

# LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

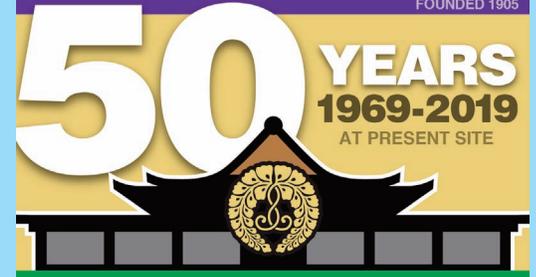
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September-October 2016

# jihō

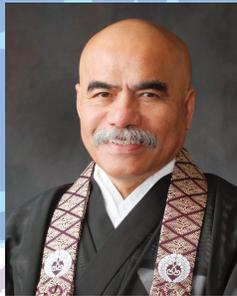
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LOS ANGELES HONPA HONGWANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE  
FOUNDED 1905



## RIMBAN'S MESSAGE

### REFLECTIONS ON MY DESIRES AND ATTACHMENTS



RIMBAN  
WILLIAM BRIONES

*People grasp after things for their own imagined convenience and comfort; they grasp after wealth and treasure and honors; they cling desperately to life. They make arbitrary distinctions between good and bad, right and wrong, and then vehemently affirm and deny them. For people life is a succession of grasping and attachments, and then, because of this, they must assume the illusion of pain and suffering.*

A couple of years ago, Nobuko and I moved into a larger residence. We now live next to a quiet park with a wonderful view, two car garage, bigger kitchen, more cabinets and two bathrooms! Prior to our move, we lived in a small two bedroom apartment on the very busy and noisy corner. But we were perfectly happy and content living a very simple life style.

As you know, before I became a minister, I was research biologist at a well-known pharmaceutical company. My lifestyle was a quite different back then. When I moved into my next phase of life, however, I realized that I didn't need much "stuff" to live comfortably. Now, with a larger residence, I've suddenly had the urge to, once again, accumulate "stuff" and, again, I feel the frustration of not getting what I want.

The opening reading is from the *Teaching of The Buddha*, "...for people life is a succession of grasping and attachments, and then, because of this, they must assume the illusion of pain and suffering."

Although my frustration seems rather petty and trite compared to the suffering and pain seen throughout the world, never-the-less it does cause me to reflect on my insatiable desire for "wealth and treasure and honors".

The pillars of Buddha's teachings are found in the four noble truths. 1) The first is that in this life there is suffering. 2) There is a cause of this suffering. 3) The elimination of the cause ends the suffering. 4) There is a way to eliminate the suffering.

The causes of the suffering in life can be categorized by the three poisons: greed, anger and ignorance. In general, these three poisons can be summarized as attachments. It is our attachments or clinging to things, ideas, and actions that are the root of our suffering.

There's an old Buddhist saying that pain is inevitable in life ... but suffering is optional. How much I suffer depends on me. Our pain and suffering point out to where we are most affected. And what we're holding onto the most. By recognizing this, we can learn to use loss and suffering in ways that help us grow wiser and become peace with ourselves.

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## VIOLENT TRAGEDIES

by Rev. Koho Takata



REV. KOHO TAKATA

This month reminds me of 911 tragedy caused by terrorists attacking the World Trade Center in New York on September 11, 2001. Since then, many religious services and peace gatherings were frequently held. As I start my day by reading and watching the news every morning, I continue to observe the many sad tragedies such as the public

mass shootings, racial discriminations, bombings, attacks by truck, car, plane, etc. occurring all the time in this world. What is the cause of those tragedies? It is very simple. It is because of one's ego, the self-centered mind, self-attachment, and self-satisfaction. Buddhism is a teaching enabling us to realize our ignorance—our blind passions. Buddhism enables us to deeply reflect upon ourselves and on the Teaching. Let us first reflect upon ourselves—who we are, and remind ourselves of the equality and preciousness of our lives on the Buddha-Dharma.

Sakyamuni Buddha was born a prince in India into a high level of a caste system. He later negated the classification of people by birth. His recorded statement in his later years was: *"We are not noble because of the family into which we were born. Rather, we become noble as a result of our actions."* Shinran Shonin also explains, *"Know that the Primal Vow of Amida makes no distinction between people young and old, good and evil; only shinjin is essential."* (CWS, P.661)

In Buddhism, all beings are equal. The Buddha's Great Compassion shines on everything and every being without discrimination. It is the sunlight shining everywhere. It is not that the sun does not shine on a mountain because the sun does not favor the mountain. As Shinran Shonin teaching us, *"The unhindered light is sun of wisdom dispersing the darkness of ignorance."* (CWS, P.3) We equally receive Amida Buddha's Infinite Light of Wisdom in our minds to light up the darkness that is deep within us.

One of the important things we need to be careful of is that we should not judge a tragedy whether it is good or evil. We tend to label those who caused tragedies are evil because they took innocent lives. Yes, their actions were terrible, but to simply label them as "evil" does not help us. We should not cause further tragedies by our anger and frustration by turning our self-centered thoughts to thoughts of justice or revenge. Shinran Shonin often commented about one's evil nature, but he does so in the context of self-reflection. He never pointed fingers at others

and label them as being evil. He always looked within without judgement.

