

LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

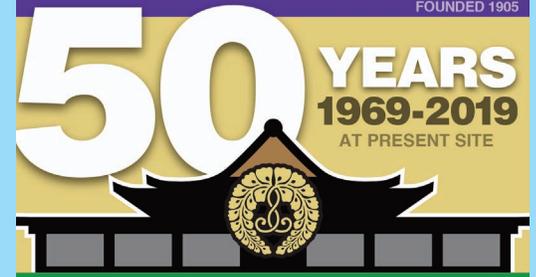
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September-October 2019

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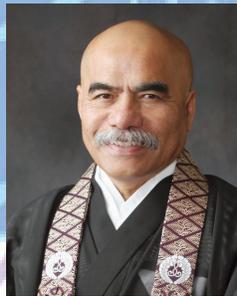
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LOS ANGELES HOMPA HONGWANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE
FOUNDED 1905



RIMBAN'S MESSAGE

50 YEARS AT THE PRESENT SITE



**RIMBAN
WILLIAM BRIONES**

"...(L)iving in the United States, there is no possibility of basking in the Compassionate Life of the Buddha. Not only are we unable to hear about the Buddhadharmā in general, we are cut off from enlightenment through the Teachings of Jodo Shinshu. Thus we are unable to understand and appreciate the heart and mind of Shinran Shonin. How we lament at such a state of affairs. Who would not lament?

In the eight directions are non-Buddhist forces surrounding the Japanese Buddhist, and we cannot be at ease. It is as if we were sitting on the point of a pin; no matter how we move, we will be pricked. Our burning desire to hear the Teachings is about to explode from every pore in our body..."

The preceding is an excerpt from a petition written in 1898, by a group of 83 members of the newly formed Jodo Shinshu organization, Young Men's Buddhist Association (YMBA) that gathered at a meeting in San Francisco. The petition was sent to the Homba Hongwanji in Kyoto requesting that a priest be sent and that permission be granted to establish a temple in San Francisco. Reading this eloquent and emotional appeal, one cannot help but feel their depth of

devotion and commitment they had towards the Buddha dharma.

"Our burning desire to hear the Teachings is about to explode from every pore in our body..." Seven years later, those inspirational words must have reverberated within the ever growing Japanese community in Los Angeles. Subsequently in 1905 the Jodo Shinshu Community came together to build the Southern California Buddhist Church in Los Angeles.

Our temple was built by the Issei pioneers as a center for our religious studies and as a guiding force for our religious consciousness. One hundred fourteen years have since past, and during those years our members have continued to support and maintain our temple.

This September marks our 50th year at the present location at 1st and Vignes. Therefore, as we commemorate the completion of the Restoration of the Naijin and many much needed repairs throughout the temple, as part of the Betsuin's 50th Anniversary project, the members of the Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple, rededicate ourselves to the aspirations and commitment that our parents, grandparents, great grandparents pursued in maintaining our facilities and preserving the teachings of Shinran Shonin.

We gratefully acknowledge those members and

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REFLECTION AND GRATITUDE

by Rev. Koho Takata



REV. KOHO TAKATA

On this auspicious and wonderful occasion of the Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple 50th Anniversary of the Current Temple Site, I wish to extend my sincere appreciation and gratitude to Shinran Shonin, the past ministers, and the members, and all of you.

Shinran Shonin lived in the Kamakura era. In a time of disunity and violence, Shinran Shonin sought a way for all beings to attain enlightenment equally. If Shinran Shonin had not clarified the teaching of the Primal Vow, our temple would not be in existence today. As I reflect upon the sufferings and hardships that Shinran Shonin certainly experienced and encountered, in order to clarify the True Teaching during his lifetime, I am truly aware of the significance of observing our anniversary which was made possible by our founders, who carried the spirit of the Nembutsu Teaching and deeply rooted their minds and hearts in the Buddha-ground of the Primal Vow.

The propagation of Jodo Shinshu in Los Angeles began on October 1, 1905. Since then, the ministers, their spouses, and the devoted members and supporters have made countless unselfish contributions and efforts to unify all followers of Nembutsu Teaching in Southern California and to promote the perpetuation and better understanding

of our teachings here in Los Angeles.

