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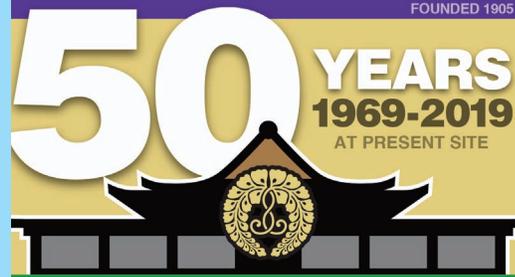
No. 450

September-October 2018

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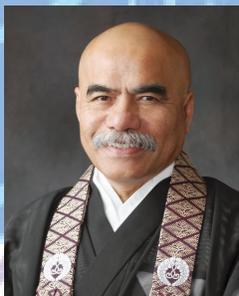
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LOS ANGELES HONPA HONGWANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE
FOUNDED 1905



RIMBAN'S MESSAGE

THOUGHTS ON MYTHS



**RIMBAN
WILLIAM BRIONES**

Recently I was asked to participate on a panel of faith leaders representing the major religious groups; Christianity, Judaism, Islamic and Hindu. As inter-faith dialogs go, it was very "enlightening". Of course there are similarities between the religions; compassion and respect for everyone, peace and non-violence to name a few. But for Buddhist our differences far outnumber the similarities. One big difference is that we do not believe in a god – one who created, one who is omnipotent, and one who is omniscient. Shakyamuni and Amida Buddha are not gods nor deities.

When I began my path in Jodo Shinshu Buddhism over 45 years ago, I was a bit confused about the historical Buddha, Shakyamuni and Amida Buddha, the Buddha that the Pure Land Buddhist revere as the main object of reverence.

Shakyamuni Buddha, whose life story is depicted on the walls of the Los Angeles Hompa Hongwanji Betsuin is the historical Buddha that lived over 2,500 years ago, almost 550 years before Jesus Christ was born. At the age of 29, the prince gave up his worldly possessions, and set out on a long journey in search of a path that would lead to the end of suffering.

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

The story is the foundation for all Buddhist traditions. The goal for all Buddhist is to be awakened. After all, the Buddha does mean "the awoken one." All Buddhists use Shakyamuni's teachings as the foundation of their doctrine: the Four Noble Truths the Eightfold Noble Path, the Three Characteristics of Buddhism ... the teaching of Dependent Origination.

It is said in the Larger Sutra, soon after becoming enlightened, Sakyamuni gave a sermon on Vultures Peak accompanied by 12,000 monks and innumerable bodhisattvas. At that time, Sakyamuni Buddha appeared majestic and brilliant. Ananda, Sakyamuni's right-hand-man, saw how wonderful he looked and asked him if he was dwelling in the supreme samadhi and contemplating all the Buddhas. Sakyamuni praised Ananda's observation and began to reveal to the gathering the wonderful dharma.

So the story goes ... In the distant past the Buddha Dipankara appeared in the world, followed by 53 other Buddhas, the last being the Buddha Lokeshvararaja. It was during this time, there lived a king who heard Lokeshvararaja's exposi-

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VOLCANO

by Rev. Koho Takata



REV. KOHO TAKATA

This month reminds me of the 911 tragedy caused by terrorists attacking the World Trade Center in New York on September 11, 2001. As I start my day by reading and watching news daily, I continue to observe the many sad tragedies such as public mass shootings, racial discrimination, bombings, attacks by vehicles, and such, occurring frequently throughout the world.

What is the cause of these tragedies? It is very simple. It is because of one's ego, self-centered mind, self-attachment, and self-satisfaction. Buddhism teaches us to reflect upon ourselves — our ignorance and blind passions. We must remind ourselves of the equality and preciousness of our lives through the Buddha-Dharma.

Sakyamuni Buddha was born in India as a prince, at a high level in the caste system. As he grew up and realized the unfairness of the quality of lives, he negated the classification of people by birth. His recorded statement was:

"We are not noble because of the family into which we were born. Rather, we become noble as a result of our actions."

Further, Shinran Shonin points out:

"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 all beings without any discrimination. It is like the sunshine everywhere. It is not that the sun does not shine on a mountain because the sun does not favor the mountain. Shinran Shonin teaches us that, *"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.

I lived in Hawaii for 16 years. I am very much concern about Big Island of Hawaii. The Kilauea volcano erupted in early May. It is affecting, not only the people who live on the Big Island, but also plants, nature, and everything. After weeks of movement, the lava had reached the ocean and created a toxic steam cloud which was formed by a chemical reaction when the lava touched ocean water. Reports are that the cause of this eruption was that new

magma mixed in with previous magma in the ground, creating a greater instability.

As I continue to follow the news about Mt. Kilauea, I think about my "magma"—my "poisons." As with Mt. Kilauea, the magma is actively working. I don't know if my mind will explode like Kilauea. My magma is made up of of greed, anger, jealousies, and ignorance, which will, forever, be within me until my life ends. If it explodes, it will affect everything around me like a toxic steam cloud. As such, if I am to live peacefully in this world, I will have to learn to keep my magma poisons stable.



Kilauea Volcano

USGS

We all suffer from ignorance and blind passions. Because of this, our forefathers built a temple so that we can listen to the teachings of the Buddha. The Buddha's teaching directs us in how to live in this fleeting world. The numerous dharma opportunities transmit the true and real mind of Amida Buddha to us and enable us to feel the same joy of the nembutsu our temple founders and ancestors truly enjoyed and appreciated. The Buddha-dharma is a message from our ancestors and forefathers who are the Buddha of Infinite Wisdom and Compassion represented by Amida Buddha. They still influence our lives to awaken to the true and real mind of Amida Buddha. Let us fully reveal our poisons and foolishness by the light of wisdom of the Buddha, the mirror of the dharma, and appreciate the Primal Vow of Amida Buddha which was established to save foolish beings who possess full of poisons.

