

LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

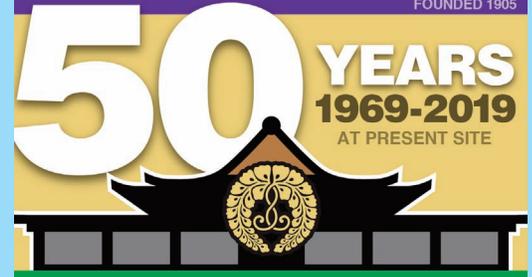
No. 443

July-August 2017

jihō

WWW

LOS ANGELES HONPA HONGWANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE
FOUNDED 1905

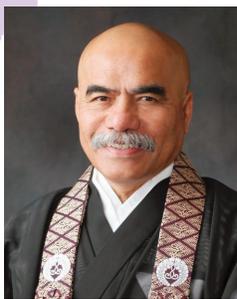


RIMBAN'S MESSAGE

THOUGHTS ON HELL

"I really do not know whether the Nembutsu may be the cause for my birth in the Pure Land, or the act that shall condemn me to hell. But I have nothing to regret, even if I should have been deceived by my teacher, and saying the Nembutsu, fall into hell. The reason is that if I were capable of realizing Buddhahood by other religious practices and yet fell into hell for saying the Nembutsu, I might have dire regrets for having been deceived. But since I am absolutely incapable of any religious practice, hell is my only home".

Every year in August, retired and past employees of Syntex/Syva come together in Mountain View for a picnic to catch up with each other's lives. In my "last life", I was employed for 28



RIMBAN
WILLIAM BRIONES

years as a Biologist at Syntex Pharmaceuticals, but once I left Syntex in 1995 I never returned and I lost contact with many friends and co-workers. Last year, I had an opportunity to attend the reunion for the first time. However, it was with great apprehension that I attend, since I would probably have to explain what I've been doing the last 21 years. To be sure, many of my Syntex friends knew I was going into the ministry and thought it admirable.

Of course when I arrived, co-workers and friends were surprised to see me bald (I immediately set them straight, that it was my choice), 10 pounds heavier (okay 20 pounds) and a very white mustache. Once we got past the physical changes, there were many questions, many were curious why I didn't stay in research, but most of the questioned centered on Buddhism.

Initially the questions were a bit silly ... do you worship that fat Buddha? Does Richard Geer belong to your sect of Buddhism? But soon they began to ask some serious questions: If you don't believe in God what do you believe in? What happens when you die? Do you have a heaven? Do you have a hell? Needless to say this generated a lively conversation.

As the day came to a close, I stopped by one of the picnic tables to chat with some old acquaintances I had barely recognized. Our conversation once again centered on my "new" career and Buddhism. However, someone at the table didn't seem too pleased with the content of our conversation. As the conversation seemed come to an end, the older gentleman, whom I did know, asked if I knew I would be damned to eternal torment. Since I did not accept Christ, I would for sure burn in hell, he said. When I argued of the injustice of a good man being eternally punished, he said that we

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JULY 8 & 9
Carnival & Bon Odori

Detailed information can be found on page 12

NO TOMORROW

by Rev. Koho Takata



REV. KOHO TAKATA

My ministry began in Hawaii in 1995. I transferred my ministry to the mainland in 2011. My first assignment in mainland was the Arizona Buddhist Temple located in Phoenix. I would like to share one of my experiences I had encountered in Arizona.

One day, a message was forwarded to me by the temple answering machine. It was a call from a young woman. She was crying on the phone and I couldn't understand what she was asking. My guess was that someone was going to die or had already died. I immediately called her and asked what she needed. She was still crying so that we weren't able to communicate very well. She said that she would call later when she had calmed down. I waited for a couple hours but I didn't receive a call from her. I was very concerned. I then decided that I would call her. She was still crying but much less so, so I was able to communicate with her. She explained that her sister's infant had suddenly passed and she asked if I would go to the emergency room of the Scottsdale Health Care. Coincidentally, her last name was same as my last name – Takata. She also mentioned that she was visiting her sister from Honolulu. I felt a connection with her.

When I reached the hospital, the young woman was waiting for me in the lobby of the emergency room. She asked me about the bedside service. I explained to her about the service and its meaning. She went back to the emergency room and explained to the parents who just lost their baby about the bedside service. The young woman returned and escorted me to the emergency room. There were so many family members there. It was almost four hours since the death of the baby. In the center of the emergency room, there was a small bed for a baby and both father and mother were on the tiny bed with their baby. I went close to the parents and the deceased baby and expressed my condolences to the parents and started the bedside service. The baby was only four months and had suddenly died. The doctors tried everything but they didn't know the cause of death. I knew it was a very painful experience for the parents and the family.