During the past 114 years, our forefathers left us not only the temple and kaikan building but also the Nembutsu Teachings. It is now our turn to develop leadership and take responsibility for the future of our temple. From grandparents to parents and parents to children, there are many things to be passed on. It is our turn to pass this rich heritage onto the next generation, especially the Nembutsu Teaching.

I believe reflection is very important for us to prepare ourselves to appreciate our anniversary. At this time, we praise the virtues of our founder Shinran Shonin, express our sincere appreciation for having encountered his teachings, and reconfirm our true entrusting minds to listen and live his teachings each day. Let us all be aware of the significance of our anniversary and appreciate all conditions and situations that brought us here today to encounter the Buddha-Dharma.

How joyous I am, my heart and mind being rooted in the Buddha-ground of the universal Vow, and my thoughts and feelings flowing within the dharma-ocean, which is beyond comprehension! I am deeply aware of the Tathagata's immense compassion, and I sincerely revere the benevolent care behind the masters' teaching activity. My joy grows ever fuller, my gratitude and indebtedness ever more compelling. (CWS P.291)

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 15, 2019 at 10:00 AM**. The guest speaker for the service will be **Rev. Harry Bridge** of the Oakland Buddhist Temple for English Service and **Rev. Doei Fujii** of the South Alameda Bud-



Rev. Harry Bridge



Rev. Doei Fujii

dhist 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
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ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

by Rev. Kazuaki Nakata



REV. KAZ

It was a great turnout at this year's Nishi Obon. During the previous two years, we encountered severe heat during the Obon weekend and many chose to participate our Obon.

Did you have a chance to come and see this year's Obon? Many came to Nishi and enjoyed food, drink, games, performances, shopping, and

dancing.

As I mentioned in the last issue of our Jiho newsletter, I offered a new food item — *takoyaki*, — octopus balls, as a part of Nishi Girl Scout in the Kaikan. For the first day of the Obon, I prepared two takoyaki grills and waited for the start of Obon. By 2 pm, people started forming the line in the kaikan. By 3 pm, there was a 30 minutes wait for takoyaki! I thought that takoyaki could be popular, but I did not expect to have that long of a wait-time. For the second day of Obon, I added an additional takoyaki grill. It helped to reduce the waiting time from 30 minutes to 10 minutes at peak time. We had not had a chance to practice takoyaki grilling before the Obon weekend. I trained Scout parents how to make takoyaki while I cooking and selling the takoyaki. These parents were quick to learn and skillful and in 30 minutes, they became masters of the takoyaki grill. I was grateful for the help of these new “masters of the grill.” We ran out of octopus before the end of Obon on Sunday. It was a great success. Nishi Girl Scouts decided to contribute their profits to the temple's 50th anniversary. I am happy to have contributed my help to the celebration.

After four years of my Buddhist studies at a master's and doctorate level, I earned the status, PhD candidate last semester and now I am working on my doctorate dissertation project. I traveled to Nepal and Japan for my research. I am hoping to finish my project in a year or so. Before starting my Buddhist studies at the master's level, I had earned my first master's degree in business administration in 2014. My graduation project was a comparative research between Apple and Samsung. Most of you use smartphone. I know some who still use the flip phone. Apple sells iPhone and Samsung sells Galaxy as a smartphone product. After a few years, these two products are still best-selling models in the smartphone market. One of my research topics was “*organizational/corporate culture*”. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, it is defined as the types of attitudes and agreed ways of working shared by the employees of a company or organization. Each organ-

ization has its unique customs and thoughts. In most cases, each branch of an organization has its unique organizational culture. Have you visited other temples such as Pasadena Buddhist Temple, Orange County Buddhist Church, or San Fernando Buddhist Temple? Although they are all Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temples, the characteristics of their sangha and the atmosphere of their temples are quite different. These differences are usually formed by various factors, such as historical background, geographical location, temple structure, age pyramid of sangha members, former and current resident ministers, temple board members, and so on. The organizational culture is stabilized /fixed over the years. The stabilization often provides positive im-pact to people who enjoy the current organizational culture. On the other hand, it keeps preventing prospective Buddhists to visit/stay with the temple activities. In the study of Business Administration, it is known that one of the most difficult challenges is to change the organizational culture. The change often