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. The nembutsu alone is true and real.

(CWS, P.679)

ISSHIN FURAN

by Rev. Kazuaki Nakata



REV. KAZ

“Oh, Shariputra. While all sentient beings who are capable of receiving the Buddha-Dharma through listening to the teachings of Amida Tathagata and to hold the meanings of the teachings in their mind, even if they keep it for only one day, only two days, only three days, only four days, only five days, only six days, or only seven days, they should be mindful

to live in the teachings of Amida Tathagata making you to feel Tranquility.” (Amida-Kyo Sutra —the meanings of the teachings of Amida Tathagata)

Hello Nishi friends! While hot weather remains in the southland, how are you living your daily life? First of all, I would like to thank all of your generous support of our Nishi Obon festival. This year, I was able to start helping with the Obon food preparation from 7 am on both Saturday and Sunday with various organizations. I enjoyed chopping beef, barbecuing chashu, cutting vegetables for chirashi, and packing the chicken teriyaki containers. Through helping out with the Obon preparation, I realized how much that needed to be done. Booths needed to be constructed, food and container had to be purchased, cooking, food packing, money handling, parking lots had to be monitored, electric cable wiring, cleaning, and so much more.

There are several stories about “cleaning” in our Buddhist sutras, such as in Chinese Agama or Pali Theragāthā. Cleaning is known as one of important practices in the Buddhist tradition or schools. I would like to take this opportunity to explain *Isshin Furan* through a story about Cūḍa-Panthaka.

The Cleaning Story of Cūḍa-Panthaka

A long time ago, it was a time of Shakyamuni [Buddha.] There were many who visited Shakyamuni who resided in northeast India. After the visitation, some became practitioners and joined the sangha and others became supporters by providing food and a place for Shakyamuni and his sangha.

When Shakyamuni started his propagation, there were only were a handful people around him. Gradually people heard about Shakyamuni and many more began following him. Once his sangha grew to become a large group, each person was given an assignment to help maintain the group. there were sangha members who were in charge of cooking, cleaning, or making beds.

One day, two brothers visited Shakyamuni and requested

to join his sangha. The older brother was Maha-Panthaka and the younger brother was Cūḍa-Panthaka. Maha was a very smart and active man and Cūḍa was not smart nor active. Maha memorize and understood Shakyamuni’s dharma talk with ease. Cūḍa, however, was not able to memorize even one single passage and there were times where he couldn’t even remember Shakyamuni’s name.

The other disciples laughed at what Cūḍa would say and do. They made jokes about him. Cūḍa was slow and simple-minded and did not understand why he was being made fun of. Eventually, he realized what the others were doing and he felt shame and was brought to tears.

His brother, Maha, encouraged Cūḍa to continue to practice under Shakyamuni. Cūḍa attempted to study diligently, but he was not able to fulfill his assignments. Maha finally told his younger brother,

“You worked so hard on your practice and to memorize Shakyamuni’s passages, but it may be difficult for you to continue such practices. I need to tell you that you have to leave the sangha and return to secular life.”

After Maha returned to the sangha, Cūḍa began weeping again. Shakyamuni heard Cūḍa and he approached him and asked,

“Cūḍa, why are you crying?”

Cūḍa replied, *“Oh, Buddha, I am crying because I am not capable of receiving the Buddha-dharma,”* and he explained how he was not able to complete his tasks in the sangha.

Shakyamuni replied, *“Cūḍa, a wise person is one who believes he is foolish. A foolish person is a one who believes he is superior to others.”*

Shakyamuni’s explanation was difficult for Cūḍa to understand. Shakyamuni then presented Cūḍa with an *upaya* [a skillful means of teaching so that one hears what is needed for that moment so that one will persevere on the path and eventually realizing the truth].

Shakyamuni asked, *“Cūḍa-Pan-thaka, what brought you pleasure during your sangha life?”*

“Oh, Buddha, I like to clean. My enjoyment is when I am able to sweep and clean,” Cūḍa responded.

Upon hearing his response, Shakyamuni handed him a white cloth and said,

“Cūḍa, I give this to you so that you can clean the dirt and dust for the disciples and visitors. As you clean, I want

(continued on page 4)

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 16, 2018 at 10:00 AM**. The guest speaker for the service will be **Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara** of the Hongwanji Office and Supervising Minister of Berkeley Buddhist Temple for English Service and **Rev. Mutsumi Wondra** of the Orange County Buddhist Church 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 per-



Rev. Kiyonobu
Kuwahara



Rev. Mutsumi
Wondra

fections 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 observance 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.

In conjunction with Fall Higan Service, we are fortunate to have a **Fall Higan Seminar** entitled *"Life of Awakening: Perfect Peace (Chapter on Realization)"* on **Saturday, September 15, 2018**. 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.

(Nakata - continued from page 3)

you to recite, *'Remove the dirt and remove the dust.'*"

Cūḍa's eagerly responded with, *"Oh, Buddha! That is easy to do. I can clean and I can recite that short phrase."*

Cūḍa then started cleaning mindfully.

For weeks, the disciples laughed at Cūḍa because all he did was clean up after everyone and was not doing the practices that they were able to do. With time, the disciples realized his earnestness and devotion to his work. They gradually began to appreciate Cūḍa for his efforts.

One day, one of the disciples approached him and said, *"Thank you Cūḍa."* Cūḍa was surprised when he understood that he was not only doing all the cleaning for his own enjoyment but it was also benefitting others and making them happy.

Cūḍa-Panthaka realized that the act of cleaning was his

practice. He then understood Shakyamuni's true intention and he eventually became an Arhat, the highest state of Buddhahood.