After returning home from hospital, I was thinking about the baby and, particularly, her parents. I could not sleep that night. My thoughts were, "What if this had happened to one of my daughters? What would I and my wife do?" These thoughts interrupted my sleep.

In my ministry for the past 30 years plus, I have encoun-

tered countless deaths and witnessed many family members who were suffering especially with their attachments to the physical form of their loved ones. However, as Sakyamuni Buddha teaches us that all things in this world including our life and death are constantly changing. Everything is empty and temporary. There is no permanent self. Intel-lectually, we all know the meaning of impermanence. It is, however, hard to accept the truth if it happens in our lives. We are always clinging to our "self" and live our lives full of our "ego."

We received our precious lives from our parents. However, our life will some day end. We can learn this from our loved ones. They show us the truth and reality of our human lives through their own death and dying. It doesn't matter whether we are young or old. We don't know when our death comes to us. We will not know what will happen to our lives tomorrow. Rennyō Shōnin, the eighth monshū of the Hongwanji, said that "there is no tomorrow in the Buddha-Dharma" and encouraged us to listen to the Buddha-Dharma to solve our life and death at this present moment.

Amida Buddha, the Buddha of Infinite Light and Life, represents all of our loved ones. I believe that the most grateful teaching of Jōdo Shinshū Buddhism is that those who passed away return to this world of suffering as the Buddha of Infinite Light and Life for guiding us to the true and real home called Pure Land. It is not an end when they passed away. Our loved ones keep living as the Buddha of Infinite Light and Life and they are constantly guiding us in the Nembutsu. The **Obon Service** is one of their compassionate activities for us to listen to their grateful messages, the perfect guidance, to live in the Nembutsu. Let us together always live with the calling voice of our loved ones, *Namo Amida Butsu*, as the basis of true and real life throughout Obon season and actualize the "Gathering of Joy" in the Nembutsu.

L.A. BETSUIN BOOK CENTER



BOOKS, OBUTSUDAN,
NENJU, INCENSE,
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SUNDAY: 9:00 AM - 12:30 PM
WEEKDAYS - BETSUIN OFFICE PERSONNEL WILL
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SUNDAY PUPPET SHOW BEGINS SEPTEMBER

by Rev. Kazuaki Nakata



REV. KAZ

The history of Los Angeles Homba Hon-gwanji Buddhist Temple, started in 1905. Along with various Buddhist and cultural activities, Sunday School (*Nichiyo Gak-ko*) and Sunday School Parents' Association (*Fubokai*) were founded. Be-tsuin members who attended the Sunday services at the Central Avenue site, may remember that there were Sun-

day (later "dharma") school services in addition to Adult English and Japanese services. According to Bessie Tanaka and Koichi Sayano, after the Sunday School Sunday services, the dharma school students were dismissed from the hondo and they went to their classrooms for their classes.

In 1969, the Betsuin was relocated to the current site at the corner of Vignes Street and First Street. The activities of Sunday dharma school class and Dharma School Parents' Association were transferred to the current temple, however, the Dharma School Service was discontinued. For last half century, there has been no substantial increase of the number of dharma school students, although the dharma school teachers have put in efforts to welcome more students.

Over three years ago, I became the ministerial advisor for Nishi Youth Education which includes Scouting and dharma school activities. I have a four years of teaching experience in Japan at a private tutoring school and I thought I may be able to use this experience. Initially, I worked to enhance the Buddhist education for the Scouting program. I discovered that is not easy to teach Buddhism to the youth. It is especially difficult to share with those who are not familiar with Buddhist culture and customs. As I mentioned, however, in the May/June issue of the Jiho, in the past two years, over 50 boys and girls have taken part in the Youth Buddhist Educational courses on Scouting to study Buddhist teachings, rituals, and culture in English, Chinese, Sanskrit, Pali, Tibetan, and Japanese. The number includes many new-to-Buddhism students. It indicates that there is a potential to grow the dharma school enrollment.

I have been using a puppet as a minister for youth Buddhist Education, and so I proposed at a recent dharma school teachers' meeting to start a Dharma School Sunday Service as a puppet show. The target age range for this show would be the young children preschool aged to elementary school level. Basically, we will keep the current Sunday service format. The plan is to add five minutes

with a "Dharma Talk for Kids" portion to service before continuing on with the English and Japanese service. Following the "Dharma Talk for Kids," the young students will be dismissed from the hondo and the middle school and high school students will stay in for English dharma talk. With this, the young children will have more time for their dharma school class activities and the older students will be able to listen to the dharma talks, mainly from Rimban Briones for their dharma school discussion topic. The proposal was accepted by dharma school teachers and was approved by Rimban Briones.

