

LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

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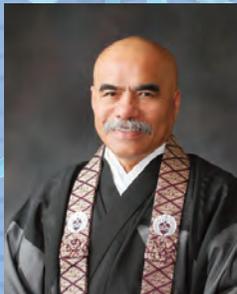
WWW

No. 421

November-December 2013

RIMBAN'S MESSAGE

THOUGHTS ON ESSHINI AND SHINRAN'S RELATIONSHIP



RIMBAN WILLIAM
BRIONES

"Although I never told your father about the dream in which I saw him as an incarnation of Kannon Bosatsu, since that time I never regarded him as just an ordinary man and continued to serve him. I hope that you too will fully appreciate what I am saying".

--Eshinni

As you may already know, my wife Nobuko Miyoshi is a minister at Higashi Honganji Buddhist Temple. If someone told me 20 years ago that I would someday be married to a Buddhist priest, I would have told them they were nuts! But here we are, having met almost 17 years ago at the Institute of Buddhist Studies in Berkeley, sharing our life as Jodo Shinshu ministers.

As you can imagine most of our time is taken up with temple work and activities at our respective temples. Even when we are at home, the conversation is centered around work and the Buddha-dharma. There is no doubt in my mind that Nobuko has been instrumental in my development and my understanding of Jodo Shinshu and she continues to influence me to reflect on the old adage, "practice what I preach."

So I find myself trying to imagine what the dynamics were between Shinran Shonin and his wife, Eshinni as they shared their life of nem-

butsu but also living everyday in the mundane. It must be for certain that together they manifested the true intent of nembutsu for the ordinary person.

In the month of October, Jodo Shinshu temples throughout BCA will be paying tribute to Eshinni. As we commemorate the life of Eshinni, it gives us an opportunity to realize that despite Eshinni's human frailties and suffering many hardships, she was able to live a life of gratitude and great joy, embraced by Amida Buddha's compassion.

Until early in the 20th century very little was known about the life of Shinran Shonin, and even less about his family. In 1921, ten letters written by Eshinni to their youngest daughter, Kakushinni, were found. The letters that had been tucked away in the archives of Nishi Hongwanji in Kyoto and forgotten for centuries. These letters attest, not only to Shinran's profound devotion to the Buddha-Dharma, but also shed light on Eshinni, also a devoted follower of the nembutsu.

Eshinni lead a very turbulent life. She was born in Echigo and married to Shinran, who was exiled to that part of the country. Together, they lived in Kanto for 20 years and then Kyoto for another 20 years. Later in life she returned, by herself, to her native Echigo, leaving behind her husband in Kyoto. For more than ten years, she took care of her property that she had inherited and also took care of her grandchildren.

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ONENESS



REV. KOHO TAKATA

Hello, everyone! This is my first article for your temple newsletter.

First of all, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to all of you for allowing me to serve as one of your associate ministers. I also would like to extend my appreciation and gratitude to the *komon* and the board president Mr. Lonny Quon, both Rimban Hiroshi Abiko and Rimban

William Briones, and Rev. Kaz Nakata for assisting and guiding my move from Arizona to Los Angeles. Arizona was very, very hot! It was almost 30 degree hotter than Los Angeles. Since our move to Los Angeles, we haven't had a chance to use our air conditioner at our residence.

As I begin my first article, let me briefly introduce myself. I was born and raised in a temple family at the Jokoji Temple in Toyama, Japan. I received *tokudo* ordination in 1986. During my high school and university days, I helped my family temple as needed.

I moved to the United States as an overseas minister on October 1, 1995. I was assigned to the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii which is a sister organization of Buddhist Churches of America. After two-month orientation at the Hawaii Kyodan Headquarters, I was assigned to the Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin as one of the associate ministers. Following two years and a half month of service, I was assigned to the Kapaa Hongwanji Mission on Kauai as a resident minister on June 1, 1998. After seven years in Kapaa, I was assigned to the Hawaii Kyodan Headquarters as the executive assistant to the bishop for six years. I served for under three bishops and two presidents during the course of the past six years.

I resigned from Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii as of June 30, 2011 and transferred to Buddhist Churches of America and was first assigned to the Arizona Buddhist Temple as of July 1, 2011. I was at the Arizona Temple for two + years. I was then reassigned here to the Honpa Hongwanji Los Angeles Betsuin as one of your associate ministers.