Isshin furan is a concept that is sometimes misinterpreted in Chinese or Japanese as being crazy in doing something. Shakyamuni's intention of *isshein furan* is to be mindful thereby creating tranquility. It is your self-benefit (*Ji-ri*) and at the same time it may benefit others (*Ri-ta*). In the Amida-Kyo Sutra, living in the teachings of Amida Tathagata should be the main practice for followers and that practice leads to the state of calmness and tranquility.

Think about what is enjoyable for you. Having this form of pleasure makes for more meaningfulness and appreciation in your life. For myself, I took great pleasure in participating in all facets of the preparation for Obon. *Gassho*

LOS ANGELES BETSUIN BUDDHIST WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION CELEBRATES 100 YEARS

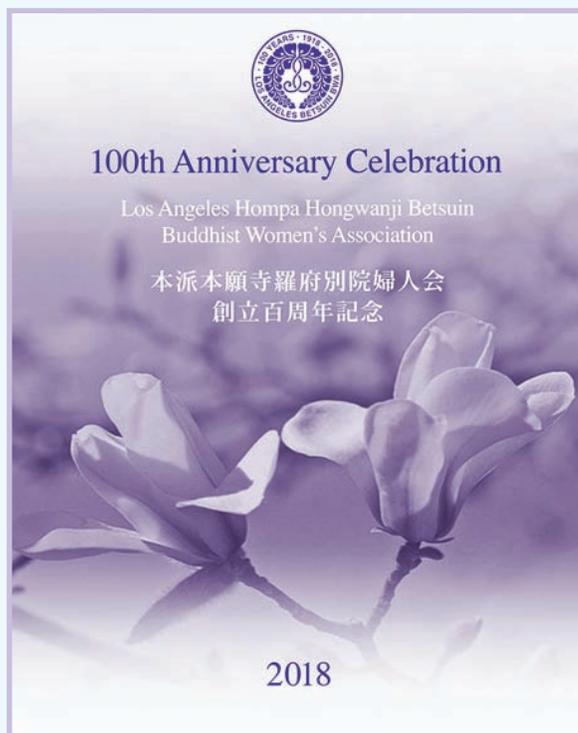
by Pam Tabata

The Los Angeles Betsuin Buddhist Women's Association (BWA - aka: *Fujinkai*) will be commemorating its 100th anniversary during the weekend of **October 20-21, 2018**.

Events taking place during the weekend will be a seminar which will be held on Saturday. The guest speakers will be Rev. Yoshiko Miyaji (Jpn) and Rev. Nobuko Miyoshi (Eng). The seminar will take place from 9:30 to 2:30 at a cost of \$10 which will include lunch.

On Sunday, there will be a Commemorative and Memorial Service from 10:00 am. Reverends Miyoshi and Miyaji will also be speaking at this service. Following the service will be an Appreciation Luncheon with entertainment that will be held in the kaikan. The lunch will be catered by Maison Akira who will provide a customized bento for the occasion.

Attendance is not limited to BWA members (current or past) to any of the events. Anyone interested in attending any of the events may do so by signing up for the seminar and/or the luncheon at the Betsuin office. The cost for the Appreciation Luncheon will be \$30 and for the seminar is \$10.



LADY ESHINNI AND KAKUSHINNI MEMORIAL SERVICE

by Rev. Koho Takata



Rev. Sala Sekiya 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 7, 2018**. The guest speaker for the service will be **Rev. Sala Sekiya** of the Gardena Buddhist Church.

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



Lady Eshinni



Lady Kakushinni

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 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
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BWA 2018 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT DANIEL YAGUCHI

Each year the Betsuin BWA awards a monetary 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's recipient is **Daniel Yaguchi**.

Daniel is the son of David and Cindy Yaguchi. He has two sister, Caryn and Corey, who was a past BWA scholarship awardee. His maternal grandparents are Florence and the late Walter Okano.

Daniel has been Jr YBA president and has been active in various capacities in the community. He was on the swim team in high school and currently plays taiko for LA Taiko Ichiza at the Betsuin.

The submitted essay is based on the following question:

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

The teachings of the Buddha and the lessons that we learn from Jodo Shinshu appear more often in our daily lives than our conscious minds are aware of. Jodo Shinshu makes itself present when we see homeless people on the street and feel compassion in our hearts. Jodo Shinshu teachings are present when we are fighting with our siblings and have a moment of anger or stupidity. Sometimes, Jodo Shinshu even shows itself on a trip to the grocery store.

The average trip to the grocery store for my family begins with my mom making a list of things that she needs in order to cook dinner for the upcoming week. My mom, my little sister, Caryn, and I get in the car and drive to Vons. My sister excitedly bounces in her seat being that the market is one of her favorite outings. As soon as we enter the store, Caryn grabs onto my hand, slightly overwhelmed by the amount of stimuli appearing as the sliding doors open. Caryn gallops through the aisles as my mom checks things off her list. Meanwhile, I slip the occasional box or Oreo cookies or can of Pringles into the cart.

As we continue our journey up and down the aisles, my sister waves at almost every stranger that walks past. Most people politely wave back. However, there are also those shoppers, on occasion, who cannot be bothered by my sister's wave. They walk past unfriendly and annoyed and I feel my grip tighten on Caryn's hand. I want to yell at them so badly and tell them about her disabilities just

to make them feel bad, but I don't. We keep walking and ignore their rude behavior.

Approaching the cash registers, we try to find the shortest line. As we wait, I tend to feel a bit anxious because Caryn has a difficult time waiting in crowded lines. Usually, she makes it through with ease and we go to the car with no incidents. There have been times, however, where she does not have the patience and acts out. The other people in line give her looks and make their side comments associating her behavior with bad parenting, but I just stand closer to her and tell her that everything will be okay.

