \$1,025,000 to the Building Trust Fund.

During 1969, a special fund drive to raise \$200,000 for interior furnishings was started. The enthusiastic response to this special fund was pleasantly encouraging. There seemed no doubt that the goal would be achieved before the completion of the temple.

The first shovelful of dirt was turned by Rimban Masuoka on October 14, 1968. Dignitaries by the score were present. It was a proud and festive occasion. The next day, the construction crew moved in.

Progress was rapid at first. But then the rains came. It turned into one of the wettest seasons on record. There were hopes that the lost time could be made up when Los Angeles dried up. But the lost time could not be made up. Finally an announcement was made that the temple would not be completed until October.

... TO BE CONTINUED

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**“100th EDITION OF  
BETSUIN JIHO”,  
March 5, 1958, No. 100**

With the publishing of this issue, the Betsuin Jiho, has completed its one hundredth issue of serving the members of the Betsuin. For a period of twelve years, under several editorship and direction, the Betsuin Jiho developed from a bulletin reporting donations and incidental reports, from a small four page rag-print paper, from a strictly Japanese edition to the bilingual edition, and from a two page half-sized paper, to a four page offset. Through the Jiho, attempts were made to report to its members of the activities and happenings in and around the Betsuin, injecting here and there, problems and food for thought, in an attempt to bring its readers a closer relationship with the Betsuin.

Those of you who are familiar with publication work, know the problems and headaches involved in gathering the news and arranging the articles in such a manner to draw the attention of its readers. Many were the nights spent in trying to meet the deadline. Perhaps, there were some other types of articles you wanted inserted. Perhaps, you would like greater emphasis upon the religious articles. We, the editors, are amateurs and perhaps lack the punch to bring to you readers the quality of articles you might desire. We have tried, however, and will keep on trying to meet the needs of its readers. In order to do this, we, the staff, would like comments from you as to what you would like to see in the REPORT, what type of articles you would like to see. Your comments will be appreciated and we will endeavor to do our best in meeting your demands. If any of the members have any interesting articles, poems, please send them to the Betsuin and we will see to its publication. To the one hundredth issue, VIVA!

*[The Nishi archives is looking for Betsuin JIHOs, issues 1 – 30, and many issues published in the 1930s, 1940s, 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. If you find any issues, please drop them off at the Betsuin office. Archives committee would be most appreciative.]*

\* \* \* \* \*

Under the guidance of Bruce Hatakeyama, the Betsuin library contents, English and Japanese, are being recorded in the computer, KOKORO. Currently, the recently donated books, in Japanese (on going), are being added to the list of Japanese books by Chiyeko Kondo

*(continued on page 11)*

## HONZAN GIFT

The LA Betsuin recently received a commemoration gift from Honzan (mother temple in Kyoto) for the attendance to the occasion of the retirement of the former Monshu and the succeeding the Hongwanji tradition by the new Monshu.

As reported in the previous issue of the Jiho, 17 members from the Betsuin, including Rimban Briones, Rev. Takata, and Rev. Matsubayashi, traveled to Kyoto to witness the retirement and ascension of the former and new Monshu.

Received was a black lacquered box known as a “*bunko*.” The kanji characters for “*bunko*” can be read as “letter storage.” Traditionally, the *bunko* holds important letters, such as the *Gobunsho* (letters of Rennyō Shonin) or *Mattosho* (letters of Shinran Shonin)



*Rev. Takata present Rimban Briones with a gift sent from Honzan*



*Gift of a lacquered “bunko.”*



## NISHI CENTER NEWS

A new school year started for Nishi Hongwanji Child Development Center — nicknamed, “Nishi Center. It is the 31st year since the establishment in 1983.

Some of the Sunshine Room children were “promoted” to the Rainbow Room and some of the Rainbow Room children were “promoted” to the Kindergarten room, some as kindergartners and others as transitional/pre-kindergartners. There are many new students to the school. Some of them naturally fell into the busy activities of the school while others were a bit anxious and teary-eyed at the beginning.

The first field trip for the school year was annual trip to the KidSpace Museum in Pasadena. Everyone had a wonderful time exploring and learning with the many activities — climbing in and out of the Ant Hole, getting soaking wet in the creek and pond, and even handling the poop of different animals (albeit it was fake poop).

After all the activities at the museum, the children, staff, and volunteer parents had a pleasant picnic lunch at the adjacent park followed by some playtime on the playground equipment.

When it was time, the weary bunch loaded into the school bus and returned to Nishi Center for the needed afternoon naps. It was a great day.



*Peering through plexiglass flooring.*



*“Wanna see some animal poop?”*

## BOOK CENTER REVIEW

*(Buddhist Study Center - continued from page 5)*

by Roy Nakahara

### **December Fan**

*Buddhist Essays of Rev. Manshi Kiyozawa*  
Translated by Dr. Nobuo Haneda

This book is a collection of essays by Rev. Manshi Kiyozawa focusing on liberation and freedom from the self, not freedom from external conditions or circumstances. He indicates examination of the self is the most important thing in life.