Topics for the "Dharma Talk for Kids" have been announced. They are "What is Buddhism? Who is Buddhist?", "Everyone looks different, but all the same", "How to deal with your friends?", "Freedom & Responsibility", "Why do we have Nishi Temple?", "What is Gassho & Os-hoko?", "Peace in your heart", "What is Nembutsu?", "Sense of Gratitude" and so on. These topics are selected from frequently asked questions by students. For more information, please check the Betsuin bulletin board. I invite you to come to see the Sunday puppet show with your child, grandchild or friends' children for fun!

Lastly, two years ago, I started "Dharma School Mochi Making" event which has taken place during the Thanksgiving weekend. From the first time to the second, there was an increase in the number of participants. I see this as an indication for the growth of our dharma school attendees. Additional plans are in the works for additional events for the dharma School. Your support of the Betsuin Youth Education will be appreciated. The presence of young students during Sunday services will be an indication of the sustainability of another century of our Nishi Hongwanji Buddhist Temple.

Gassho

SAVE THE DATE



HOLLYWOOD BUDDHIST CHURCH
Proud Supporter of the Nishi 50th

**2ND ANNUAL
BREW HA HA**

August 26, 2017

**A Beer Tasting Event
with Gourmet Appetizer Pairings**

PILGRIMAGE TO JAPAN

by Ernest Hida



BETSUIN MEMBERS' PILGRIMAGE TO JAPAN

Betsuin tour members take a commemoration photograph (kinen shashin) with Gomonshu Kojun Ohtani (front center)

March 2017, Rimban William Briones and Rev. Koho Takata lead a group of 35 members from LA Betsuin to Japan to attend the Commemoration on the Accession of the Jodo Shinshu Tradition at Nishi Hongwanji Kyoto and to make a pilgrimage to various sites related to Shinran Shonin and Lady Eshinni.

The group first visited Tsukiji Hongwanji in Tokyo with a service and a tour of the Indian-design temple and also visited Wakabayashi Butsugu Company's Tokyo retail store next door to Tsukiji Hongwanji. While touring Tsukiji Hongwanji, we had a surprise meeting with Rev. Torimi and his family, who was also visiting the temple. In addition, the members enjoyed their time at the bustling Tsukiji Outer Market and a Tokyo City tour. During our stay in Tokyo, Rimban Briones, Rev. Takata and Shoichi Sayano paid a visit to Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai (BDK) Office to offer condolences on the passing of Rev. Toshida Numata, chairman of BDK, and conducted a short service for him. The Numata Family and BDK are strong supporters of the LA Betsuin, as well as many other temples. Later, the group traveled to Kyoto by the Shinkansen (Bullet Train).

In Kyoto, the group attended the daily 6:00 am service at Nishi

Hongwanji (*Honzan*). After returning to the hotel for breakfast, we returned to *Honzan* beginning with an audience and a group photo with the *Go-Monshu-sama*. After lunch in the Mombou Kaikan, we took a group photo in front of the temple prior to entering the *Amida-Do* for the Commemoration Service. It was an auspicious service with the new **Monshu Kojun Ohtani** as the officiant. In attendance also were **Lady Ruzumi Ohtani** and their two children, and the Zen-Monshu and Zen-Lady Ohtani. It was a wonderful experience to be at this auspicious service, chanting the sutra with both Go-Monshu and Zen-Monshu and many temple members from overseas and Japan, to commemorate the accession of the Jodo Shinshu tradition to the new Go-Monshu-sama. It was a once in a lifetime experience. During this time, we met Mrs. Matsudaira and her two children. Unfortunately, Rev. Matsudaira was not able to attend the service with his family. After the service, the group members visited the Shoin of Honzan, which is a National Treasure. That night, we enjoyed a Japanese-style dinner at the hotel with some guests from Kyoto – Rev. Tokiko Hikita, Director of the International Department, Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha; Mr. Tomoyuki Wak-

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BWA JODO SHINSHU CENTER VISITATION

by Pam Tabata

During a long weekend at the beginning of May, Rimban Briones escorted a group of 12, mostly BWA members, to the Jodo Shinshu Center (JSC) in Berkeley. We arrived at the JSC on Friday afternoon, greeted by Glenn Kameda, the facility manager. We began with *omairi*, conducted by Bishop Umezu and Rimban Briones. Mr. Kameda then gave us the history and a tour of the center.