These trips to the market may seem mundane, but are really packed with moments of Jodo Shinshu. I realize that I am constantly trying to be mindful of my surrounding in order to keep my sister safe and to be courteous of other shoppers. I find that my sister is the perfect example of kindness and compassion, waving to every person who passes without prejudice or discrimination. I see the greed in my unnecessary additions to my mom's cart that only make her grocery bill higher than expected. I reflect on the moments of anger that took over me when people were not understanding of my sister and her situation. I am grateful for the fact that we are able to go to the store and buy enough food to feed our family. Jodo Shinshu is everywhere, all around us in every moment of our lives.

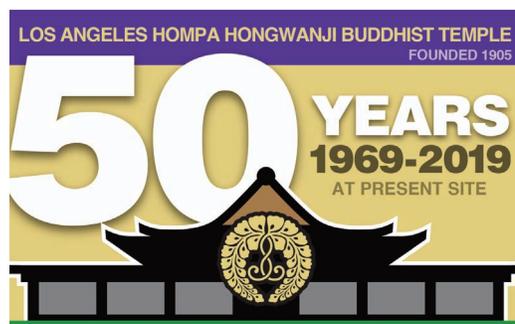


Daniel Yaguchi, 2018 BWA Scholarship Awardee, flanked by Rimban Briones and Pam Tabata, BWA president.

50TH ANNIVERSARY REPORT

by Ernest Hida

Our Obon festival was held during the first weekend of July during an unusual heat wave that affected the greater Los Angeles area. Despite this hardship of the brutal heat wave, our members persevered and put on a successful Obon festival. This type perseverance and dedication of our members, including our past members, carried the LA Betsuin through 113 years since its establishment including 49 years at its current location. With dedication to the temple, Our Obon festival was held during the first weekend of July during an unusual heat wave that affected the greater Los Angeles area. Despite this hardship of the brutal heat wave, our members persevered and put on a successful Obon festival. This type perseverance and dedication of our members, including our past members, carried the LA Betsuin through 113 years since its establishment including 49 years at its current location. With dedication to the temple, the milestone of 50 years at the current location will be reached and will be a proud moment for the temple as it reflects the long history of dedication of our members and the guidance of all of our ministers, past and present. Our Issei pioneers and the succeeding generations established the temple for us and, now, we must maintain the temple for our future generations.



celebration of The Nishi Betsuin's current location in 2019 to honor our Issei pioneers and past members and ministers for the legacy they left for us, and continue to maintain the temple for our future generations.

Gassho, Ernest T. Hida,



Upgraded air-conditioning

The Projects Committee continues with the renovation of the temple building. The installation of the air conditioning and the reflective film are ongoing.

The installation of the heightened railing of the hondo balcony has been completed.

The Fundraising Committee continues its dedicated efforts to meet the goal of \$2.5 million with \$1.4 million already raised. We continue to ask for your support to meet our goal to maintain and preserve the beautiful Nishi Betsuin temple to honor our Issei pioneers and the succeeding generations who established and built this temple for everyone to learn the Nembutsu teachings.

Our Affiliated Organizations and branch temples are continuing in their fundraising efforts for the 50th Anniversary.

The Nishi Dharma Center continues to provide excellent opportunities to learn and expand understanding of Buddhism with its interesting and meaningful classes. (See page 6 for the list of classes and how to register)

Let us put our hearts and minds together and work together for a wonderful and meaningful 50th Anniversary

(Eshinni Kakushinni - continued from page 5)

1921. Lady Eshinni is considered as the mother of Jodo Shinshu.

Lady Kakushinni established the foundation of Hongwanji to transmit the 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 Ho-gwanji. Let us gather at temple the opportunity given by Lady Eshinni and Lady Kakushinni for hearing the Buddha-Dharma, their spiritual foundation.

BETSUIN DHARMA SCHOOL 100 YEARS

by Koichi Sayano

The Los Angeles Betsuin Dharma School will observe its centennial during the Sept. 9, 2018 morning service, marking 100 years since the dharma school was first organized when the temple was at Yamato Hall. In commemoration of this milestone, the **Tomoshie** group from Japan (see article below) will be presenting a short shadowgraph story set around the birth of Shakyamuni Buddha as part of the service. The story will be followed by a dharma message by **Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara**, who is the director of the Nishi Hongwanji North America office and minister at the Berkeley Buddhist Temple.

All past as well as present Dharma School teachers are welcomed to attend.

OBON 2018 RAFFLE WINNERS

Grand Prize \$2,000	Kimiko Kochi
2nd Prize \$1,000	Justin Nishi
3rd Prize \$500	Frank & Hiroko Iwata
4th Prize \$250	Miyako Kudo
iPad	Thomas Mochizuki
donated by Star Auto Group	
LA Dodgers 4 tickets,	Cathy Tanaka
parking included	
donated by Irwin & Judy Wong	
Magic Castle 4 tickets	C. Morinaka
Donated by Academy of Magical Arts	
Maison Akira Brunch for 2	Johnny Yamada
donated by Maison Akira	
Marukai Gift Certificates	
\$50	Ken's Tire
\$30	Wally Shindo
\$30	Sanaye Kumagai
donated by Kubota Nikkei Mortuary	

TOMOSHIE – LIGHT AND PICTURES

Tomoshie is a dynamic group of young Jodo Shinshu priests from Japan. They will perform shadowgraph storytelling at the LA Betsuin on September 9th and 10th.

Three stories will be performed:

- **Birth Day:** a story about the birth of Siddhartha Gautama, the historical Buddha who lived in Nepal and India.
- **Bennen's Joy— A story of Shinran Shonin:** Get to know the Japanese Buddhist priest, Shinran through his dramatic encounter with the ferocious mountain ascetic Bennen.
- **The Journey out of the Four Gates:** Discover the courage and vision of Siddhartha Gautama, the founder of Buddhism, as he left a life of wealth and privilege to seek the path to awakening.