I am now here in Los Angeles with my wife, Yuka, and two daughters, Kaylee and Shanti. As I reflect upon my min-

istry in this country for the past 18 years, I have always been supported and guided by many ministers, temple members, and my family. I humbly ask for your support and guidance to fulfil my duties here in Los Angeles.

The history of Honpa Hongwanji Los Angeles Betsuin goes back to 1905, when the temple was officially established through countless dedications, contributions, and sacrifices made by ministers, their spouses, and sangha members. Since then, the nembutsu teachings were handed down from generation to generation for 108 years. The flourish and growth of the Nembutsu is verified by the dedication of the present temple in 1969. Since then, many additional construction and also projects were carried out by dedicated members and ministers for the past 44 years. It is truly my honor and privilege to serve at such a historical temple and listen to the Buddha-Dharma with you. As we walk the footsteps which our forefathers and dharma friends had shown us to follow and also as I begin my ministry here in Los Angeles, I would like to have my own theme which is "ONENESS." According to the Merriam-Webster, "oneness" means the quality or state or fact of being one: as singleness, integrity, wholeness, harmony, sameness, identity, unity, and union. Oneness also means that we are always one and together with Amida Buddha, the Buddha of Infinite Light and Life. The Buddha of the Infinite Light and Life always guides all sentient beings equally through Perfect Wisdom and Compassion at all times and in all places without any discrimination. Through this true and real virtue of "ONENESS," we can come together and form one united temple so that Honpa Hongwanji Los Angeles Betsuin will be everything for our family, community, and state. If we will keep holding the mind and spirit of oneness, Honpa Hongwanji Los Angeles Betsuin will be our real spiritual home.

Rennyō Shōnin, the 8th chief abbot of the Hongwanji, expanded the importance of "companions and fellow Nembutsu practitioners" in his earnest propagation of "*On-dobo, On-dogyo*." He believed that we are all fellow Nembutsu practitioners walking in Shinran Shōnin's true Nembutsu way. Let us, therefore, have this thought in our hearts at all times and grow and work together in the spirit of oneness. I look forward to working with you. 

WHEN YOU KNOW YOUR END IS APPROACHING...

by Rev. Kazuaki Nakata "Rev. Kaz"



REV. KAZ

In this Jiho issue, I would like to write about *"living the dharma"*. First, I will define what dharma means and then I will explain *"living the dharma"* along with examples.

The term dharma has several definitions. My interpretation of the dharma is the *"universal truth"* which is understandable to most people whether they believe it or not. The dharma is also known as the *"teachings of Buddha."*

One of the most important teachings of the Buddha is to *"see things as they are"*. So, in one sense, what *"living the dharma"* means is to live *"a life with a sense of mindfulness to see things as they are."*

As a minister, one of my duties is to do visitations. Since 2001, I have responded to requests for visitations from sangha families and I have done over 300 hospital, home care and home visitations. When I was assigned to the Nishi Betsuin last year, I was told that Nishi has no visitation committee. I asked several members of Buddhist Women's Association about forming such a committee. We made the first visitation in August to a lady who was in the process of recovery from an illness. She was very pleased to accept our visitation. I was happy that this visitation committee created. I would like to thank Moruko Okita, Yoshie Ishigame and Carol Hida for their help and support in establishing this committee.

I have also had a number of opportunities to do hospice care visitations. There are so many stories in each visitation. I will share with you one of the most memorable stories as an example of *living the dharma – living a life with sense of mindfulness to see things as they are.*

About ten years ago, Nancy was a very active and energetic mother. She had one daughter. I knew Nancy personally because she was a very active temple member and one of my study class students. Before I had met her, she had suffered from the breast cancer. When I met her for the first time, she had already gone through her treatments, recovery, and was truly enjoying her everyday life.

Nancy told me that the cancer had changed her perspective of everyday living. She stated that, *"Everyday and every moment is a gift for me."* She looked well and healthy.

However, a few years later, her doctor found a tiny cancer was growing in her brain. The doctor's diagnosed

that Nancy would have two to three years to live. She had been a cancer survivor and she did not want to give up her life now. She went through many forms of treatment that might help her.