makes people who enjoy the current organizational culture to feel a negative reaction. It is natural to feel that when something is enjoyed, why does there need to be change? Opposition may occur between the pros and cons. It is risky to change the culture. On the other hand, it is easy to follow the current organizational culture and to continue same kinds of activities and events over and over. It is a low risk choice but does not become a

venue for prospective supporters. Unfortunately, a concept of “*follow the tradition*” does not sustain a Buddhist organization. History has a clear answer for this. Shinran Shonin started Jodo Shinshu in 13th century, and it was a trend teaching only for a century. By the time of Rennyō Shonin, in 15th century, Jodo Shinshu was in a precarious position. His life hung by a thread of poverty. After he became *monshu*, a resident minister of Hongwanji, he started many unique activities and changed tradition. His leadership changed its organizational culture and he saved Hongwanji from going out of existence.

When I moved to Nishi in 2012, I was a parent of two daughters, Kanon, 4 years old and Michilu, who was a year old. Several Nishi parents approached me and asked me to encourage kids to the temple. Kids are honest. If they think something is not interesting or fun, they do not want to be there. As such, I planned “fun events” and hosted them with Dharma School Parents, Sangha Teens, Jr. YBA, and Scouts. Last June, 28 people from our Nishi youth and their parents visited Kyoto Hongwanji in

(continued on page 8)

**As of
August 1st, Rev.
Nakata has been
transferred to the
Fresno Betsuin**

(see page 7 for
testimonials)

50TH ANNIVERSARY MESSAGE

by Ernest Hida

On the historical occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Current Temple Site, we invite all of you to join the commemoration of this special time in the history of the Los Angeles Betsuin. Your continuous support of and active involvement in the temple made it possible to reach this historic milestone. All of you and the previous generation of members along with all the ministers have kept the temple active with programs for the youths and adults and created opportunities to learn the nembutsu.

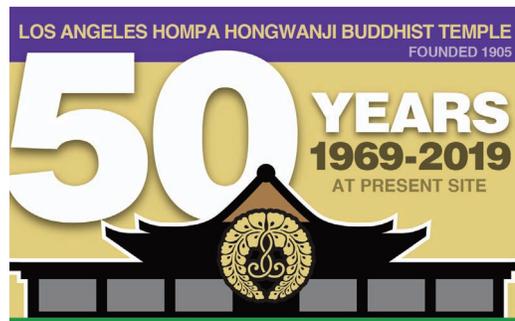
In addition, we are honored to have the **25th Monshu, Kojun Ohtani**, to participate in our commemoration programs. The Gomonshu will be participating in the following 50th Anniversary celebration programs:

09/07 Saturday

- Opening Ceremony of the Temple's Dharma Center and giving his Special Message in the afternoon
- Commemoration Banquet at Quiet Cannon Restaurant in the evening

09/08 Sunday

- Commemoration Group Photo
- Chigo Procession
- Officiating the 50th Anniversary Commemoration Service in the morning
- Officiating the Affirmation Ceremony in the afternoon.



It is indeed a great honor for the temple and its members for the Gomonshu to be with all of you for this historical celebration. This is indeed a rare and excellent opportunity to see the Gomonshu, hear the dharma message from him, and to receive Affirmation from him.

The fundraising campaign is ongoing and we ask for your continued support. We also thank all of you for your past support.

The General Committee members have worked hard to plan and arrange this historical celebration for all of you.

We Invite and welcome all of our members to be a part of this historic celebration with the Gomonshu.

Gassho, Ernest T. Hida,
50th Anniversary Chairman

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 6, 2019**. The guest speaker for the service will be **Rev. Yugo Fujita** of the Salinas Buddhist Temple.

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



Lady Eshinni



Lady Kakushinni

of its foundation were two women: Lady Eshinni (Shinran Shonin's wife) and Lady Kakushinni (Shinran Shonin's daughter).