There will be four presentations at the Betsuin:

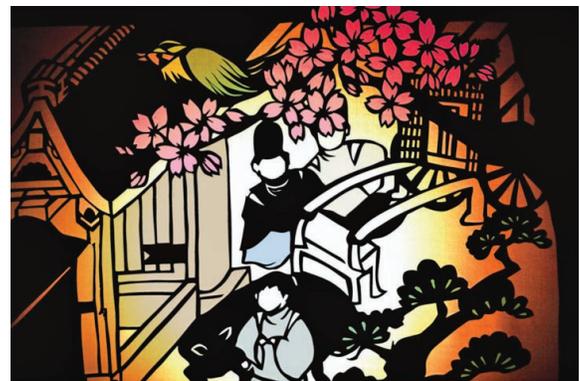
Sunday, September 9th
10:00 am - English
1:00 pm - Japanese 3:00 pm - English

Monday, September 10th
9:00 am - English

Subsequently, presentations will take place at the San Mateo Buddhist Temple and the Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple.



Young Jodo Shinshu priests who will perform the shadowgraph stories.



Shadowgraph stories



DID YOU KNOW?

by Eiko Masuyama



The Los Angeles Nishi Hongwanji Buddhist Womens' Association, formerly Nishi Bukkyo Fujinkai, will be celebrating its 100th anniversary, October 20-21, 2018

The Los Angeles Nishi Hongwanji Dharma School, formerly Nishi Sunday

School, will also be celebrating its 100th anniversary, September 9, 2018

Hompa Hongwanji Los Angeles Betsuin, 1905 – 1980, History of the Los Angeles Hompa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple, p. 29

An important factor in the growth of our Betsuin is the *Fujinkai* (Women's Association). Organized in 1918 with 13 members, their first activity was to listen to and study the Buddhist teachings. Since then, they have worked selflessly behind the scenes on every temple activity and project. Not only have they worked hard, but they have emptied their treasury time and again for temple projects. Tsune Tokunaga was the first elected president of the Fujinkai. The headquarters in Kyoto also honored her for her inspired work for the Los Angeles Betsuin. In 1970, the Fujinkai initiated a program of home service gatherings. Currently three services a month were held in members' homes in just the Los Angeles area.

In 1951, the Nisei women formed their own group, the Junior Matrons, which eventually changed its name to Nishi Matrons. Their work and purposes were similar to the Fujinkai. In time, many ladies were members of both...

* * * * *

Strong emphasis is placed on the Sunday school department. The Issei early recognized the importance of teaching their children the Buddhist way of life. Sunday schools were the first consideration in many of the Japanese communities requests for spiritual guidance. Many branches of the Betsuin were started with the organization of Sunday schools, followed by the establishment of regular services for adults.

Soon after the merger in 1917, weekly Sunday school sessions were started in Yamato Hall. It was admittedly a rather haphazard start. Younger children were taught by the older children. During one short period of time, *gathas* were sung to the accompaniment of a violinist! The major emphasis was on teaching moral values, prized by the Issei parents. Today, every effort is made to conform to the BCA recommended curriculum for each age group.

In the depth of the depression years in the middle 1930s,

the Betsuin Sunday school system included 11 Sunday schools with 80 teachers and 1,120 students. They were located at the Betsuin, Hollywood, Canoga Park, San Fernando, South Pasadena, Compton, Orange, Bangle [Long Beach], Senshin, Sawtelle [WLA], and San Gabriel. Today there are six Sunday schools and 71 students and 98 teachers.

(continuing, "The Los Angeles Betsuin Sunday School," Hompa Hongwanji Los Angeles Betsuin 1905 – 1980, p. 77)

There was no set curriculum at this time, so the emphases was on the sermon for the older students and singing and dancing to the gathas and Japanese folk songs for the younger children. The teachers attended their own study classes once a month and annual conferences at the local level as well as the state level.

Toshiko Kusumoto remembers the annual Oseibo Taikai programs as elaborate and colorful performances presented by all classes and temple affiliated organizations. Picnics, outdoor services, and sports activities were also held.



Obon Odori teachers, 2006: Standing: Mary Iwamoto, Ray Fukumoto, Aki Hamanaka, Betty Hatakeyama, Tootsie Yoshimura, Mitsuyo Tanaka, Lauren Shinohara, Eiko Masuyama, Michi Matsunami, Kayo Uno; Kneeling: Elaine Fukumoto, Lina Okita Shimizu, Leanne Saita Silverthorne, Kelly Fukumoto Nguyen

Sports activities were started by Min Ota in the mid-fifties. Boys like Norman Ozaki, Bob Itatani, Howard Miyamoto, Bruce Shinohara, Gerry Nagamoto, Stanley Shirai, Glen Kishi, Wesley Ozaki, Mike Miyamoto and many others participated. Mas Okino recalls the growing enrollment in the Sunday school during this period. Perhaps one reason for this growth was the development of successful athletic programs. Many boys and girls participated in seasonal

(continued on page 10)

(Did You Know? - continued from page 9)

sports with the support and enthusiasm of other athletes, their parents, coaches and friends.

Since our temple was the center of Nisei social activities immediately after the war, Tootsie Yoshimura remembers many teachers' activities. Well-attended beach parties, picnics, potluck dinners, showers, and conferences remain in Toshiko Kusumoto's memory from this period.