On one occasion, she exclaimed, *"I cannot die till I see my daughter's wedding. I cannot die till I hold my grandchild."* That was her dream and purpose to live though her daughter was still in a high school at that time.

She was getting weaker and weaker. Eventually, because her legs could no longer support her body in an upright position, she needed the use of a wheelchair. The doctor explained to her family that she would have a few more months to live. It was then when her family considered hospice care for her.

A few weeks later, I was requested by the family to visit Nancy. I had visited her home two or three times before when she was healthy. When I visited her home again, I noticed there was a bed in the family room. Her family did not want to keep Nancy alone in her bedroom, so they moved her and her bed to the family room where her family members always gathered.

Nancy looked well but she stated, *"My doctor told me that I have only a few more months. I wish I could see my daughter's wedding dress and I wish I could play with my grandchild. But time will not stop for me. Now I have only one wish is that to see my daughter's high school graduation."*

Her daughter had a few more months before graduation. With the help and support from many people, Nancy was able to attend her daughter's graduation. After the graduation, she was very happy and she showed me the graduation pictures. In the picture she was standing and holding her daughter's shoulder. She looked very happy.

After the graduation ceremony, Nancy's condition had dramatically changed. She bed for the better part of the day. I visited her as usual and we started our conversation as usual. She told me, *"The cancer not only brought bad things to me but also it brought me good things."* I was not sure what she was trying to say. I responded with, *"Pardon? What do you mean by that?"*

Nancy then said, *"The cancer gave me a wonderful present."* She smiled and continued on.

"Before I had this second cancer, I was working so hard to make money to support my family. I did not have enough time to talk with my daughter. So I did not know

(continued on page 7)

DID YOU KNOW?

by Eiko Masuyama



EIKO MASUYAMA

“Rimban Mohri to Retire at End of March”, JIHO, January 1, 1994

In 1976, after the 5th Rimban, Rev. Ryuei Masuoka retired, Rev. Shoki Mohri was appointed as the 6th Rimban of the Los Angeles Betsuin. In 1994, he will be 70 years old, and thought this would be a good opportunity to retire while considering his physical condition and so forth. Rimban Mohri will therefore be retiring at the end of March, and hopes in this way to give the next Rimban a chance to develop the Buddha-Dharma-Sangha for the future.

The duties of the Betsuin Rimban are quite varied and heavy. They include:

1. The completion of temple responsibilities with Betsuin ministers in the education and propagation of the Nembutsu teaching;
 2. Planning and maintaining various BCA and Southern District activities;
 3. Participation in the activities of the LA Buddhist Federation of Churches;
 4. Participation in the activities of the Japanese American community;
 5. The handling of relationships between the Betsuin, Honzan and Ryukoku University in Kyoto, Japan, including hospitality for visitors from Japan;
- With responsibilities such as these, a Rimban has to manage a wide range of relationships at the Betsuin, in the community and between two countries.

It is safe to say that Rimban Mohri has been able to complete these duties, relationships, and activities through the cooperation of the Betsuin ministers, past presidents and members. He expresses that it has been an honor for him to serve at the Los Angeles Betsuin. During his tenure at the Betsuin, Rimban has been instrumental in seeing the successful completion of the following events:

- a. July, 1976, Rev Shoki Mohri appointed as Rimban
- b. February, 1978: Vista Buddhist Church became an independent temple;
- c. October, 1979: Construction of the bell tower was completed for the 75th Anniversary of Betsuin;
- d. September, 1980: Dedication Ceremony with Monshu for the 75th Anniversary of the Betsuin
- e. May, 1981: First Hatsumairi Service was held during Gotan-e;

f. October, 1981: San Fernando Valley Buddhist Temple became independent

g. October, 1982: Nishi Day Care Center was established;

h. October, 1983: First Golf Tournament with Zen-Monshu sponsored by the Betsuin;

i. July, 1987: First Saishin Dojo Summer School;

j. October, 1989: 20th Anniversary of the new Betsuin building with Monshu and renovation of the Onaijin (shrine);

k. 1992(?): Higan Seminars started, twice a year, all day Saturdays

l. October, 1993: Purchase of the property on Banning Street, north of the Betsuin.

Rimban Mohri's resignation was accepted by Bishop Yamaoka and officially announced at the Betsuin Board meeting and accepted at the General Meeting in November, 1993.