The following day, we left for the Buddhist Church of San Francisco and the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) Office. Rev. Kobata gave us a history of the temple. Yumi Hata, temple member, gave us a tour of the facilities. She also showed us the stupa which is located on the roof of the temple and houses the holy relics of the Shakamuni Buddha gifted by the Emperor of Thailand in 1935. The San Francisco BWA then graciously hosted snacks for our group. A surprising individual we saw there was Mrs. Abiko! Following lunch in Japan Town, we visited the Japanese Cemetery in Colma. There, we saw a monument that honors the deceased BCA ministers. We had an *omairi* there at the monument. We then moved on to Pier 39 for dinner and we all purchased the famous San Francisco sourdough bread.



On Sunday, we were joined by Kenny and Lisa Kawasaki. We left for the Mountain View Buddhist Temple for *omairi* with Rev. Mukojima. The BWA and sangha were very welcoming with snacks for our trip home.

As we were making our way home, we heard about the hail and pouring rain down in SoCal, but our trip from Nor-Cal was sunny all the way home.

It was a wonderful, enjoyable trip, as well as educational.

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OBON DHARMA SERVICE

by Rev. Koho Takata

The annual *Hatsubon* (First Obon) Service for those who passed away from last Obon until today is scheduled for **Saturday, July 1, 2017** at 10:00am and 1:00pm.

The annual *Obon service* is scheduled for **Sunday, July 16, 2017**, with guest speaker, **Reverend Hiroshi Abiko** former rimban of LA Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple for the English and Japanese service, guiding us through this reflective time.



We also schedule to observe Obon Service at Evergreen Cemetery at 9:00am and at temple columbarium **Rev Hiroshi Abiko** (*Nokotsudo* or *Muryo Koju do*) at 11:30am on the same day with our annual Obon Service at temple, **Saturday, July 16, 2017**.

The term *Bon* is an abbreviation of a Japanese Buddhist term "*Urabon*," which is derived from the Sanskrit term "*Ullumbana*." "*Ullumbana*" means to be liberated from a spiritual state of pain and hunger caused by greediness, one of three blind desires.

Even as we reflect on the sorrowful consequence of basic human defilement, we, as Jodo Shinshu Buddhists, joyfully reflect on the Primal Vow Power of Amida Buddha which has been fulfilled, thus enabling us to live in gratitude. The Bon Service is called the "*Gathering of Joy*" in Jodo Shinshu tradition, instead of being merely called a "Memorial Service."

The donation envelope for Obon 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.



DID YOU KNOW?

by Eiko Masuyama



YBA [Young Buddhist Association] Scrapbook, 1948 Starts Tonight

The Bussei [young Buddhist] “busy bodies” of the L.A. YBA early this morning pounded in the last nail to some 50 carnival booths to await anticipated crowd of nearly 20,000 tonight when the two-day Obon Festival opens at the Nishi Hongwanji Church.

Frank Suyenaga, general chairman, announced that in order to accommodate the “turn-away” visitors of the 1st annual carnival in 1947 [postwar], the concession areas have been enlarged for tonight’s spectators.

On the entertainment side will be the first postwar Obon odori slated in front of the temple where the public is expected to join the Nisei and Sansei *odori-kos* in gala ondo parade beginning at 7:30.

Along the line of the dance will be **John Little** [six foot, 200+ pound African American], prewar ondo enthusiast, who has won the hearts of many an Issei who used to marvel at his artistic grace in doing the odori.

Buddhist groups from Gardena, Senshin, and the West Los Angeles districts will join in to make the festival one of the colorful events of 1948.



Obon 1940 Fujinkai

L-R: Hideko Harada, Masano Fujihira, Kauyo Mihara, Toku Aratani, Rev. Kow, ?, ?, Mrs. Kijima, Mrs. Horino, Mrs. Hiroshima, Yo Umekubo

Nishi Hongwanji Fujinkai reported the ladies will have sushi, soda pop, and watermelon on sale.

While the gaiety will last until midnight tonight, the Obon activities will close at 10 p.m. Sunday, it was announced.

* * * * *

YBA Service

The Los Angeles YBA will observe Obon, a Buddhist memorial day, with a special service tomorrow, 10:45 a.m., at the Nishi

1948, at Japanese Hospital in Los Angeles].

The Rev. Shinjo Nagatomi of the Gardena Buddhist Church will be the guest speaker.

Dickie Kazuo Goto, nine years of age, who is a Sunday School pupil at the Nishi Hongwanji, will be the soloist during the Bussei rite.