2017 BCA SD Buddhist Conference, hosted by San Fernando Valley Buddhist Temple: Seated: Elaine Fukumoto, Jean Kondo, Nobuko Sayano, Joy Tomita, Setsuko Nakahara, Elsie Inouye, Gail Matsuura; Standing: Pam Tabata, Amy Miyakawa, Moruko Okita, Jean Kawakami

The teaching staff was enlarged during the sixties, and public school teachers and education majors were among those joining the staff. The influence and experience of these professional educators changed the direction of classroom teaching, observes Mas Okino.

A graduated and uniform curriculum was developed for each grade by the headquarters of the BCA. The quality of religious education improved which meant teachers had to spend more time preparing their lessons.

The present [1980] Sunday school enrollment is approximately 150 students ranging from nursery-age children to college age youth. The teaching staff consists of 30 teachers, ranging from high school student aides to a 30-year teaching veteran. Most teachers use the BCA teaching guides. The Sunday school still participates in yearly picnics, annual Oseibo Taikai programs and athletic activities.

* * * * *

Special thanks for donations made to our Library and Archives: From Kyoto, Japan, book on Ascension activities of Monshu Kojun Ohtani was received. – members are welcome to peruse book in the Nishi Library, especially those who attended the activities; photograph of Sonyu Ohtani (1925?), who wrote the calligraphy that is hanging

TAI CHI / QIGONG KEIRO GRANT

by Setsuko Nakahara



Grand master Jason Tsou leading the Tai Chi/Qigong class in the Betsuin kaikan. In the back l-r: Roy Nakahara, Setsuko Nakahara, and Kayo Uno.

The Tai Chi / Qigong class for adults and seniors is offered every Friday from 10 - 11 am at the Betsuin kaikan. The class is taught by Grand Master Jason Tsou.

The purpose of the Tai Chi / Qigong class is to improve and maintain physical and mental health. Topics covered include techniques and exercises that focus on balance, movement, flexibility, strength, endurance, proper breathing, using imagery, promoting mind-body awareness, positive thinking, and pain reduction.

The class is supported by a Keiro grant, aimed at improving the quality of life for older adults and caregivers in the Southern California Japanese-American and Japanese community. The reduced fee for the class is \$5 per person per class. All adults are welcomed to participate at any time.



above our temple altar in the hondo, and is the uncle of former Monshu Kosho Ohtani, donated by the Shinmoto Family (Julie Uyemura, Lynn Devirian, Mark Shinmoto); book, paperback/dvd set, handbooks, pamphlets in English and Japanese donated by Betsy Mieko Tango, in memory of Hiroshi Tango

OBON 2018 PHOTOS



The extreme heat of the day did not keep the dancers away from the eventful evening. The dancers wait for the final dance of the evening while the chochin overhead glow like giant fireflies.



Rimban Briones (center), Rev Nakata (left), and Rev. Takata conduct a brief service from the yagura before the dancing begins.



Rimban Briones and Marley Uyemura

I ❤️ BON ODORI



This is how "the guys" do bon odori.



"...cho chon ga chon..."



Bon daiko kids led by Yuki Inoue (far left) and Denise Okimoto (2nd from right)



The ever-popular Dough-Ball game.



Alyssa Koba checks BINGO numbers with Jon Kawaguchi



Boy Scout parents busy preparing for the beef teriyaki plates.



Bon odori teachers: I-r: Karlee Itomura, Eiko Masuyama, Mildred Morales, Mitsuyo Tanaka, Joy Tomita, Marley Uyemura, Kelly Nguyen, Elaine Fukumoto, Michi Matsunami, Lina Shimizu, and Kayo Uno.

MORE OBON 2018 PHOTOS



The Nishi Center children showing their "odori stuff" on stage and entertaining the audience with their cuteness.



Roseanne Takahashi's thermometer shows that it's a scorching 100 degrees at 5:00 pm.



(l-r) Carol Hida, Nobuko Sayano, & Joy Tomita spend a light-hearted moment together.



Rimban William Briones (left) and Rev. George Matsubayashi share a quiet moment before the Obon service at Evergreen Cemetery.



Ho'Aloha Polynesian dancers. Karlee Itomura is second from the right.



Tea Ceremony by JoAnn Hirose



The Kokoro Band plays some danceable songs on stage while one of their singers goes down to the floor to sing and dance with a young admirer.



Tsuruko Iwohara looks on while Howard Takata sharpens dozens of knives for the Obon weekend



Putting away parts of the yagura and other obon equipment/structures in the storage garage.



This is how the yagura is taken down.

BETSUIN PHOTOS



Dharma school attendance awardees



Rimban Briones presents BCA Federation Dharma School Teachers Service Awards to (l-r) Ilene Otani (50 years), Denise Otani (10 years), and Elaine Fukumoto (25 years).



Dharma school high school graduates. l-r: William Mori, Bryce Middo, Ryan Ishii, & Daniel Yaguchi. Certificates were presented by Rimban Briones

FAMILY FUN DAY



Preschool run...



Throw-and-stick cereal onto head



Food...



Toss a ball of paper into the wastebasket



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 2018

- 18 Satoru Takesaka
- 23 Clyde Kazuo Nakamura
- 23 Hideko Ochi
- 24 Anera* Shiga
- 26 Mamoru Iwaki

- 15 Katherine Yoshie Torigoe
- 18 Shoji Tanaka
- 21 Yoneo Maruyama
- 25 Mamoru Kotake

JULY 2018

JUNE 2018

- 1 Miles Nakamura
- 5 Tsutomu Maehara
- 8 Hiroshi Furukawa

- 4 Kazunobu Masada
- 5 Fusako Kanai
- 6 Elaine Honda
- 10 Fujiko Izumi

sonomama
"just as you are"

Betsuin Jiho

Editor-in-Chief: Rimban William Briones
English Editor: Elaine Fukumoto
Photos: Koichi Sayano and Glen Tao

(Rimban - continued from page 1)

tion on the dharma. He was so impressed that he renounced his throne and became a monk named Dharmakara. After praising the Buddha with a hymn, (*San Butsu-ge*) he expressed his resolution to become a Buddha. After contemplating for five kalpas, Dharmakara formulated his 48 vows. After proclaiming his vows, he, again, praised with a hymn (*Juseige*). In order to fulfill his vows, he performed various meritorious practices for many of kalpas, but finally became a Buddha, the Amida Buddha.