Rev. Shoki Mohri

Although the temple members will dearly miss Rimban Mohri, we would like to express our deepest appreciation for his many contributions and years of dedicated service, and wish him the very best on the occasion of his retirement. The last service with our retiring Rimban will be during Spring Ohigan on March 20, 1994. Preparations for Rimban Mohri's retirement party are being planned and full details will be announced as soon as possible.

* * *

“Padma and Metta Awards, Cub Scout Troop 738, Girl Scout Troop 1213”, JIHO, November 1, 1996

Recently, nine scouts were recognized for earning Padma and Metta Awards from the BCA for the completion of religious studies.

Lisa Ikkanda and Michel Toguchi received their Padma certificates for 12 weeks of study as Brownies.

Shelly Kimura, Leanne Saita, Denise Nakamura, and Michelle Hirose each received their Padma certificates and bronze Lotus pendants for their 24 weeks of study as Junior and Cadette Girl Scouts.

Todd Matsuzaki, Michael Okumoto, and Michael Ikkanda received Metta certificates and Dharma Wheel Pendants for their 24 week of religious study as Cub Scouts.

(continued on page 5)

ENHANCED BETSUIN

A special service was held outside in the parking lot, adjacent to the Shinran Shonin statue. The service was to recognize the five members who played a part in enhancing the exterior of the LA Betsuin.

Recognized were Tatsushi Nakamura for his donation of the new announcement board. Mr and Mrs. Shoichi Sayano donated the new bulletin board that is placed in the temple garden facing First Street.

In commemoration of Shinran Shonin's 750th Memorial, Seibi Okita had a vision and plan to create a wisteria garden adjacent to the Shinran Shonin statue. To put forth this plan, Ron Nakamura built the trellis structure from which the wisteria vines would cascade. Ken Nakano landscaped the area complete with plants, paved pathway, stone lantern and a stone bench. Gary Kawaguchi donated the funds needed to complete this auspicious project.



Announcement board donated by Tatsushi Nakamura. Pictured: Noriko Fukuma (L) and Nobuko Sayano



L-R: Tatsushi Nakamura, Ron Nakamura, Shoichi Sayano, (then) Rimban Hiroshi Abiko, Gary Kawaguchi, & Ken Nakano. Insert: Seibi Okita



Bulletin board donated by Shoichi and Nobuko Sayano.

(DID YOU KNOW? - continued from page 4)

* * *



Lauren Iwata

Lauren Naomi Iwata, 2013 Nisei Week Queen, sponsored by the Gardena Evening Optimist Club, is the granddaughter of the late Jack and Setsuko (Peggy) Iwata and the daughter of Clyde and Fern Iwata. Mr. Jack Iwata, photographer, was an active member of pre- and post-war YBA, and Board member at Nishi. Mrs. Setsuko Iwata was active in the YBA, also, and was a president of Nishi Buddhist Womens' Association (Fujinkai). Dad, Mr. Clyde Iwata, went through the Sunday school system at Nishi and was also active in the Jr. Y.B.A.

Lauren and her court stopped by at Rimban Abiko's Retirement Luncheon at Quiet Cannon Restaurant, Sunday, August 25, to wish him well and was introduced to approximately 400 people there.

* * *

The Archives Committee is in search of photographs of: Torazo Okamoto, Nishi Board president, 1926; Rev. Keiryu Akasaka, Nishi minister, 1922; Rev. Jushin'in Shindo, Nishi minister, 1922; Kinya Mayeda, Nishi Board president, 1938-1939.

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NISHI BOY SCOUTS VISIT NISHI HONGWANJI, KYOTO

by Ernest Hida

Prior to attending the 16th Nippon Scout Jamboree in Yamaguchi this past August, the Los Angeles Area Scout Council Contingent, which included the Nishi Boy Scouts, visited Nishi Hongwanji Kyoto and were honored with an audience with Gomonshu Koshin Ohtani.

Later, the contingent was given a tour of Nishi Hongwanji. Nishi Scouts were **Kenji Hatakeyama**, Contingent Leader; **Ernest Hida**, Assistant Contingent Leader; **Alan Hatakeyama**, Assistant Contingent Scoutmaster; **Darren Kawasaki**, Contingent Senior Patrol Leader, **Justin Bow**, **Kyle Oda**, **Ross Leong**, and **Will Ritchie**.