June Tokuyama will chair the worship [event]. Miss Kimi Terama will [be the pianist].

* * * * *



*Bon Odori on Weller Street
Early 1950s 5th Grade Sunday school class
Mary Hatakeyama Iwamoto, teacher, ... Wesley Ozaki (4th boy from left)*

YBA Scrapbook, 1946

YBA Elects New Cabinet

In the general election held after their regular Sunday morning service, the Young Buddhist Association of L.A. Buddhist Church yesterday re-elected Noboru Ishitani, former active Heart Mountain *Bussei*, for the coming term. Albert Hirota was named men’s vice-president and Ruth Kodama as women’s vice-president.

Misao Nakamura was selected as recording secretary with Emi Nomi their corresponding secretary.

Others on the newly formed cabinet are: Sam Kuratomi, treasurer; Kenneth Fujiyoshi, auditor; Roy Kawamoto, public relations; and Sadami Nomi, literary chairman.

Julia Kitayama, religious chairman; Kayo Hayashi, social welfare; Tom Nakashima, research; and Kimiko Terama, music chairman.

Athletic managers are Ben Nakamura and Dorothy Mori for the men’s and women’s division, respectively.

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Hongwanji.

The day will be dedicated to those residents who died during the past year and will also be devoted in paying special tribute to the late Bishop Ryotai Matsukage [died June,

(Rimban - continued from page 1)

don't go to heaven because we are good but because we've accepted Christ. Therefore having rejected Christ, I would be damned to hell for all eternity.

Do you think that hell is possibly something or someplace that awaits you in your next life if you're bad. Do you think we are living in hell right now?

The Protestant hell and the Catholic hell are actual places of eternal punishment for sinners, however Catholics also believe there is a "purgatory" where all souls go for a time and there's a limbo where un-baptized souls go.

Within the western context when we do think of hell we always think of the Dante's Inferno version of hell... with the devil, with pointed horns and the pitch fork, residing in deep underground fiery caves. This is where we go if we're really bad.

Of course in Buddhism our understanding of hell is our suffering here and now, in this life time. In traditional Buddhism, this suffering is understood as this transmigration through this samaric world of sufferings by way of the six paths, know as the six realms of existence, in Japanese, Rokudo.

As for Jodo Shinshu, Shinran Shonin was influenced by Genshin, an 11th century religious teacher and writer. Genshin's writings made such a strong impression on Shinran that he named Genshin as one of the seven patriarchs through whom he traces the spiritual lineage of the Nembutsu teachings, back to Sakyamuni Buddha.

Genshin's major work was *Ojoyoshu*... Essential for Re-birth. It somewhat like Dante's Inferno. Genshin gives graphic descriptions of the various levels of hell. Genshin's masterpiece portrays a man who is suffering, pleads for forgiveness of a demon. The demons response is "you created your own hell while you were still alive"

The journey begins at first and worst of the six paths which is hell, itself. Within this first hell there are eight chambers, stacked below each other, each more horrific that the one above.

The first chamber is called the Hell of Revival. The sinner in this hell are repeatedly attacked with iron swords by hell wardens who hack, dismember, and scatter them. After awhile the pieces are reassembled and they are brought back to life only for the process to be repeated over and over. You might ask what did this person did to deserve such a hell... well this hell results from committing the slightest evil, like killing a fish or chickens.

The eighth chamber is called the "Unremitting Hell." In this hell molten metal is poured into the sinners mouth, dissolving their insides, foxes with flaming jaws consume

them and so on.

The good news is that these hells are not an eternal punishment. When, one goes through required number of cosmic eons, the sufferer's evil is requited and he passes on to another of the six paths.

Those being "Starving Ghost," beasts, raging spirits, men and deities. Each one have similar grizzly details of punishment.

You might recall that the story of Obon, it is Mogallana's mother who ends up in the hell of starving ghost. Those who are covetous and envious are reborn in this path. Here the sinner are depicted as lurking about seeking to feed on corpses, excrement, and grave offerings, but are unsuccessful because though their bodies are bloated, their mouths are as small as the eye of a needle, or because the food turns to flame, burning them.

The whole point of Genshin metaphoric descriptions of hell was the awaking to one's own suffering, awaken to our falling in to hell as being the very condition essential for birth in the Pure Land.

Within our tradition of Jodo Shinshu, the world of awakening, that is to truly realize the depth of their foolish-ignorant self... that self that suffers in hell, are thus able to experience the very joy that they are going to the Pure Land, that spiritual realm of reality itself from which the workings of compassion are manifested.