*In truth, myself and others discuss only good and evil, leaving Amida's benevolence out of consideration. Among Master Shinran's words were: I know nothing at all of good or evil. For if I could know thoroughly, as Amida Tathagata knows, that an act was good, then I would know good. If I could know thoroughly, as the Tathagata knows, that an act was evil, then I would know evil. But with a foolish being full of blind passions, in this fleeting world – this burning house – all matters without exception are empty and false, totally without truth and sincerity. Then Nembutsu alone is true and real. (CWS, P.679)*

We always view the world through our self-centered minds and determine whether something is good or evil. Shinran Shonin refrained from emphasizing the state of "being good." This is because any status (being "good" or "evil") is always in flux depending on situations and conditions through one's self-centered nature. All of our thoughts are based on our defiled minds. Thus, there is no truth and sincerity. Shinran Shonin reminds us of the importance of seeking the Wisdom of the Truth, Universal Teaching of Boundless Wisdom and Compassion of the Buddha for guidance.

After Shinran Shonin was pardoned from his exile in Echigo, he moved to a place called Inada and stayed in a cottage where he completed the first draft of his major work *"The True Teaching, Practice, and Realization of the Pure Land Way (Kyo-Gyo-Shin-Sho)."* One day, a samurai warrior visited Shinran Shonin asking about his teaching. The warrior was concerned that he had killed so many individuals. Because of his skills during the war, he became a high-ranking samurai. He realized, however, just how terrible his actions were in order to earn his position. He confessed to Shinran Shonin that he was afraid that he, as well as his children and family members, may not be able to be born in Amida's Pure Land because of his evil acts. Shinran Shonin explained to the warrior, *"The Primal Vow of Amida Buddha is to save for those evil and foolish beings possessed blind passions and cannot be free from self-centered mind."* Shinran Shonin saw his own evilness and foolishness in the conversation with the samurai warrior. He had a feeling of empathy that he also had committed similar evil acts and shared his appreciation to the Teaching as follows:

*For those who make their living drawing nets or fishing in the seas and rivers, and those who sustain their lives hunt-*

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## GRASSROOT TRANSMISSION OF BUDDHISM

by Rev. Kazuaki Nakata



REV. KAZ

The 2016 Obon season is over. This year, I enjoyed helping dharma school parents chicken teriyaki booth, BWA sushi, and white elephant goods sale. The BWA, in particular, was sorely in need of man-power and I was so glad that I could reduce their hassle by carrying their heavy items. I was only able to help a few organizations, but I sincerely appreciate all the volunteers for their generous help and support to make our Nishi Betsuin Obon successful.

In the June issue of BCA's newsletter "*Wheel of Dharma*," there is a group photo of our Nishi Cub Scouts on the first page. They were honored to represent our temple with their Scouting achievements. Our temple was established by Japanese immigrants in 1905 to sustain their cultural backbone and ethnic community. Later, second and third generations of Japanese Americans (JA) began experiencing intermarriage where reevaluating and rethinking the purpose of going to temples started taking place.

Boyle Heights was once a community where many second and third generation JAs were born and raised. After WWII, many of JAs and their businesses shifted to the South Bay area. Currently, Boyle Heights is heavily populated by Latinos. Although our Nishi is located in the Little Tokyo District which is the center of Japanese Cultural Heritage, it is surrounded by the Latino community, China Town and Korea Town. When attending the Sunday service at the temple, you may discover that many of the attendees live within a 20 minute radius of the temple.

Currently, we are in the midst of 50th year Anniversary fundraiser. We must also, however, project what the status of the temple will be in 10 years. A building can be sustained by any business or organization but a religion can be sustained only by people. We are so fortunate to have many supporters of our temple. I believe that it is a time to sit and discuss how we can reach out to our temple neighbors to get their support. I would like to share a recent story of the grassroots transmission of Buddhism at the Betsuin.

On last May, over 70 Latinos filled our hondo. Gloria Lopez requested to conduct Quinceañera in the Buddhist way. Gloria and her family are not new to our temple. Her aunt, Mrs. Davalos, supports a number of Betsuin scouting activities as one of the Cub Scout leaders. When I received the request, I had no knowledge of the Quinceañera tradition. After I researched its history and

background, I told her, "Yes. I am honored to conduct Quinceañera and make it one of your special memories."

Allow me to explain the word, Quinceañera. In the Latin culture, Quinceañera is a recognition ceremony for a girl who turns 15 years old. The majority of Latinos are Catholics, so the ceremony is often labeled as a Catholic ritual, which is a misconception. Anthropologists for the Latin cultures found evidence that the origin of Quinceañera was formed in Central Mexico by the Aztecs around 500 B.C.E. In the Aztec tradition, when a boy turns 15, he becomes a soldier, and when a girl turns 15, she is educated to be a wife of a soldier. Older women teach her the roles of being a woman, wife and mother. So Quinceañera is a *Coming of Age Ceremony*.