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DID YOU KNOW?

by Eiko Masuyama



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY AT THE CURRENT SITE

Do you remember walking from the old temple at 119 North Central Avenue, at the corner of First Street and Central Avenue, one warm November day in 1969, to the sparkling new temple, about half a

mile east, at the base of the East First Street bridge? Many of us do, but was it 50 years ago! We followed the *Chigo* procession of children and the ministers on that auspicious day, not thinking that we would be celebrating 50 years in 2019! Yet, here we are!



Walk from former Nishi temple (in background), led by Rimban Ryuei Masuoka, with (in background) Rev. Sensho Hida and Rev. George Matsubayashi, November 1969
(photo Yutaka Shinohara)

In commemoration of the 50th Anniversary at the current site at the corner of First Street and Vignes Avenue, three projects were selected: 1) altar refurbishment, 2) establishment of Nishi Dharma Center, and 3) a number of maintenance projects. Thanks to all of you, these projects were initiated and are ongoing, with many of them completed.

Our temple is open seven days a week, the office manned from 9 am to 9 pm, with business hours, Monday through Friday, from 9 am to 5 pm, and usually with at least one minister available, on duty, from 9 am to 9 pm so it is bound to require much maintenance, especially with their air conditioning units and parking lot surfacing. With laws added and changing for safety requirements, repairs of railing and roofing, replacement of lighting, floors and ceiling tiles, and installation of balcony safety barriers were among the other maintenance works.

Nishi Dharma Center (by Rev. Koho Takata)

Courses took place in the Spring, Fall, and Winter, from 2015 to the present:

- **Rev. Koho Takata:** *“Understanding Shinran Shonin,” “Origin and Establishment of Jodo Shinshu Buddhist – Historical Background,” “Jodo Shinshu in Daily Life,” “Shoshin Nembutsu-ge – Hymn of True Shinjin and the Nembutsu,” “Reason to Live the Shin Buddhist Way”*
- **Rev. Ryuta Furumoto:** *“Jodo Shinshu Buddhism Guide – To Be a Good Listener,” “Tannisho – A Record in Lament of Divergences,” “Introduction to the Three Pure Land Sutras,” “Shinran Shonin’s Hymns,” “The Basic Teaching of Buddhism,” “The Basic Teaching of Jodo Shinshu”*
- **Rev. William Briones:** *“Life of Sakyamuni Buddha,” “Contemporary Issues and Jodo Shinshu Perspective”*
- **Rev. Masao Kodani:** *“Historical Perspectives of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism in the JA Communities and Beyond,” “Buddhist and Jodo Shinshu Vocabulary from the Japanese,” “Death and Dying – Jodoshinshu Tradition,” “Rituals,” “Traditions of Nishi Hongwanji,” “Japanese Buddhist Art,” “What Makes You Not Buddhist,” “Buddhist History to Kamakura Period”*
- **Rev. Kazuaki Nakata (Jpn):** *“Jodo Shinshu Buddhism”*
- **Rev. Koho Takata (Jpn):** *“Jodo Shinshu Ritual on Death and Dying”*
- **Rev. Tetsuo Unno:** *“Jodo Shinshu Buddhism Explained from Traditional and Western Perspectives,” “Focusing on and Being Guided by the Transcendently Profound Religious Experiences of Great Shin Buddhists and also, of Great Zennists,” “Shin Buddhism on ‘Dukkha’ (Suffering): When it begins; Why it persists; When it comes to an end,” “Seeking a Final Solution to (One’s) Life, Guided by Shinran Shonin and Helped by In-sights from Zen and Western Thinkers,” “Drawing Closer to and Learning from Extraordinary Lay Shin Buddhists, Such as Myokonin Shomatsu, Saichi, Kichibe, and Others,” “Being Guided, Once Again, by Shin Buddhists of a Transcendental Spiritual Depth, Such as the Lady Takeko Kujo, the Poet Muso Kimura, and the Great Layman Goromatsu Maekawa and Others,” “An Attempt to Make Hard-to-Understand Shin Buddhist Tenets Understandable: Defilement (Bonno), Faith (Shinjin), Pure Land, etc.,” “Listening to Great Zennists as a Means of Broadening and Deepening One’s Shin Buddhism,” “Explaining Shin Buddhism In the Simplest Way Possible,” “Freewheeling Discussions on the Seemingly Enigmatic Words of Shinran and His Great*