Kiyozawa sees himself as useless as a fan in December. He faced difficulties in the final years of his life; losing his wife and sons, failing to reform the traditional Otani-ha institution, suffering from tuberculosis, and awaking to the absolute uselessness of his self-effort and of his total ignorance.

Kiyozawa's profound thoughts are expressed in the passages:

*"Our true self is nothing but committing our total existence to the wondrous working of the Infinite, then settling down just as we are in our present situation", and "My religious conviction is to trust in Tathagata, where Tathagata is the fundamental reality underlying my existence as a believer."*



March 4, 11, 18, 25, April 1  
(5 week class: \$50)

### *Historical Perspectives of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism in the JA Communities and Beyond*

Thursday, 7:00-8:30PM  
Rev. Masao Kodani  
January 29, February 5, 19, 26, March 5, 19  
(6 week class: \$60)

*Jodo Shinshu Buddhism*  
(Taught in Japanese)  
Every Friday, 10:00-11:00AM  
Rev. Kazuaki Nakata  
(\$5 per week)

### *Jodo Shinshu Buddhism Explained from Traditional and Western Perspectives*

Saturday, 10:00-11:30AM  
Rev. Tetsuo Unno  
January 24, 31, February 21, 28, March 21, 28  
(6 week class: \$60)

*Introduction to Buddhism/  
Jodo Shinshu Buddhism*  
Every Sunday, 11:00-11:30AM (free)  
Rimban William Briones

### *Nakata - continued from page 3)*

and Comparative Religion. I am taking these classes on a part-time basis, attending classes on my day off. The oldest existing Jodo Shinshu sutra (text) was written in Sanskrit and the Sanskrit class is helping me to understand the sutra in its original form. In the research class, I have to read 4-5 Buddhist journal articles as a weekly exercise which has provided me with various topics for my dharma talks on Sundays.

The comparative religion class uses Moreman's *"Beyond the Threshold"* as the text book where death and dying in Buddhism and other religions is presented. In the beginning of my article, I quoted Corliss Lamont's passage which appears in a text book. Interestingly, in the class, there are students who work in the medical field as doctors and nurses. They have shared, in class, the medical aspects of death and dying. As a minister I have had many experiences observing those who have died during which I have conducted bedside services known as the *maku-*

*rakyo* service. None of these experiences have been a "mysterious occurrence" even if lives were lost through accidents or unknown causes.

Lamont's book was published in 1935. Since then, many health and medical techniques and technology advancements have changed the world. These advancements have changed the definitions of death and dying substantially. I would like to share an example.

One day I received a phone call from a woman. She requested a *makurakyo* service at the hospital for her husband. When I arrived at the hospital, his family members were gathered and were waiting for my arrival. He was about in his mid-40s and appeared to be sleeping. His children, I'm guessing, were teenagers. His wife mentioned that he had been in a deep coma for a few days. The doctor reported that there was brain function but there was no

*(continued on page 13)*

*(Rimban - continued from page 1)*

from the suffering of birth, old age, illness and death.

He then retreated to what is now called Buddha-gaya, and sat under a pippala, making a firm resolution that he would not rise from this seat until he attained enlightenment. He then entered quiet meditation to discern the true nature of himself. After conquering Mara's evil temptations, the prince, at 35 years of age, became the *Awakened One*, Shakyamuni Buddha. For the next 45 years expounded on the dharma.

This Shakyamuni story, is one that we're all familiar with ... it's relatively easy to understand. Shakyamuni is the "historical Buddha." He was the one who pointed out the possibilities of enlightenment through his own quest for religious liberation and truth.

This is the foundation for all Buddhist tradition. The goal for all Buddhist is to be awakened. After all, "the Buddha" does mean "the awakened one". All Buddhists use Shakyamuni's teachings as the foundation of their doctrine ... the Four Noble Truths the Eightfold Noble Path, the Three Characteristics of Buddhism ... the teaching of dependent origination.

All Buddhists revere Shakyamuni as the main object of reverence. Therefore many Buddhists place the image of Shakyamuni Buddha at the center of their altar. However, as Pure Land Buddhist, which Jodo Shinshu is part of, Amida Buddha is the single Buddha found in the altar. Within our temples throughout the world, Amida Buddha comes in three forms. The statue of Amida in human form, the painting of Amida in human form and the Name (*myogo*) the Chinese six characters *na mu a mi da butsu*. So then ... who or what is Amida Buddha? My understanding is that Amida is the embodiment of all the realities that we consider basic Buddhist tenets; impermanence, interdependence, non-duality these are very dynamic in trying to awaken us to the reality of human life.