After the European countries colonized Central America in the medieval ages, missionaries were sent to these colonized countries and Quinceañera was included as a Catholic ritual in order to convert Latin people into Catholicism.



**Quinceañera Ceremony**

Nowadays, many Latinos start saving money for Quinceañera when a baby girl is born. It is like a wedding without a groom. In the ceremony, there are seven boys and seven girls who represent the last 14 years of a girl's life. They escort the Quinceañera girl to the altar for the ceremony to be recognized as a woman.

In our Jodo Shinshu tradition, the Kyoto Nishi Hongwanji has been conducting the *Coming of Age Ceremony* for the last 64 years. The ceremony is generally called "*Seijin Shiki*" and the origin of the ceremony can be traced back to the Japanese Shinto ritual of "*Genpuku*" in the Nara period (8th Century).

Both Quinceañera and Seijin Shiki have a non-Buddhist origin. I believe Gloria's request is a first ever in any Buddhist temple. I had a discussion with Rimban Briones, as

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## FALL OHIGAN SERVICE

by Rev. Koho Takata

With the waning of the hot, relaxing summer days, the Buddhist communities in Los Angeles are reminded of the coming Higan, a time to reflect on the human condition and examine the options open to us through the Infinite Wisdom and Compassion of Amida Buddha. The members of Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple and their families are invited to attend one of the six major services in the Hongwanji tradition, the Fall Higan Rededication Service which will be held on **Sunday, September 18, 2016 at 10:00AM**. The guest speaker for the service will be **Rev. Mutsumi Wondra** of the Orange County Buddhist Temple for English Service and **Rev. Masanori Watanabe** of the Oxnard Buddhist Temple for Japanese Service.

Higan is an abbreviation of “*To-Higan*” - literally meaning “*to reach the other shore.*” In Buddhism, the world of suffering is referred to as “*this shore*” and the world of Enlightenment is called “*other shore.*”

The term Higan comes from the Sanskrit word Paramita - “gone to other shore,” and suggests the Six Paramita of charity, morality, patience, effort, meditation, and wisdom. Various sutras teach that six paramita or perfections of practice are the way of reaching the other shore from this shore.

In Jodo Shinshu Buddhism, the observance of Higan is simply the expressing of our gratitude to Amida Buddha for awakening us to Boundless Compassion and Wisdom. Our part in this ob-

servance would be to put into action the Compassion which comes to us vertically from Amida Buddha and to apply it horizontally in our relation with man and other living beings on this earth. This appreciation in our daily life is the Jodo Shinshu Buddhism way of expressing our gratitude and thanksgiving for the wondrous virtues extended to us unconditionally and equally for all just like the sun’s ray which falls on the earth.

**The donation envelope for Ohigan Service is attached to the Jiho, temple newsletter. The amount of donation is not set. It is up to your decision how much you wish to contribute toward receiving the Dharma. Your sincere and mindful donation of any amounts is truly appreciated to offset the expenses of the major service. This enables all of us, as a Sangha, to listen to the Dharma on this special occasion. We sincerely ask for your understanding and cooperation as we devote ourselves to listen to and share the teachings of the Nembutsu through the embrace of Amida Buddha’s Wisdom and Compassion, never to be abandoned.**

In conjunction with Fall Higan Service, we are fortunate to have a Fall Higan Seminar entitled “*Life of Awakening: Namu Amida Butsu*” on **Saturday, September 17, 2016**. The seminar will begin at 9:00am and end at 3:00pm. The registration is available at temple office. The registration fee is \$15.00 including lunch and refreshments. We encourage all of you to hear the teaching of Shinran Shonin who clarified the purpose of our lives.

## LADY ESHINNI AND KAKUSHINNI MEMORIAL SERVICE

by Rev. Koho Takata

The members of LA Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple BWA and their families and friends are invited to attend the annual **Lady Eshinni and Kakushinni Memorial Service, which will be held on Sunday, October 2, 2016**. The guest speaker for the service will be **Rev. Tomoyuki Hasegawa** of Higashi Honganji USA Headquarters in Los Angeles.

Jodo Shinshu, which literally means “*True Teaching of the Pure Land Way,*” was founded by Shinran Shonin. In 1224, Shinran Shonin completed the first draft of his major work “*The True Teaching, Practice, and Realization of the Pure Land Way (Kyo-Gyo-Shin-Sho).*” The Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha regards Shinran Shonin, who revealed the essential teaching of Primal Vow and the Name of Amida Buddha in his writing “*Kyo-Gyo-Shin-Sho,*” as its founder and the completed year as the founding year. At the heart of its foundation were two women: **Lady Eshinni** (Shinran Shonin’s wife) and Lady **Kakushinni** (Shinran Shonin’s



*Lady Eshinni*



*Lady Kakushinni*

daughter).

Lady Eshinni gave Shinran Shonin her complete dedication and support. Her dedication is witnessed by her letters which were discovered in the archives of Hongwanji in 1921. Lady Eshinni is considered as the mother of Jodo

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## 50TH ANNIVERSARY REPORT

by Ernest Hida

The 50th Anniversary Project of the onaijin renovation is ongoing in the hondo.