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BWA 2019 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS KOTARO CHAVEZ & KAYLEE TAKATA

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 are **Kotaro Chavez** and **Kaylee Takata**

Kotaro is the elder son of Matthew and Michi Chavez. He is a graduate of Marshall High School and will be attending Oregon State University where he will study Environmental Policy and Economics. Upon earning a Bachelor's degree, he plans to attend law school with a possible future in politics.

Kaylee is the elder daughter of Rev. Koho and Yuka Takata. She is a graduate of Arcadia High School and will be attending Cal Poly, Pomona where she will be studying Visual Communications which falls under the umbrella of Environmental Design.

The essays these individuals submitted answers the following question:

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

Kotaro

In my life I've known only two things to be certain, my life right now and my death at any moment. I feel that this is why Buddhism connects so easily for me. From what I've gathered from Sunday services and countless seminars, the only thing I can do is be my own person and live the life that I'm given.

I remember a dharma talk where the speaker spoke of having no soul, no afterlife like reincarnation or a heaven. Buddhism has allowed me to believe what I believe, and I do think there is no life after our death. From our passing and on we live in memory but not in a consciousness. Alive in the minds of the people we shared our love with but never actually there. We have no body because once our life has come to an end and everything else after it is just that, the end. My trust in this concept has given my life new meaning, a new will, to move forward everyday.

Right now my experiences will be told as a story, by my parents, family members and children. It will be a story of happiness and sadness, confidence and fear, with each step I took as invaluable as the last.

My favorite quote from “*Marvel's Avengers*”, is “*A thing isn't beautiful because it lasts*”. Just like that superhero movie, Buddhism has constantly reminded me to be compassionate, understanding and thoughtful, loving all people and valuing all life. I do these things everyday because I know tomorrow I might not be able to play with my dog,



L-R: **Kotaro Chavez, Kaylee Takata, and Pam Tabata, BWA president**

talk to my grandma, help my teacher with her bags or even give my parents a hug so they know how much I love them.

I might not be an expert or even particularly well versed in the teachings but as I've been told, “its okay.” It does not matter how much I go to church on Sundays, but rather what I do to give back where I can. Whether its with *os-hoko* after service or saving a bug from the sole of someone's dirty shoes. I will live every moment as kind hearted and open minded as I can. I know that I can't change yesterday and I don't know what will happen tomorrow, so today I will control how much I appreciate the people and lives around me. I will forever be thankful for what Nishi has given me and I'll spend the rest of my lifetime trying to share the love I've been so incredibly grateful to receive.

Kaylee's essay will be published in the November-December issue of the Jiho

Betsuin Jiho

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

FAREWELL TO REV. KAZUAKI NAKATA



HATSUMAIRI 2016

Rev. Kazuaki Nakata, wife, Michiko, eldest daughter Kanon, second daughter, Michilu, and baby, Akika.

“REV. KAZ”

*Thank you so much for all that you have done!
You have made Nishi lots of fun!
This is expressed with a heavy heart,
As we are sad to see you depart.*

*We wish to thank you for so many things,
For all the adventures each day brings.
Advisor to Sangha Teens, Jr Y and DSP
For all the Scouts and Sun Valley.*

*Teaching Sangha and Padma class,
Having them write essays in order to pass.
You have done so much for our youth,
Even making takoyaki for the Girl Scouts' booth*

SUN VALLEY BUDDHIST TEMPLE'S APPRECIATION OF REV. NAKATA

Sun Valley Buddhist Temple is a small group of families who enjoy attending the monthly service together. Having joined the community center over 50 years ago, many members are now grandmothers, grandfathers and great grandmothers; their children are now parents and grandparents themselves. This small community is fragile since the elderly members continue to grow in age, but diminish in number – yet we are dedicated to continuing on. All of us feel so fortunate that Nakata Sensei joined us: everyone realizes that he has restored strength and vibrancy to our temple. For the last seven years, Nakata Sensei has contributed in so many ways. He and his family have become part of our close-knit community, and all of us appreciate his many contributions.