However, many of us find it difficult to accept this cosmological story that took place several eons ago. For myself, my understanding of the Dharmakara is that he is a mythical hero. His story represents the deepest aspirations of the human heart that some day all of us will be free of suffering. Amida is a symbol of reality and points to our interdependence with all things and the need to share with others.

For sure, myths are entertaining stories. But myths are, or were, much more than that. For in their time, a myth can serve many important functions for the society and culture that believe in them. We can see the myths as symbolic stories about the relationship between humans and the natural world, between humans and other humans, or between individual humans and the phenomena.

Myths carry with them an essential element of authority. The stories they tell are unproven, but they were also unquestioned by the culture that gave rise to them.

Myths address truths ranging from the creation of universe, the earth and human beings to some jolly fat man in a red suit giving presents to good boys and girls, to a red demon with horns and a pointy tail and pitchfork. Whether accepted literally or examined for their "deeper" meaning, these myths offered insight to all people, ancient or modern. Stories are the same since the beginning of time. Hopefully, we have developed spiritually and have different understandings as we mature.

According to our founder Shinran Shonin, Shakyamuni Buddha appeared in the world to tell us about Amida Buddha. So it is within our tradition of Jodo Shinshu, the main object of reverence is Amida Buddha.

The content or the essence of Shakyamuni's Enlightenment is none other than Infinite, Inconceivable, Immeasurable Light and Life. These are the very words that describe the essence of Amida Buddha. Then Amida Buddha, being Wisdom and Compassion is a Buddha who manifests the meaning of ultimate enlightenment

So you see, Amida is the embodiment of all the realities that we consider basic Buddhist tenets; impermanence, interdependence, non-duality these are very dynamic in

trying to awaken us to the reality of human life.

There is a term that we use in Jodo Shinshu that conveys this skillful means, *hoben hosshin*, It's the expediency of Amida Buddha to awaken us from our ignorance and delusions. It's a way of guiding us to the truth. It's only a symbol to help us try to comprehend the abstract. It is a reminder that Amida is not a divine being nor a god, but only a symbol of compassion and wisdom. Otherwise, we may start to worship Amida rather than being liberated by Amida.

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

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

Namoamidabutsu

SAVE THE DATE!

**AN EVENING OF
BINGO & DINNER**

hosted by Nishi ABA

Saturday, November 10, 2018

Betsuin Kaikan

Cost: \$20

MENU

chicken teriyaki, chow mein, rice,
macaroni salad, and green salad

**Presale only
Forms will be available in temple office**

**Benefitting
Nishi Hongwanji 50th Anniversary**



LA HOMPA HONGWANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE

NISHI DHARMA CENTER



WINTER 2018 (JANUARY - MARCH) COURSES

The Dharma Center of the Los Angeles Hampa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple will be offering the following dharma opportunities to hear and learn about general Buddhism and Jodo Shinshu Buddhism. It will be introductory for those who are new to the Buddhist concepts and continuing education for those already learning the truth of the dharma to live each moment in the teachings. Let us all enrich our lives by listening to the teachings.

Reason to Live the Shin Buddhist Way

Monday, 6:30-8:00 PM

Rev. Koho Takata

October 8, 15, 22, November 5, 12 (5 week class: \$50)

There are many religions and Buddhist Schools in this world. What is a reason to live the Shin Buddhist way? This class will focus on how Shin Buddhist Teaching applies to our daily lives and how the teaching changes and enriches our lives by reading the words of Rennyo Shonin, the eighth Monshu, who teaches us how to live a life of Shinjin.

The Basic Teaching of Buddhism

Tuesday, 7:00-8:30 PM

Rev. Ryuta Furumoto

September 18, 25, October 2, 16, 23 (5 week class: \$50)

This class is an opportunity for those who wish to learn the basic teachings of Buddhism. The class will cover the life of Shakyamuni Buddha, the history of Buddhism, the Eightfold Noble Path, Six Paramitas, etc. The focus will also be on the connection between Jodo Shinshu teaching and basic Buddhism teaching.. The class is conducted in a relaxed and fun atmosphere.

Contemporary Issues and Jodo Shinshu Perspective (Discussion)

Wednesday, 7:00-8:30 PM

Rimban William Briones

September 5, 12, 19, 26, October 3 (5 week class: \$50)

Such topics as same sex marriage, immigration, global warming were not an issue during Shinran's life. There was, however, war, sexism, and poverty during his time. What is our understanding of these contemporary issues living a life of nembutsu? These five lectures will discuss current events and issues that affect our way of life and how Jodo Shinshu Buddhism influences our view point.

Turning, Once Again, to Shinran Shonin and His Great Myokonin Disciples

Saturday, 10:00-11:30AM

Rev. Tetsuo Unno

September 29, October 13, 27, November 3, 10 (5 week class: \$50)

Shakyamuni Buddha and Shinran Shonin's dharma ultimately ends in a "Place" or "State of Being" that is free of all dukkha (Imperfection, Dissatisfaction, Suffering, Pain, etc.) That same dharma, however, at the outset begins with words. These lectures, therefore, begin with words. That is, the words of our "Good Friend and Teacher" (Zenjishiki) Shinran Shonin and his great myokonin disciples: Shomatsu, Genza, Kichibe and their dharmic friends. Questions, answers and discussions are encouraged and welcomed.