The content or the essence of Shakyamuni's enlightenment is none other than infinite-inconceivable- immeasurable light - wisdom and life-compassion. These are the very words that describe the essence of Amida Buddha. Then Amida Buddha, being light wisdom and life-compassion is a Buddha who manifests the meaning of ultimate enlightenment.

It is said that Amida Buddha has no form, shape, color, odor, nor taste; but it can manifest itself into a lady bug on blade of grass to a massive earthquake below the ocean causing a catastrophic tsunami, taking the lives of over 15,800 people. Amida Buddha can manifest itself into any



*Fat Laughing Buddha*

form, shape or thing to lead us to ultimate enlightenment.

Whether man realizes reality of life and self through other beings or whether they be animal, human, evil person, material, or mineral, it is the working of Amida Buddha in such manifestations to awaken man from his ignorance.

To entrust our life in Amida Buddha, we must realize that the real Buddha goes beyond the symbol of Amida Buddha, goes beyond the statue, the portrait and even the Name. We must encounter that experience. We can't become attached to the symbol as if it were the Buddha itself. We must go beyond the symbol.

Buddha is everywhere for those who are able to taste the dharma in realizing this true self and reality of life in what ever form or shape one faces in daily life.

Siddhartha Gautama in becoming Shakyamuni Buddha was able to become one with the infinite-inconceivable, and immeasurable compassion and wisdom that is the essence of enlightenment in other words it makes enlightenment real. Shakyamuni became one with Amida.

*Namo Amida Butsu*

*(Did You Know? - continued from page 8)*

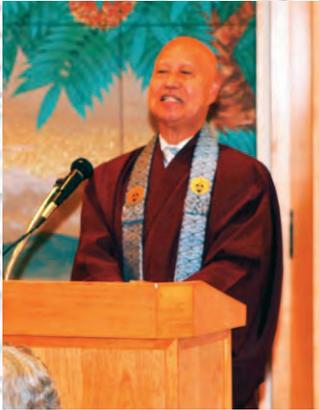
and Michiko Nakata (*okusan*). Recall, the monumental, initial listing, was done by Masayo Koizumi (*okusan*), a few years ago. Ikuko Shimizu also assisted in making additions. Kayo Uno is checking the list of English books added to the library. Boxes of audio tapes were found and are now are being listed on a spreadsheet by volunteers, Michi Matsunami and Rose Kitayama. Many were named in Japanese, and Yuka Takata (*okusan*) assisted.

The Betsuin library is open to interested members. The books are categorized as general Buddhism, Jodo Shinshu, or other. If the door is locked, check with ministers or office. If you wish to borrow book to take out of the library, please sign out for it and return it to the same place when finished.

\* \* \* \* \*

Special thanks to the late Yutaka and Takako Shinohara family for donations of photos, ledger with minutes of YBA meetings 1940 - 1943, album of Hawaii pilgrimage, L.A. Betsuin, Hompa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii Centennial Celebration pilgrimage, March, 1989 (in waiting room), and valuable memorabilia.

BETSUIN PHOTOS



Rev. Zuikei Taniguchi (left) and wife Rev. Dr. Shoyo Taniguchi both served as guest speakers and the Ohigan Seminar and Service.

Rev. Ryoko Osa of Higashi Honganji, guest speaker at the BWA sponsored Eshinni-Kakushinni Service



The Betsuin "men" enjoy a hearty breakfast during the BEC breakfast provided by the dharma school teachers.



Howard Takata, 7th-dan, head of the Nishi Judo Club, is honored by Nisei Week as a "Pioneer of Judo." Also pictured is wife, Helen and daughter, Janis.



Nishi Jr YBA Cabinet 2014-15 installation by Rev. Nakata

Betsuin Jiho

Editor-in-Chief: Rimban William Briones

English Editor: Elaine Fukumoto

Photos: Koichi Sayano and Glen Tao

(Nakata - continued from page 10)

response. This man was being kept alive by a life support system. In this state he could possibly live another 5 - 10 years. The wife explained,

*"We were told that he was in no pain. Our family discussed over the course of the past several days about how we should take care of him and we decided to let him go. So when you are finished with the chanting, the doctor will stop the system and we will end*

Having experienced such situations on many occasions, I knew what I needed to do and what to expect. As I was chanting, in my mind I questioned whether there was any possibility for this man to regain consciousness. Before the existence of the life support system, those in critical condition simply ended their lives and their family had to accept the loss. The advancements in medicine now has made "something that could not be done" to "something that can be done."