On July 17th, three staff members from the Wakabayashi Butsugu Company, Kyoto arrived in Los Angeles to prepare the onaijin for the return of the renovated statue housing (*butसugu*), tables and accessories. They worked diligently everyday to prepare the walls and columns with gold leaf foil and gold colored paper.

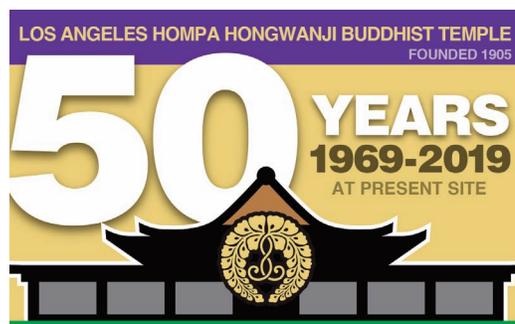
The craftsmen also installed the Buddhist floral ceiling tiles. All donors to the 50th Anniversary, in any amount, will have their names attached to the back of the ceiling tiles. There have been some confusion regarding the names of donors on the ceiling tiles. Everyone who makes a donation to the 50th Anniversary, will have their names on the ceiling tiles. If you made a one-time only donation, your name will be included. If you made a pledge, with your first donation, your name will be included. If you make a donation "In Memory of .....", these names will also be included. The deadline to make your initial donation to have your name included on the ceiling tile is **September 30, 2016**. Any initial donation after that date will not be included. We look forward to your donation by the deadline so that your name will be included on the ceiling tile.

On July 24, after the Sunday service, the sangha was invited onto the onaijin to see the preparatory work that was done including the floral ceiling tiles. Everyone was amazed at the work that was done and the beautiful floral ceiling tiles. It seems to brighten up the onaijin.

In addition, the craftsmen installed the silk artwork designed and donated for the 50th Anniversary by **Yasuhiro Chiji**, a kimono designer in Kyoto. The four panels of this silk artworks are installed on the upper portion of the front of the onaijin facing the sangha. Chiji also donated the silk artworks in the Wisteria Chapel, that were donated for the Betsuin's Centennial Anniversary. Chiji also assisted his father, Hideya Chiji, in painting the murals depicting the life of Shakyamuni Buddha that were installed in the hondo of the newly built temple in 1969. It took almost a year to complete this mural, painting from high up on the scaffolds.

The dharma school students are continuing with their fundraising project of collecting recyclable plastic bottles and aluminum cans. Please support the students by bringing your recyclables to the temple office.

We now look forward to the completion of the onaijin and the Re-Dedication Service For The Renovated Onaijin on November 6, 2016, Sunday. Bishop Umezu of BCA will



be officiating this re-dedication service. We invite all of you to this auspicious service.

Thank you very much for your support and for your past and future donations.

Gassho,

Ernest Hida, 50th Anniversary Chairman

(See photos on page 11)

## ONAIJIN PROJECT

In January of 2016 following the Ho-onko service, all the parts and ornaments of the onaijin (altar) were carefully packed and shipped to Kyoto by the Wakabayashi Company to be completely refurbished. As scheduled, everything is set to return.

### Arrival of onaijin ornaments

**10/29** - All of the parts and ornaments will arrive at Nishi.

**10/29 to 11/3** - The Nokotsudo will be closed.

**10/29 to 11/6** - The Hondo and Wisteria Chapel will be closed.

The Sunday service on October 30th will be held in the kaikan. There will be no access to temple office through Nokotsudo area (the entire hallway).

**11/5** at 1:30 pm - There will be a brief chanting at Wisteria chapel followed by procession with statue from Wisteria to Hondo. This will be a Ceremony for Transportation of Amida Buddha statue from Wisteria Chapel to Hondo altar.

**11/6** at 10 am There will be a Dedication Service for refurbished altar, 85th anniversary of Betsuin status, and the 111th anniversary of establishment of the Betsuin, officiated by Bishop Kodo Umezu.

## BWA 2016 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS JESSICA NAITO AND KYLE ODA

Each year the Betsuin BWA awards a scholarship to a graduating high school senior based on a submitted essay that reflects what has been learned as a Jodo Shinshu youth. This year, there are two recipients. **Jessica Naito** and **Kyle Oda** are the BWA Scholarship recipients for 2016.

*Jessica is the second child of Paula and Jerry Naito. She graduated from the Los Angeles Center for Enriched Studies and will be attending the University of California at*

*Riverside, majoring in Sociology.*

*Kyle is the son of Cindy and Kenji Oda. He is a graduate of South Pasadena High School and will be attending the University of California at Santa Cruz.*

The following are the essays they submitted to the Dharma School Teachers. The question they needed to answer was:

**What Jodo Shinshu means to me and how does it apply to my daily life?**

**Jessica:** Jodo Shinshu teaches us how to cope and deal with all the different types of suffering we deal with throughout life. Jodo Shinshu Buddhism for me is basically a mixture between a religion and a philosophy. It is not strict of a religion in that we have to believe everything that applies to life, we can't always just follow what we are told. We have to question in order to learn to believe.