The course tuition is collected and no refund on missed classes. Please mail completed registration form with a check for the total payment (payable to: LAHHBT) or bring it to temple.

For more information: Phone: (213) 680-9130/

Email: nishidharmacenter@gmail.com

SOUTHERN DISTRICT
BWA & Dharma School Teachers' League Conference



“THE SOCIAL FACE OF BUDDHISM”

Saturday, October 6, 2018
@ LA Nishi Betsuin

Register at the temple office
\$65 early/\$85 late

hosted by Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple
assisted by West Los Angeles Buddhist Temple

HOLLYWOOD BUDDHIST CHURCH FUNDRAISER
Proud Supporter of the Nishi 50th



BREW HA HA
3.0

A Paired Beer and Food Tasting Experience
+ Silent Auction and Raffle

Saturday, September 29, 2018

Happy Hour: 5:00 pm Event: 6:00 pm - 8:30 pm
Place: Nishi Hongwanji Buddhist Temple Kaikan
Registration: \$50 per person for drinks/food (non-alcoholic options)
\$500 per table of 10 (list names of guests)
\$1,000 per Corporate Table (list names of VIP guests)

Limited Seating

For information, email Rev. Koho Takata:
kohotakata@gmail.com

TECHNOBUDDHA POP-UP



Like.



Heart.



Action!

Saturday
September 22
2:30-5:30 pm
@ LA Nishi Betsuin
followed by Social
Hour in Little Tokyo

Registration \$20 on-
line through 9/16
\$25 after 9/16 and at
door

 /technobuddha.conference

Keynote Speaker
Rev. Matt Hamasaki

We share ourselves and our feelings through social media, but are we as quick to take action in real life? How do we respond to the world beyond our phones? Whether you want to improve your personal well-being or contribute to your community, together we'll explore Buddhist perspectives on putting likes and hearts into action.

TechnoBuddha is a network for young professionals (ages 21-39) to connect with Jodo Shinshu Buddhism and each other.

BETSUIN
VEHICLE DONATION



HAROLD'S CAR DONATION SERVICE

Donate any vehicle:
car, truck, motorcycle, or boat

The vehicle need not be operational.

Funds received will go to the Betsuin general fund and donors can get full amount credit towards income tax.

Contact the Betsuin office: 213-680-9130

SEPTEMBER 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 Regular Service 10:00 am	3 Labor Day Temple Closed	4	5 <u>Contemporary Issues & Jodo Shinshu Perspective</u> (discussion) Rimban William Briones 7 - 8:30 pm	6	7	8
9 Dharma School 100 Year Commemoration & Tomoshie Presentation 10:00 am Tomoshie Presentation 1:00 pm Jpn 3:00 pm Eng Eitaikyo Shotsuki Hoyo 1:00 pm	10	11	12 <u>Contemporary Issues & Jodo Shinshu Perspective</u> (discussion) Rimban William Briones 7 - 8:30 pm	13 Board Meeting 7:30 pm	14	15 Ohigan Seminar 9 am - 3 pm Speakers: Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara Rev. Mutsumi Wondra
16 Ohigan Service 10:00 am Speakers: Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara Rev. Mutsumi Wondra	17 Study Class Rev Takata 6:30-7:30 pm Annon Cafe 7:30-8:30 pm	18 <u>The Basic Teaching of Buddhism</u> Rev Ryuta Furumoto 7 - 8:30 pm	19 <u>Contemporary Issues & Jodo Shinshu Perspective</u> (discussion) Rimban William Briones 7 - 8:30 pm	20	21	22 TechnoBuddha Pop-Up Speaker: Rev. Matt Hamasaki Young Professionals ages 21-39
23 Regular Service 10:00 am	24	25 <u>The Basic Teaching of Buddhism</u> Rev Ryuta Furumoto 7 - 8:30 pm	26 <u>Contemporary Issues & Jodo Shinshu Perspective</u> (discussion) Rimban William Briones 7 - 8:30 pm	27	28	29 <u>Turning to Shinran ...Myokonin Disciples</u> Rev. Tetsuo Unno 10 - 1130 am
30 Regular Service 10:00 am						 Hollywood BT "Brew Ha Ha" Fundraiser

OCTOBER 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
		<u>The Basic Teaching of Buddhism</u> Rev Ryuta Furumoto 7 - 8:30 pm	<u>Contemporary Issues & Jodo Shinshu Perspective</u> (discussion) Rimban William Briones 7 - 8:30 pm			So Dist Seminar "The Social Face of Buddhism" @ LA Betsuin hosted by Venice & WLA
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
BWA Eshin-ni & Kakushin-ni Memorial Service 10 am Speaker: Rev. Sala Sekiya	Study Class Rev Takata 6:30-7:30 pm Annon Cafe 7:30-8:30 pm			Board Meeting 7:30 pm		<u>Turning to Shinran</u> <u>...Myokonin Disciples</u> Rev. Tetsuo Unno 10 - 1130 am
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	Study Class Rev Takata 6:30-7:30 pm Annon Cafe 7:30-8:30 pm	Go-Meinichi-ko 1:30 pm <u>The Basic Teaching of Buddhism</u> Rev Ryuta Furumoto 7 - 8:30 pm				BWA Centennial Seminar Speakers: Rev Nobuko Miyoshi (E) Rev. Yoshiko Miyaji (J)
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
BWA Centennial Commemorative & Memorial Service 10 am BWA Centennial Appreciation Luncheon	Study Class Rev Takata 6:30-7:30 pm Annon Cafe 7:30-8:30 pm	<u>The Basic Teaching of Buddhism</u> Rev Ryuta Furumoto 7 - 8:30 pm				<u>Turning to Shinran</u> <u>...Myokonin Disciples</u> Rev. Tetsuo Unno 10 - 1130 am
28	29	30	31			