The reading I began with is from chapter 2 of the Tannisho. The last line reads, "*I am absolutely incapable of any religious practice, hell is my only home.*"

For me, I can appreciate Shinran Shonin's words "Hell is my only home" in that he wasn't only thinking about his future life, but he was reflecting on his actions of this present life too. In Buddhism, hell is not viewed as something that is completely separate from one's actions. It is inevitably linked with one's karma that we are constantly creating. By the way, way karma, in Buddhism, is not fatalism but rather defined as "actions and the consequences of that action". In our transmigration with the six realms of suffering, where will we find ourselves next? To generally answer this question, a sutra states, "When you wish to know about your past, know that the life you are living now is a result of it. When you wish to know about the future, know that the cause of it lies in what you are doing now."

When Shinran says, "*Hell is my only home,*" Shinran looks inward to realize the depth of his ignorance, his bonno to truly know himself.

Those who do not really see hell interwoven into their lives

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(Pilgrimage - continued from page 5)



Three Generations Ohtani Family

left: Zenmonshu Koshin Ohtani and wife Zen Urakata Noriko Ohtani. right: His Eminence Kojun Ohtani, Gomonshu and Ourakata Ruzumi Ohtani with children Takashi and Akiko.

abayashi, President of Wakabayashi Butsugu Company, whose company renovated our onajin; and Mr. Yasuhiro Chiji, kimono designer, who painted with his father the mural in our hondo, and he donated the silk artworks in the hondo and Wisteria Chapel. Mr. Chiji was accompanied by two geishas. Many members took photographs with them.

The next day, we visited sites relating to Shinran Shonin – Suminobo Betsuin, where he passed away; Rokkaku-do, built by Prince Shotoku and where Shinran Shonin made his decision to leave Mt. Hiei; Shore-in, where he was ordained at age nine years old; and Ohtani Hombyo, which is the mausoleum dedicated to Shinran Shonin and where his ashes are interred. Ohtani Hombyo was established by his daughter, Kakushinni, and includes a multi-story nokotsudo, where Jodo Shinshu followers and temples have niches. LA Betsuin has three niches in the Overseas Districts' Section. Rimban Briones and Rev. Takata lead the group in sutra chanting in front of the LA Betsuin's niches.

From Kyoto, the group traveled towards the Sea of Japan following the footsteps of Shinran Shonin where he was exiled to the Echigo Province (currently Niigata Prefecture). Enroute to Kanazawa, we visited Yoshizaki Betsuin, established by Rennyō Shonin. Later, at Kana-zawa, we visited the beautiful Kenrokuen Garden, one of Japan's three most beautiful landscaped gardens and is noted for their sakura blooming trees. Normally at this time, the sakura would be in full bloom but due to the sudden cold weather, the sakura was still in bud form. Next, we toured Noto Peninsula and headed for Toyama, Rev. and Mrs. Takata's hometown. That evening we visited his family's temple, Jokoji Temple, and Rev. Takata and his younger brother, Rev. Kosen Takata, conducted a service for our members with their sangha. After the service, they hosted us to a wonderful

fellowship dinner. Our members had a great time with their members. After a few hours, we sadly said sayonara to fellow Jodo Shinshu followers.

The following day, the group enjoyed a boatripe along the canal which was the moat of the former Toyama Castle. The canal is lined with many sakura blossom trees, however, again, due to the sudden cold weather, no sakura were in bloom. Toyama is famous for its herbal medicine production since the Shogun days, therefore we visited Kokando Museum and learned about the history of herbal medicine. Toyama is also noted for its delicious *masu-zushi* (pressed trout sushi in a wooden container). Therefore, the group members visited a factory to see the production of Toyama's specialty and enjoyed making this delicacy and having their own hand-made lunch.

The next day, the group traveled to Naoetsu and visited Kotogahama Beach where Shinran Shonin landed when he was exiled to Echigo from Kyoto. Later, we visited nearby Gochikokubuji Temple where he temporarily stayed after he stayed for one year and Kokufu Betsuin where he stayed for six years after a year at Gochikokubuji Temple. Later, we visited the gravesite of



Mitsi Komatsu (left) and Kayo Uno on the Honzan grounds just outside of the Goei-do.



l-r: Yasuhiro Chiji, Shoichi & Nobuko Sayano, Geisha, and Ernest Hida.