**Jessica Naito**

I suffer on a daily basis. We have to suffer to learn. Suffering means to undergo the state of being in pain, distress, or hardship. Many agree with this definition that is provided. I would as well, but not full heartedly. Suffering sounds like a one way negative pathway, only to harm and not to help. I disagree. To me I think of suffering as my teacher and I am its student. There are so many wrong things that I do in life and suffering is always there beside me taunting me over and over again for the mistakes that I made. To every ying there is a yang. White to a Black. Up to a down. Right and a wrong. Suffering is only the beginning. Life is like a race. The beginning seems of only suffering and pain only to have one goal; finish the race. And in order for me to get out of this situation, I must try harder and harder to succeed so that suffering is speechless and can't do a thing against me.

At my school, not everyone knows that I am a busy person in general. Not everyone in my life knows that I cry on a daily basis. Not everyone knows that I suffer in general. No one but me know the hardships and struggle that I, myself go through. During my school days, I would suffer to sleep for a maximum of 4-5 hours to wake up and strive to get an education and repeat. But it was all worth it. I would fight to stay awake in my afternoon classes so I don't miss any important lectures. But it was worth the

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**Kyle:** I believe that Jodo Shinshu tells us that we are all imperfect beings and that despite this we should all try to live with confidence and peace of mind. We should strive to live life to the fullest and try to achieve our full potentials. If we are able to overcome the challenges we face in life, we will be able to find happiness.



**Kyle Oda**

People tend to view having money, fame, or power as their goals in life. People also believe that satisfying one's desires will result in happiness and that doing the opposite will result in unhappiness. We pour our efforts into pursuing these goals and in the process we come attached to material possessions. However, when faced with overwhelming challenges and obstacles, people look towards superstitious practices or blame it on "bad luck." According to Jodo Shinshu, I believe that both happiness and sorrow are presents in life and that these practices are flimsy and unproductive. By following the teachings of Shinran Shonin, one can find true happiness.

One of the main beliefs in Jodo Shinshu Buddhism is interdependence and impermanence. These both apply to my daily life in countless ways. Everything I have in life has been given to me. My life was given to me by my parents. My education was given to me by my teachers. Even my achievements in track and cross country, where I trained all year round, running thousands of miles and doing challenging workouts, I owe to my coaches for guiding me and leading me. All of my possessions have been given to me by others.

Impermanence is relevant in my daily life because my life is constantly changing. I'm graduating high school and will be attending the University of California, Santa Cruz in the fall. Although I would love to stay with all my friends

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## ABA: AN EVENING AT THE HOLLYWOOD BOWL

by Lonny Quon

On Sunday, July 3, Nishi ABA attended an annual event to the Hollywood Bowl July 4th Concert featuring Chicago (band). Joining Nishi this year were members, families, and friends of Gardena and Venice Buddhist Temples. A total of 200 participants from these three temples were in attendance at the sold out event.

Chicago's unique rock and roll sound that came out of the late 60's, got the crowd moving and grooving to songs such as "Beginnings", "Saturday in the Park", "Does Anybody Know What Time It Is", and many more. Some members were even seen doing the *cha cha* in their seats! Throughout the evening delicious foods, snacks, and refreshments were passed around. Everyone ate and drank more than they needed. The highlight of the evening was patriotic music by the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra and a special tribute to the armed forces. The grand finale was the Fireworks Spectacular. Everyone had a wonderful time and are looking forward to next year's concert.



ABA members enjoying the music at the Hollywood Bowl

## COMMEMORATION ON THE ACCESSION OF THE JODO SHINSHU JAPAN TOUR

In the July-August issue of the Betsuin Jiho, the itinerary on the Japan Tour was included. That information has been updated. The cost for the full tour is \$4475.00 Per Person, twin share. The partial tour (Tokyo & Kyoto, Mar 27-Apr 2): will be \$2495.00 per person, twin share. The tour leader will be Rev. Koho Takata.

A tour brochure is available. For further information, call the LA Betsuin at 213-680-9130.

## YOUTH ESSAY

*Rev. Nakata has been conducting an intensive Buddhist studies class for teens who are part of the Boy Scout and Girl Scout program at the Betsuin. Each of the students wrote an essay on a topic in Buddhism. Two of the essays were published in the May-June Jiho issue. Here is the next one.*

### Sukkha and Dukha — by Takeshi Chavez

Sukkha and Dukha are two different things. First lets start with Sukkha, it is a Sanskrit word that when translated means happiness. Other synonyms for Sukkha are pleasure, relief and grateful. Second, we have Dukha which is basically the opposite from Sukkha. Dukha is another Sanskrit word like Sukkha but means suffering instead of happiness. It's synonyms for Dukkha are torture, distress, torment, etc.