The contingent attended the Jamboree from July 31 to August 8 during Japan's unusually hot summer. They also experienced a sudden squall with a heavy downpour of rain and strong winds which blew things away and flooded some campsites. Fortunately, our campsite was not heavily flooded. The scouts participated in various programs and had the opportunity to visit the Peace Park and Museum in Hiroshima. Darren Kawasaki was selected to represent the United States to attend a reception of Boy Scout representatives of each country and met the Crown Prince Naruhito and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. Ross Leong was selected to participate in the Closing Ceremony program. The scouts had to cook their own meals and became very good at it as the days went by. During the religious day at the Jamboree, the scouts attended a service sponsored by Nishi Hongwanji Kyoto with the participation by the

Shinmon-sama. Parents of the scouts, the Odas and Leongs, visited the campsite and met up with their sons. The scouts had an evening get-together with the Brazilian Contingent which included some Nikkei scouts and a Nikkei woman contingent leader. On the last day, everyone was glad to leave the Jamboree site, which will be the site of the World Jamboree in 2015.

After the Jamboree, they visited Hiroshima, then to Nagoya, Sister City to Los Angeles, and homestay with scout families. The contingent returned home safely but tired. 

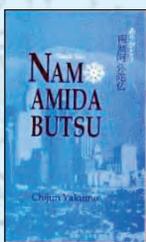


NISHI BOY SCOUT TROOP 738
VISITS NISHI HONGWANJI KYOTO

BOOK CENTER NEWS

Thank you: Namo Amida Butsu
by Rev. Chijun Yakumo

During the last Fall Ohigan Seminar, Rimban Don Castro from Seattle Betsuin served as the English guest speaker. He recommended the late Rev. Chijun Yakumo's book "Thank You: Namo Amida Butsu," which includes many excellent essays on various Japanese terminology used and their connection to Buddhism. Expressions such as "okagesama de," "arigatai," and "Gokuro sama," are some examples of terms described in this book. The expression "mottainai" conveys a very Jodo Shinshu ideal.



by Rev. Chijun
Yakumo

Give Me the Power to Live –
Hisako Nakamura's World

by Tamon Mishima

日常勤行聖典 (Nichijyo Gongyo Seiten)
CD and Audio tape

Chanting-Shoshinge, Bussetsu Amidakyo, Juseige, Gobunsho etc.

A Jodo Shinshu Buddhist
Alphabet Book:
A is for Amida, B is for Buddha

A children's paperback book by Rev. John Iwohara Eri Iwohara and illustrated by Eri Iwohara



by Rev. John
Iwohara

(RIMBAN - continued from page 1)

The opening reading comes from Eshinni's third letter, a letter written to Kakushinni revealing a dream that she had about Shinran.

Eshinni's dream takes place at a dedication ceremony for a recently completed temple. She sees huge images of the Buddha. One of the images is emitting bright lights and she is unable to see the face. The other image is clearly the face of the Buddha. When she asks what is the name of this Buddha, there is a reply.... "The one with the light is Honen Shonin, he is none other than Seishi Bosatsu and the other is Kannon Bosatsu, he is none other than Shinran"

She awakes from her dream and she vows not to tell anyone of the dream fearing no one would believe her. However she does tell Shinran about seeing Honen Shonin in her dream. Shinran acknowledges the significance of the dream, but she never tells Shinran that she saw him as an incarnation of Kannon Bosatsu.

Because of this dream, Eshinni regarded Shinran as an incarnation of a Bodhisattva of Compassion and assured Kakushinni of his exemplary religious life.

For Shinran, dreams and visions also played a significant role in his religious development. In one such dream, while Shinran was staying at Rokkakudo in Kyoto, he dreamt that Kannon Bosatsu appeared to him and told him that because he was driven by sexual desire, that he

would, indeed, be with a woman. Kannon Bosatsu said that he would transform himself into the woman that Shinran would embrace. This woman would adorn him through out his life and at death lead him to the Pure Land.

It was this dream that ultimately drove him to abandon the monastic life at Mt. Hiei, convert to Honen's teachings and eventually marry Eshinni and have a family.