Rev. Sokusui Murakami, *kangaku* (scholar), argued that:

*...however much we are convinced that one aspect of our life is fulfilled, it will become an empty delusion when we face our own death. Death is lying at the bottom of our life so that there is no fulfilled life as long as our life is threatened by death itself. Our life can be truly fulfilled only when we transcend the mystical*

*delusion of fearful death. That is the reason why Buddhism encourages us to cope with the solution of death. "Misunderstandings and understandings to Shinran's teachings."*

Nowadays, it is very rare to see and encounter natural death as well as natural birth. We are surrounded by numerous options which make our life longer or shorter. The example of my *makurakyo* experience indicates that the length of our life can be practically managed by man-made solutions or man's will. It means we are dealing with and challenging the area of "threshold".

Therefore, Buddhism, simply, may question us with, "So what?" These dealings and challenges do not settle the fundamental problem of how we can transcend the "mystical delusion of fearful death." One suggestion Buddhism offers in making such decisions when you or a loved one is facing death is to think about what is enough in living beyond a natural death. There is no right or wrong answer to that question in Buddhism. Buddhism is a teaching of awareness so that there is mindfulness of everyday life circumstances. There is, then, a realization of what is important beyond living and dying. Once this is realization takes place one can live a truly fulfilled moment of life.

Gassho

## 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*

### August, 2014

- 4 Yasue Hiroi
- 7 William Shinichi Fujimori
- 12 Aiko Miyagishima
- 15 Kazuo Yokoyama
- 16 Ryoko Yamaguchi
- 18 Yukiko Kimura
- 19 Kunio Kato
- 22 Yukinobu Jack Tao
- 25 Alan Hisao Morigaki

### September, 2014

- 1 Hajimu Murakami
- 11 Misao Oshiro
- 15 Itoko Irene Horino
- 15 Toshiko Sako
- 16 Hideyo Jean Okikawa
- 20 Bramah Nand Singh
- 24 Atsuko Irene Abe
- 26 Akiye Aki Suyenaga



## 44<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL

## KOHAKU UTAGASSEN

The 44th Annual Kohaku Utagassen will be held on Sunday, January 4, 2015. Tickets are available at the temple for \$20.

**NISHI ABA INVITES YOU TO A**

# **SPAGHETTI DINNER & BINGO FUNDRAISER EVENT\***

**Saturday, November 1, 2014  
Nishi Kaikan**



**Dinner served from 5 pm - 6:30 pm**  
(menu: spaghetti, rolls, salad, dessert, & beverage)

**BINGO 6:30 pm - 9:00 pm**

**\$15 Dinner & 1 BINGO card** (good for the entire evening)

**\$10 for Dinner only**

Special games throughout the evening and a 50-50 drawing will be available

Pre-ordering tickets is recommended  
Tickets will be sold at the door.  
(A limited number of dinners will be sold)

To pre-order, see an ABA member or pick up an  
order form at the temple office counter.

\*All proceeds will go to the Nishi Hongwanji 50th Anniversary/Restoration Fund

# NOVEMBER 2014

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1  Spaghetti Dinner & BINGO Fundraiser (see page 14)
2  Bon Odori Exercise 8:30 am  Regular Service 10:00 am	3  Study Class Rev Takata 6:30-7:30 pm Annon Cafe 7:30-8:30 pm	4	5	6  Beginning Buddhism Rimban Briones Study Class 6:00 pm	7	8  So. District Seminar (see page 6)
9  Regular Service 10:00 am  General Meeting 11:30 am	10	11  Bon Odori Exercise 6:30 pm	12	13  Board Meeting 7:30 pm	14	15  Eitaikyo Service 1:30 pm
16  Bon Odori Exercise 8:30 am  Eitaikyo Service 10:00 am & 1:30 pm	17  Study Class Rev Takata 6:30-7:30 pm Annon Cafe 7:30-8:30 pm	18  Beginning Buddhism Rimban Briones Study Class for 30s & 40s 7:00 pm	19	20  Beginning Buddhism Rimban Briones Study Class 6:00 pm	21	22
Regular Service 10:00 am 23	24	25	26	27  Thanksgiving Day Betsuin Closed	28	29
30  Regular Service 10:00 am		Bon Odori Exercise 6:30 pm				

# DECEMBER 2014

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4 Beginning Buddhism Rimban Briones Study Class 6:00 pm	5	6
7 Temple Clean-Up	8	9 Bon Odori Exercise 6:30 pm	10	11 Board Meeting 7:30 pm	12	13
14 Regular Service 10:00 am	15 Study Class Rev Takata 6:30-7:30 pm Annon Cafe 7:30-8:30 pm	16 Go-Meinichi-ko 1:30 pm Beginning Buddhism Rimban Briones Study Class for 30s & 40s 7:00 pm	17	18 Beginning Buddhism Rimban Briones Study Class 6:00 pm	19	20
21 Oseibo Taikai 10:00 am	22	23	24	25 Christmas Day Betsuin Closed	26	27
28 Regular Service 10:00 am	29	30	31 New Year's Eve Service Joya-e 6:00	1 New Year's Day Service Shusho-e 10:00 am		