Lady Eshinni and chanted a sutra in her memory. We then visited the nearby interesting Eshinni No Sato Museum and learned more about her life. From here, we continued to Akakura Onsen, which was discovered by Shinran Shonin. During his stay at Gochikokubuji Temple, he took a walk through the woods and observed animals going to some ponds of water. He

(continued on page 11 • Additional photos on page 10)

BETSUIN PHOTOS



Hatsumairi participants and their extended families.



Nishi Center Gotan-ye



Betsuin Hanamatsuri service flower and sweet tea representatives



Nishi Center Hanamatsuri - pouring sweet tea over the Baby Buddha

ADDITIONAL JAPAN PILGRIMAGE PHOTOS



This statue marks the site where Shinran Shonin passed away which is the present site of Suminobu Hongwanji.



Ernest Hida (left) and BCA Bishop Kodo Umezu at Honzan



"Eshin No Sato," the gravesite of Lady Eshinni, Shinran Shonin's wife.



Moruko Okita (3rd from left), along with Amy Miyakawa (2nd from left), present a donation to the 50th Anniversary from the Betsuin Book Center to temple president, Bessie Tanaka and Rimban Briones

YOUTH ESSAY

Rev. Kaz Nakata currently offers courses on intensive Buddhist studies to teens and preteens who are a part of the Boy Scout and Girl Scout organization at the Nishi Betsuin. The students are taught the essential teachings of Buddhism in English, Chinese, Japanese, Tibetan and Indian Sanskrit. The students are given an opportunity to share what they have learned.

Tatsumi Capela

In "Romeo and Juliet," Juliet asks, "What is in a name?" In the case of the *ojuzu* or the *onenju*, the name is everything. Though both are used within the Buddhist religion, but in different Buddhist sects, their uses are not the same. They both are traditionally made up of 108 beads, but the number of beads can be reduced in divisions of 108 (54 or 27 beads). Some juzu or nenjus have tassels, some do not. Either one should be carried in your left hand, or worn on your left wrist. With these similarities, it is easy to confuse the juzu and nenju. Their real difference is in their names.

The term "zu" means counting, and the term "ju" means beads, juzu means "counting beads." Some Buddhist sects use the juzu to count how many times they recite a certain mantra, or to count how many times they have said the Nembutsu. The term "nen" means mindful or thinking. Nenju means thinking beads. For Jodo Shinshu Buddhists, who do not put a lot of importance on the number of times we recite the Nembutsu, we use the nenju. We use the nenju to be "mindful" of the Buddha and his teachings. Their names say it all.

(Pilgrimage - continued from page 9)

discovered that it was not ordinary water but warm mineral water. Thus the birth of Akakura Onsen. At the ryokan where we stayed at, Akakura Hotel has a butsudan (altar) next to the lobby. The former owners of the establishment wanted to have a butsudan for fellow Buddhists who visit the historical sites of Shinran Shonin and Lady Eshinni. The next day, Rev. Takata conducted a morning service, after which we enjoyed a Japanese-style breakfast.

We then traveled by Shinkansen to Tokyo for one night, where we finally saw sakura in full bloom at Ueno Park. The next day, we returned to Los Angeles with a wonderful memory of a meaningful experience in Kyoto and in following the footsteps of Shinran Shonin in Echigo Province.

gassho

(Rimban - continued from page 8)

will not be able to realize the Pure Land. In other words, those who do not see hell in the depths of their own minds are really falling into it.

Buddhism does not judge who will be rewarded or who will be punished like the Christian religions. In Buddhism, at the end of life of our life, one really doesn't know what happens, hell ... Pure Land no one knows. However, our falling into hell, the realization of our ignorant self, is crucial to awaken in this life, here and now, at this very moment.

(Know? - continued from page 7)

Social chairmen will be Toy Toki and Miyo Yokota. Bill Ishii will act as sergeant-at-arms.

* * * * *

Special thanks to: Family of late Agnes Nakamura for donations of LA YBA photos (1940-1950) and scroll depicting Shinran's departure from Kanto area; Misao Nakamura Tomita for monetary donation to Archives/Library Fund; Sally Yoshikawa for volunteer time in archives, working on Kaoru Inouye Collection of photos.

(BWA Jodo Shinshu Center - continued from page 6)

Thank you, Rimban, for taking time from your very busy schedule to escort us to the JSC.

Attendees:

Rimban Briones, Jean Kawakami Mitsi Komatsu, Gail Matsuura, Lucy Matsuura, Amy Miyakawa, Moruko Okita, Shoichi Sayano, Nobuko Sayano, Kayo Uno, Sherry Watanabe, and Pam Tabata.