In Boy Scouts there are ranks and to get to those ranks you need to know and demonstrate certain things like First Aid and knots. Some of my personal experiences with Sukkha and Dukha are in scouts. Recently I earned the rank of Second Class even though thats not close to Eagle, it's an amazing thing to accomplish. Having achieved that I am Sukkha. I am happy that I have made it to Second Class but I know that I cannot stop there. The Sukkha only lasts for a short time because I know the next rank is straight ahead. Dukha pushes me harder, I am suffering from not earning the next rank. I will not stop, I will keep on going, knowing that I need to continue advancing.

Another example is a sport or hobby that you do. For

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## APPROACHING THE SACRED JAPANESE BUDDHIST TEMPLES IN HAWAI'I

Sunday, October 9, 2016 at LA Nishi Betsuin  
Exhibition display from 11am to 4pm  
Presentation by Professors George and Willa Tanabe  
at 11am and 1:30pm  
Admission: free

Professor Tanabe is Professor emeritus of religion and art at the University of Hawaii and current President of Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai (BDK) America. This event is hosted by the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii, BDK, Hawaii Buddhist Council, and others.

*(Rimban - continued from page 1)*

It should also be said that attachment isn't about being bad or wrong. We shouldn't be so hard on ourselves for having attachments and desires but rather understand that certain kinds of attachments and desires are at the root of our suffering.

However, in our Jodo Shinshu tradition, it is impossible to abandon our attachments, especially letting go of our own ego. How then do we attain the goal of all Buddhist, that of Enlightenment.

It is through the absolute realization that we cannot abandon our self or our attachments. Hardly a moment *passes that we don't live without attaching to "I, me, mine."*

This what Shinran Shonen wrote about in the KKSS:

*I know truly how grievous it is that, I, Gutoku Shinran, am sinking in an immense ocean of desires and attachments and am lost in vast mountains of fame and advantage, so that I rejoice not at all at entering the stage of the truly settled, and feel no happiness at coming nearer the realization of true enlightenment. How ugly it is! How wretched!*

The absolute recognition and acceptance of this reality opens up a world of infinite wisdom and compassion. My attachment to my iPhone, computer, wireless internet, cable TV and my desire to accumulate more "stuff" causes me to suffer, yet it also reveals the working of the infinite wisdom and compassion that continues to embrace my life, just as I am. As a selfish being, I am able to experience and be touched by compassion of Nobuko, my grandchildren, my daughters, my mom and the members of our wonderful Betsuin, past and present. This is the Nembutsu path. This path is for those who are unable to practice and abandon their attachments on their own. This is the path that allows us to be foolish beings because we are foolish beings. But this is the path that reveals the working of Infinite Wisdom and Compassion that we call Amida Buddha.

In Jodo Shinshu, to abandon the "attachment to self" means to entrust in the working of this Infinite Wisdom and Compassion. The minute you awaken to the cause of suffering, which is your preoccupation to your "self," then you'll began to feel joy in your life. And the more you awaken to your interconnection with others, the freer you will be from suffering and by doing this we are able to appreciate and enjoy every day, every moment.

*Namo Amida Butsu*

*(Takata- continued from page 2)*

*ing beasts 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. If the karmic cause so prompt us, we will commit any kinds of act. (CWS, P.671)*

In those days, not only the samurai, but also hunters, fishermen, and farmers who made their living by killing other living beings, and peddlers who wandered from place to place for selling their wares were regarded as shameful and base individuals. Shinran Shonin explained that those who think they have never killed is no different from those so-called base individuals. They are just as guilty because they owe their ability to maintain their livelihood to such shameful people. In Buddhism, there is no justification for taking any life. However, the other reality is that there may be necessary situations or conditions that may result in shameful actions—shameful actions that may be contradictory to peace or be seen by others as dishonorable. We should remember the *Three Poisons*: Greed, Anger, and Ignorance — which can become dangerous weapons. Shinran Shonin has allowed us to be awakened to the fact that one who commits evil acts is none other than ourselves who are always filled with blind passions.

When I receive the Light of the Wisdom from Amida Buddha, my blind passions, caused by my own self-centered nature are revealed. It makes clear that I am the "foolish one." Honen Shonin said, "*Persons of Pure Land tradition attain birth in the Pure Land by becoming their foolish selves. (CWS P.531)*" Amida Buddha's Great Compassion is first directed to the ignorant being who is foolish person and suffers with full of blind passions. Amida Buddha's Primal Vow (18th Vow) was established solely for me, the one who carries an ignorant nature, needing to be liberated from the darkness of a deluded mind.

As we welcome the Fall Ohigan season, let us all reflect upon ourselves by the mirror of the dharma and positively move on to create a more harmonious world in which there is unity and respect for all based on the Teaching of Amida Buddha's Primal Vow.

*My eyes being hindered by blind passions,  
I cannot perceive the light that grasps me;  
Yet the great compassion, without tiring  
Illumines me always.*

(CWS P.385, Hymns of Pure Land Masters,  
Genshin #95)

*(Scholarship - continued from page 6)*

### Jessica

wait. On some days, I would cry in my math class due to my stress that was built like the firm wall of China. But now I'm over it. During my progress of my Gold Award, I suffered knowing the fact that I had encounter many hardships such as my schedule, sports, school, extracurricular activities, and the project itself. But now I'm done.