Little is written about the relationship, the interaction between Shinran and Eshinni. But one can only imagine the devotion and dedication they had for one another, since they both considered that their mate was the incarnation of a Bodhisattva. Together they helped propagate the nembutsu teachings, through drought, famine, disease ... no doubt an inspiration to each other.

Truly, they were a unique couple, united in a deep and enduring faith. Together and apart they lived a life of deep gratitude manifesting the ideal of nembutsu practitioner.

As I reflect on Shinran and Eshinni's life and their deep commitment to the nembutsu, I can only dream, that someday I too will awaken to the same great joy and gratitude that Shinran and Eshinni shared. 

Namoamidabutsu

Rev. William Biones, Rimban

(NAKATA - continued from page 2)

what she was thinking. If I did not have this second cancer, I would have continued to work hard. My daughter would graduated from her high school and she would leave our home for her college. If so, we would not had the time for such deep conversation as we had... Also if I just tried fighting with my cancer like when I had the first cancer, I might have stayed focus in my treatment and I might not have the time to talk with my daughter.

But once I accepted my given situation, accepted things as they are... then I started analyzing my given situation and I really wanted to know about my daughter. So I started talking about all kinds of things with her. Surprisingly, I found out that she has a boyfriend which I did not know and I was not interested about it before. Now I thank my cancer for giving me this opportunity. The conversation with my daughter became a wonderful gift to me."

She was not just saying this. When she finally accepted her condition, she really tried to live fully in that given con-

dition. And a few weeks later she passed away peacefully besides her husband and her daughter with my chanting of *Juseige*.

It is intellectually easy to say and understand the phrase to "live fully in a given situation" but it is very difficult to actually take actions to "live fully in the given situation," because we as human beings will never be satisfied to live in the given situation. However to "live fully in a given situation" is really "living the dharma."

I am sure that Nancy had a life with a great sense of mindfulness to see and accept things as they are. While I was talking with her, I realized that she truly appreciated the opportunity to live her life... I will never forget her smiling face and her talk of living the dharma.

Nothing more, nothing less... what we can do is just simply live our life fully with a great sense of mindfulness. It is truly the Buddhist way of life. 

JAPANESE DOLL CLASS

One of the classes at the Los Angeles Betsuin Cultural Classes is the Japanese Doll Class. Mrs. Nobuko Sayano has been instrumental in teaching and guiding students in the making of not only Japanese dolls but many other Japanese crafts.

Each year, there is a Cultural Class exhibit at our Obon Carnival. During this past Obon, one very enthusiastic student by the name of Ben Tsuchida spoke of his experience and observations of the class.

It has been about 20 years since I began making Japanese dolls. I started taking classes at the Nishi Betsuin under the guidance of Mrs. Sayano in 1994. There are many types of dolls known as Japanese dolls, however, my favorite doll is the Ichimatsu doll.

This year I exhibited a complete set of hina dolls (Girls Day Festival Doll) made in the style of kimekomi dolls. To find the correct fabric and to also match the fabric, pattern and colors in the various under garments and accessories is most interesting and very satisfying when you end up with the perfect selection. In this process Mrs. Sayano's knowledge of costume history and her Japanese color sense is invaluable and also researching period costumes and styles on the internet was very helpful.

The kimekomi doll forms are made with a paulowni

sawdust and glue mixture which hardens while it molds. I started making this set of hina dolls about three years ago. However, because I also worked on other dolls for the annual Obon exhibit, I could not complete this project until this year.

On the first tier of the hinadan are the emperor and empress dolls. On the second tier are the Three Ladies in Waiting. On the third tier are the five court musicians. On the fourth tier are the, "minister on the left" and the "minister on the right." Below them on the fifth tier are the three servants. On the top tier are folded screens and lamps and in between the various dolls are assorted lacquered serving trays, vases and stands, all of which, including the large display stand, were ordered from Japan.

This project was truly a labor of love but upon its completion I was filled with a feeling of accomplishment and satisfaction in being able to finish the project with the help of my teacher, Mrs. Sayano. My thoughts now are that I would like to find a place like a Japanese community center or museum where the dolls will be displayed each year during Hina Matsuri so that everyone may enjoy them.