Nishi Center kindergarten graduates 2017

SO. DISTRICT OBON ODORI SCHEDULE

July 1

Senshin 7:00 (Saturday only)

July 8 & 9

L.A. BETSUIN 7:00 / 6:30

Oxnard 6:00 (Saturday only)

July 15 & 16

Orange County 7:00
 Santa Barbara 4:00 (Saturday only)
 Venice 7:00

July 22 & 23

Pasadena 6:30
 Vista 6:30

July 29 & 30

West Los Angeles 6:30
 Higashi 5:30- not BCA

August 5

San Diego 6:30 (Saturday only)
 Las Vegas 12:45- not BCA

August 13 & 14

Gardena 6:00



OBON PROGRAM SCHEDULE

SATURDAY

RELIGIOUS Q&A 3³⁰ - 4⁰⁰
 4³⁰ - 5⁰⁰

CARNIVAL 2⁰⁰ - 10⁰⁰

BON ODORI 7⁰⁰ - 9⁰⁰

BINGO 4⁰⁰ - 10⁰⁰

DEMONSTRATIONS

Tea 2⁰⁰ - 4⁰⁰

CULTURAL DISPLAYS

2⁰⁰ - 6⁰⁰

STAGE PERFORMANCES

Nishi Center @ 3⁰⁰

Matsutoyo Kai @ 3⁴⁵

Ho' Aloha Polynesian

Dancers @ 4²⁵

TBD @ 5⁰⁰

Taiko Ichiza @ 5³⁰

Dance to Kokoro

@ 9⁰⁰ - 10⁰⁰

SUNDAY

RELIGIOUS Q&A 3³⁰ - 4⁰⁰
 4³⁰ - 5⁰⁰

CARNIVAL 1⁰⁰ - 8³⁰

BON ODORI 6³⁰ - 8³⁰

BINGO 4⁰⁰ - 8³⁰

DEMONSTRATIONS

Tea 2⁰⁰ - 4⁰⁰

CULTURAL DISPLAYS

2⁰⁰ - 6⁰⁰

STAGE PERFORMANCES

Nishi Center @ 2⁰⁰

Da Kapakahi's @ 2⁴⁵

The Cherry Blossoms

@ 3⁴⁵

TBD @ 5⁰⁰

Taiko Ichiza @ 4³⁰

RAFFLE DRAWING @ 8³⁰



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*

March, 2017

18 Yoshiko Yamada

20 Reiko Ohata

26 Kyoko Yoshimura

22 Noritoshi Kanai

27 Trudes Tsuyako

Nishizu

29 Jimmy Shigeyuki

Kurata

April, 2017

2 Kazuo Michihara

4 Yoshio Hamada

4 Nobuko June Imamoto

8 Kay Kazuo Gojobori

17 Masao Imanishi

18 Kenneth Yoshio Uyeki

May, 2017

1 Rosaline Asako Kaya

3 Keiso Kuranushi

11 Thelma Tsuruko

Fukuhara

14 May Sumiye Kanow

OBON DANCE



July 6 @ Sakura Gardens @ 6:00 - 7:00 pm
 325 S Boyle Ave 90033

July 29 @ Kei-Ai @ 1:45 - 2:30 pm
 2221 Lincoln Park Ave 90031

Betsuin Jiho

Editor-in-Chief: Rimban William Briones

English Editor: Elaine Fukumoto

Photos: Koichi Sayano and Glen Tao

JULY 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 Hatsubon Services 10 am & 1pm
2 Family Service 10:00 am Eitaikyo Shotsuki 1:00 pm	3	4 Independence Day Temple Closed	5	6 Bon Odori @ Sakura Gardens 6:00-7:00pm	7	8 Obon 2:00 - 10:00 pm
9 Obon 2:00 - 8:30 pm	10	11	12	13 Board Meeting 7:30 pm	14	15
Gomeinichi-ko 16 Obon Services Evergreen Cemetery 9:00 am Betsuin 10:00 am Nokotsudo 11:30	17	18	19	20	21	22
23 Family Service 10:00 am	24	25	26	27	28	29 LABCCC Campers Departs 
30 Family Service 10:00 am LABCCC Camp 	31					

AUGUST 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5 LABCCC Campers Returns
6 Hiroshima-Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Memorial Service 10:00 am	7	8	9	10	11	12
13 Family Service 10:00 am Nagashi Somen 11:00 am Eitaikyo Shotsuki 1:00 pm	14	15	16 Go-Meinichi-ko 1:30 pm	17	18	19
20 Family Service 10:00 am	21	22	23	24	25	26 Brew Ha Ha Fundraiser
27 Family Service 10:00 am	28	29	30	31		