To every negative there is a positive. To every suffering their is enlightenment. Enlightenment is the action of enlightening or being enlightened. Which also means understanding, wisdom, and education. And I was able to learn and gain during this process of suffering. As of now, I am not done with the race, I'm not even halfway done. I continue to run and fall through these obstacles of suffering and enlightenment that life throws at me. I will continue to strive for enlightenment.



*(Nakata - continued from page 3)*

to how we could make the ceremony Buddhist-based. The traditional ceremony was revised by combining parts of the wedding and Hatsumairi (infant's first temple service) ceremonies. Because the majority of the attendees were Spanish speakers, I conducted the ceremony in English and Spanish. Instead of a commitment of love I asked her for a commitment to being a lifelong Buddhist by reading the *Three Treasures*. I created a Quinceañera certificate and presented it to Gloria at the end of the ceremony. The certificate was written in both English and Spanish. One of our Nishi Center teachers, Gaby Vazquez kindly helped me by proof-reading the Spanish. After the ceremony, I gifted Zenmon Koshin Ohtani's, "*Buddha's Wish for the World*" to Gloria. I am sure she will learn many things in Jodo Shinshu teachings from Zenmon's book.

As a minister, I will continually put my efforts to propagate Buddhism. I am proud that our Nishi Betsuin functions as a front-end flagship temple in the American Buddhist history and society. I sincerely appreciate your continuing help and support to YOUR Betsuin.

*Gassho*

### Kyle

from my high school, I know that I must move forward and continue through life.

The four Noble Truths also have applications throughout my daily life. The first truth applies to me because I have undergone sufferings throughout my life. I have been sick and I have lost grandparents and other loved ones. I have had to push through a lot of pain during races and workouts in cross county and track. These are all sufferings that I have experienced in my life. The second truth applies to me because of my own thoughts and attachments. My greed and attachment to my loved ones are what caused my suffering.

*(Eshinni Kakushinni - continued from page 4)*

Shinshu.

Lady Kakushinni established the foundation of Hongwanji to transmit Nembutsu Teaching for many generations. After Shinran Shonin's passing, she built a small temple in Higashiyama, Otani in Kyoto to enshrine Shinran Shonin's ashes and portrait. This temple gradually developed and became Hongwanji.

The World Federation of Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha BWA respectfully adopted the following resolutions;

1967 (Honolulu, Hawaii): Encourage BWA members to read "Letter of Eshinni" written by Lady Yoshiko Ohtani

1978 (Sao Paulo, Brazil): Established "Eshinni Day": Donation of the day to help youth activities

1986 (Kyoto, Japan): Designated "Eshinni Day" as World Peace Day

2002 (Sao Paulo, Brazil): Celebrate and Honor the life of Kakushinni

It is a time to remember and honor Lady Eshinni and Lady Kakushinni who have greatly contributed to establish the foundation of Hongwanji. Let us gather at temple the opportunity given by Lady Eshinni and Lady Kakushinni for hearing the Buddha-Dharma, their spiritual foundation.

## Betsuin Jiho

**Editor-in-Chief: Rimban William Briones**

**English Editor: Elaine Fukumoto**

**Photos: Koichi Sayano and Glen Tao**

BETSUIN PHOTOS



Photo by RimbanBriones

Hundreds of dancers participating at the Betsuin's 2016 bon odori in the west lot.



Obon: Ron Nakamura (l) and Roy Tanaka fry Okinawa dangos for ABA.



Obon: Saburo Koga sings his song live for the Obon dancers.



Obon: The bon daiko kids, led by Yuki Inoue (back row)



Obon: David Terry uses a fork lift to move the yagura parts during clean-up.



Obon: Dismantling of the yagura



Rimban Briones (left) and Rev. Takata at Evergreen Cemetery for Memorial Day services.



A new plaque was installed on the Bell Tower donated by Fukui Mortuary.



Obon: Nobuko Miyamoto (4th from lt) and her Great Leap singers singing Sembazuru. George Abe on taiko in back..

**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*

**MAY 2016**

29 Kazuko Sugasawara

**JUNE 2016**

5 Gary Shigeto  
Takahashi  
10 Takemi Oda Shimizu  
18 Walter Ichiro Okano  
24 Roy Hiroshi Kitano

**JULY 2016**

3 Sachiyo Shirley  
Wakisaka  
3 Kumie Jane  
Yamaguchi

*(Youth Essay - continued from page 7)*

me, I like playing basketball. I play point guard and a shooting guard so my priorities are to make good passes to other people, driving to the basket, or getting open shots. When I get an assist or make a basket I am Sukkha. I am happy I made a good play. Then I have to turn my head around because the other team is ready to make a good play too. I am dukha because the other team is trying to score. I need to stop them with defense to get back to Sukkha. This continues back and forth through the game and at the end of the game we may win. I'll have sukkha if we win the game, but It quickly changes to Dukha because the game has ended.