The class is held at LA Betsuin every Monday night 7:30-9:00pm. For further information: Betsuin Office (213)680-9131/ Mrs. Sayano (323)722-833 



Nobuko Sayano (left) with her students



Ben Tsuchida with his Hina dolls

WITH PALMS TOGETHER IN GASSHO



ABIKO FAMILY

I-r: Ryo, Kaori, Misaye, and Rev. Hiroshi Abiko

May this letter find you well, enjoying the life in the nembutsu.

As I retire from active full-time ministry from the Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple and from the Buddhist Churches of America, in retrospect, it has been an incredible life's journey, sharing a total of 43 years with the San Jose Betsun, Palo Alto Buddhist Temple, Buddhist Church of San Francisco and the Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple.

The karmic conditions, originated in the Primal vow of Amida Buddha, has influenced and encompassed my whole perspective of awareness and self transformation toward a life of gratitude---formidable and forever present in each of us. With that in mind, I now retreat from and reflect on my past *kaikyoshi* service, completing one phase, just to move on to another, continuing to be a student of the Buddha-dharma with old and new sangha friends.

My family and I have been most fortunate to have been able to receive and experience the embracing, all-inclusive presence of Jodo Shinshu practice, largely due to the sangha's understanding, kind responses and generous efforts. We are deeply indebted to your grace and spirit.

We wish to extend our heartfelt appreciation and gratitude to the BCA, the Los Angeles Nishi Betsuin board, the ministerial and office staff, the sangha and the organizations for the overwhelming gesture of appreciation and farewell presented on August 25th, 2013. Your time and energy, fond moments and memories will always be treasured.

May we ask for your continued support and participation in the sharing of the Buddha-dharma, as well as your friendship in the years to come.

With palms together in *gassho*,

Rev. Abiko and family – Hiroshi, Misaye, Kaori and Ryo



Final dharma message



Leis from Hui Aikane



City of Los Angeles Proclamation presented by former Councilwoman, Jan Perry



Temple members singing the to/about Rev. Abiko



Banquet Head Table



Mrs and Rev. Abiko and Socho (Bishop) Kodo Umezu



Well-wishes from Rinban Noriaki Ito of Higashi Honganji



Message from temple president, Lonny Quon

ACCESSION APPRECIATION



BRIONES EXTENDED FAMILY

center l-r: Rev. Nobuko Miyoshi (wife) Rev. William Briones (Rimban), and Mrs. Reymunda Briones (mother)

Greetings!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who attended Rimban's Accession Service and joined Nobuko and my family for refreshments afterwards in the kaikan and for lunch at the Oiwake Restaurant. My family was truly touched by your hospitality and kind words. I would also like to thank all those who have expressed their support and encouragement since the announcement of my appointment to Rimban back in March of this year. Your enthusiastic support has given me the opportunity to realize how fortunate and honored I am to serve as your tenth Rimban.

I'd also like to thank Reverends Takata and Nakata for arranging the special Accession Service. Their knowledge of Hongwanji ritual and tradition will surely preserve Betsuin's special status that it deserves.

I look forward to the challenges that lay ahead. There is much to accomplish in the coming years. The community surrounding the Betsuin is changing incredibly fast and families are returning to the temple. We are at the threshold of a bright future, but we must continue to move forward, reflecting on our past with appreciation and gratitude. Remembering it's all about the Buddha-Dharma.

Gassho,

Rev. Briones, Rimban



Rev. Briones and Rimban Abiko



Presentation....



Rimban Briones' first dharma message



Sangha in attendance to the Accession Ceremony

PHOTOS



Rev. Takata's first dharma message



Takata Family
l-r: Rev Takata, Yuka, Shanti, & Kaylee



Setsuko Nakahara, BWA president, along with Rimban Briones, presented checks to the Sangha Teens and Jr YBA representatives. Each year, the BWA donates funds to these youth organizations.



Rev. Nobuko Miyoshi is a minister at the Higashi Hongwanji Buddhist Temple. She was the guest speaker at the BWA sponsored Eshinni-Kakushinni Memorial Service. She is the wife of Rimban William Briones.



Rev. Don Castro serves as the Rimban at the Seattle Betsuin. He was the English guest speaker at the Fall Ohigan Seminar and Service



Rev. John Iwohara is the resident minister at the Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple. He was the Japanese guest speaker at the Fall Ohigan Seminar and Service. He is the son of Betsuin member, Tsuruko Iwohara.



**43RD ANNUAL
KOHAKU UTAGASSEN**

**SUNDAY
JANUARY 5, 2014 @ 1:00 PM**

**NISHI HONGWANJI
BUDDHIST TEMPLE**

TICKETS: \$20

NOKOTSUDO INFORMATION UPDATE

In 2005, the Los Angeles Nishi Betsuin observed its centennial. As part of the celebration, one of the projects was the building of the Muryokoku-Do (Hall of Immeasurable Life and Light) which holds the nokotsudo (columbarium) which houses 3,000 niches. Many temple members have secured a niche for the ashes for family members and/or themselves.

In checking the nokotsudo records, it has been found that there are some individuals who have reserved a niche space and have not yet paid for the right to use the niche and/or have not yet signed a contract.



After December 31st, 2013, the niche spaces that have been reserved but have not been yet been paid in full or contracted for will be duly cancelled. There have been a number of inquiries regarding the "reserved" spaces. Niches that have been fully paid for and have a signed contract on file will have the family name already in place.

If there are any questions, contact the Betsuin office (213-680-9130) and a nokotsudo committee member will be in contact. Committee members are available at the temple on Sundays from 10:00 am to 12 noon.

To be noted: The committee is examining the need to raise the cost of purchasing a niche during the year 2014.

gassho, LA Betsuin Nokotsudo Committee

2014 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Valid from January 1 through December 31, 2014

**\$250 PER HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD
\$150 FOR ADDITIONAL FAMILY MEMBERS**

(SAME ADDRESS OVER 21 YEARS OLD)

CHECKS ARE PAYABLE TO:
L.A. HONPA HONGWANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE

Payments may be made in full or by installments throughout the year of **2014**

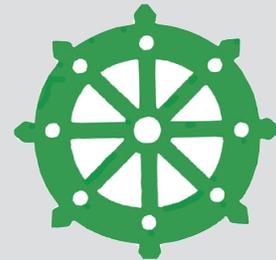
IN MEMORIAM

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 2013	
11 Hiroshi Komatsu	11 Wilfred Itsufumi Oyama
12 Masahiro Higaki	12 Mary Teruye Kusaba
18 Jane Shigemi Komatsu	15 Seigo Fujikawa
25 Katsumi Mayemura	17 Terry Takeko Hanamoto
28 Tokiko Mary Shinmoto	17 Mary Hatsue Nakamoto
30 Sumiko Tokunaga	27 Yoshihisa Kiyon
September 2013	
8 Naoe Hirayama	27 Yoshio Dick Nakata
10 Shizuye Kondo	30 Mitsuko Matsumoto
	30 Lucy Masako Yoshino

LOS ANGELES BETSUIN STUDY CLASSES



BEGINNING BUDDHISM

by Rimban William Briones

1st & 3rd Thursdays 6:00 pm

3rd Tuesdays 7:00 pm (30s & 40s)

INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHISM & JODO SHINSHU

by Rev. Koho Takata

1st & 3rd Mondays

6:30-7:30 pm Study Class

ANNON (peace & tranquility) CAFE

7:30-8:30

Questions & Answers / Fellowship

SAVE THE DATE

JANUARY 2014

- 1 **SHUSHO-E**
NEW YEAR'S DAY SERVICE
10:00 AM.
- 2 **BETSUIN CLOSED**
- 12 **43RD KOHAKU UTAGASSEN**
1:00 P.M.
- 18 **HO-ONKO SEMINAR**
- 19 **HO-ONKO SERVICE**



BON ODORI EXERCISE CLASS

BETSUIN

Lotus Room

2nd & 4th Tuesdays of the month

6:30 - 8:00 PM

1st & 3rd Sundays of the month

8:30 - 10:00 AM

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



MYOKONIN

*O Saichi, who is Nyorai-san?
He is no other than myself."
Who is the founder [of the Shin
teaching]?
He is no other than myself
What is the canonical text?
It is no other than myself.
The ordinary man's heart has no
fixed root,
Yet this rootless one takes delight in
the Hō [i.e., Dharma];
This is because he is given Oya's
heart--
The heart of "Namo-amida-butsu.*

--Asahara Saichi

DAIJO FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

daijofcu@hotmail.com

TUNE IN TO

KTYM AM 1460

Sunday 12:50 PM Dharma Message

Betsuin Jiho

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