You will always have dukha and sukkha because something in your life will always be changing whether it is good or bad. Everybody lives life with some ups and downs just like sukkha ups and dukha downs. If everything in your life is Dukha then keep your head up because eventually it will change.



*Sangha members were given the opportunity to see the floral ceiling panels that were being installed by the Wakabayashi Co. craftsman.*

*William Safranek (l) and Kenny Kawasaki set up the scaffolding for the silk panels installation*



*Takata Sensei (l) and Wakabayashi Co. craftsman, Takeshi Nakamura, show the silk artwork by Yasushi Chiji. The four panels were installed above the onaijin opening.*



# SEPTEMBER 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
Bon Odori Exercise 8:30 am 4  <b>Regular Service 10:00 am</b>	5  LABOR DAY BETSUIN CLOSED	6	7  Contemporary Issues & Jodo Shinshu Perspective Rev. Briones 7:00-8:30 pm	8  Board Meeting 7:30 pm	9	10  Shin Buddhism Spiritual Depth Rev. Unno 10:00-11:30 am
Dharma School Registration 11  <b>Regular Service 10 am</b> <b>Eitai-kyo Shotsuki Hoyo 1 pm</b> Applied Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Studies for Teens Rev. Nakata	12  Shoshinge Rev. Takata 6:30-8:00 pm	13  Bon Odori Exercise 6:30 pm	14  Contemporary Issues & Jodo Shinshu Perspective Rev. Briones 7:00-8:30 pm	15  Traditions of Nishi Hongwanji Rev. Kodani 7:00-8:30 pm	16  Go-Meinichi-ko 1:30 pm	17  <b>Fall Ohigan Seminar 9 am - 3 pm</b>
Bon Odori Exercise 8:30 am 18  <b>Ohigan Service 10 am</b> Applied Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Studies for Teens Rev. Nakata	19  Shoshinge Rev. Takata 6:30-8:00 pm	20  Three Pure Land Sutras Rev. Furumoto 7:00-8:30 pm	21  Contemporary Issues & Jodo Shinshu Perspective Rev. Briones 7:00-8:30 pm	22  Traditions of Nishi Hongwanji Rev. Kodani 7:00-8:30 pm	23	24  Shin Buddhism Spiritual Depth Rev. Unno 10:00-11:30 am  Myokonin (Jpn) Rev. Matsubayashi 10:00-11:30 am
BEC Breakfast 25 9 - 10 am  <b>Regular Service 10:00 am</b>	26  Shoshinge Rev. Takata 6:30-8:00 pm	27  Three Pure Land Sutras Rev. Furumoto 7:00-8:30 pm Bon Odori Exercise 6:30 pm	28  Contemporary Issues & Jodo Shinshu Perspective Rev. Briones 7:00-8:30 pm	29  Traditions of Nishi Hongwanji Rev. Kodani 7:00-8:30 pm	30	31

# OCTOBER 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 Shin Buddhism Spiritual Depth Rev. Unno 10:00-11:30 am
Bon Odori Exercise 2 8:30 am  <b>Eshinni-Kakushinni Memorial Service 10 am</b>  Applied Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Studies for Teens Rev. Nakata	3   Shoshinge Rev. Takata 6:30-8:00 pm	4   Three Pure Land Sutras Rev. Furumoto 7:00-8:30 pm	5   Contemporary Issues & Jodo Shinshu Perspective Rev. Briones 7:00-8:30 pm	6   Traditions of Nishi Hongwanji Rev. Kodani 7:00-8:30 pm	7	8
9  <b>Regular Service 10 am</b>  <u>Approaching the Sacred JPN Buddhist Temples in Hawai'i</u> Prof. George & Willa Tanabe Exhibit	10   Shoshinge Rev. Takata 6:30-8:00 pm	11   Bon Odori Exercise 6:30 pm	12	13   Board Meeting 7:30 pm	14	15   <b>So. Dist. BEC Seminar Rev. John Iwohara</b>
Bon Odori Exercise 16 8:30 am  <b>Regular Service 10 am</b>  Applied Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Studies for Teens Rev. Nakata	17	18   Three Pure Land Sutras Rev. Furumoto 7:00-8:30 pm	19	20   Traditions of Nishi Hongwanji Rev. Kodani 7:00-8:30 pm	21	22   Shin Buddhism Spiritual Depth Rev. Unno 10:00-11:30 am  Myokonin (Jpn) Rev. Matsubayashi 10:00-11:30 am
<b>Regular Service 10 am</b> 23  Applied Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Studies for Teens Rev. Nakata	24	25	26	27	28	29   Shin Buddhism Spiritual Depth Rev. Unno 10:00-11:30 am
<b>30 Regular Service in Kaikan 10 am</b>  Applied Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Studies for Teens Rev. Nakata	31	Three Pure Land Sutras Rev. Furumoto 7:00-8:30 pm  Bon Odori Exercise 6:30 pm		Traditions of Nishi Hongwanji Rev. Kodani 7:00-8:30 pm		