One of Nakata Sensei's most notable qualities is the focus and effort he puts forth to make our temple the best it can be. He takes time each month to host *Dharma Chatter*, which allows us to explore topics and ask questions about areas of interest. He took the time to create a booklet with content tailored for our services and photos of our members. His effort to reach out and welcome new members has inspired us to have our family members attend services. Nakata Sensei has also taken the time to visit those who are not well and provide his support. After the temple service, he takes the time to chat with us, and over the years he has built solid connections with all members.

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*Thank you so much for starting something new!
Mochitsuki, somen nagashi and suikawari to name a few.
Thank you for allowing us to express our gratitude.
We deeply appreciate your energy and positive attitude.*

*Although we may have to part ways now,
Here's to hoping our paths meet again somehow!
Thank you sensei for all that you've done!
You have made Nishi lots of fun!*

by Terrie Itomura

More “Farewell to Rev. Nakata” on page 8

(Sun Valley - continued from page 7)

Caring and conscientious, Nakata Sensei also reached out to each of us. We all know how much he cares.

In addition, Nakata Sensei has the art of preparing sermons that are relevant to both elderly and young. He would take a topic, introduce it first to children through Kanamochi, a puppet he created, and then continue to expand on the topic in a manner that is meaningful and thought provoking to adults. His fluency in both Japanese and English has allowed him to communicate with all of us.

Nakata Sensei has truly made services meaningful and has enabled us to connect with Buddhism. He brings us together and has contributed to the positive energy of our services. Nakata Sensei brings a special dynamic to our temple, and we appreciate all that he has done to support our community.

(Nakata - continued from page 3)

Japan (see page 2). When my time allows, I joined many youth activities to chat with kids to make connections. Later, kids started asking me to be their mentor or endorser for their high school/college support letter. I am proud to be a supporter of these young people. Every year, I enjoyed helping with the “vegetable pickup,” dharma school vegetable cutting, Scout meat grilling, and teriyaki food packing at Obon. During this time, I had many wonderful conversations with parents. I was deeply impressed by their tireless support and contribution. In Jodo Shinshu, “*Reverend*” does not only mean someone has a priest’s license. “*Reverend is a person who show reverence to Buddhism.*” In another word, *Reverend* is a person who tirelessly helps and supports the temple. To me, honestly, I felt that all parents who helped in the kitchen and the booth at Obon, should be called “*Reverend.*” Standing before them – all those who were volunteering – I was ashamed that I was not working hard enough as a paid worker.

Following Obon, I received many letters and comments from parents. Many of them say that “*In the past, I had to grab my kids to go to Nishi. Now my kids grab me to go to Nishi!*” I sense that the organizational culture of Nishi is changing. I am so glad that Nishi allowed me to complete my Master’s Degree in Business Administration and acquire the management/leadership skill of the organizational culture. I was able to contribute my learned skills back to Nishi.

Sincerely

“THANK YOU, REV. NAKATA”

I was sad to hear the news of Rev Nakata’s transfer to the Fresno Betsuin.

I began attending Rev. Nakata’s Thursday Japanese dharma class three years ago. In his class he presented two of Shinran Shonin’s three volumes of verses *Koso Wasan* and *Jodo Wasan*

As difficult as the subject matter was, Rev. Nakata was able to explain the information in such a way that I was able to clearly understand what he was sharing with all of us.

As a result of my understanding of Shinran’s works, I now live a more calm and less stressful life. I feel as if I have received *shinjin* and am living in *Jodo* on a daily basis.

It is regrettable that the sangha, particularly the youth, here at the temple will no longer reap the benefits of Rev. Nakata’s knowledge and ability to share that knowledge.

Thank you, Rev. Nakata. I wish you well and a bright future at the Fresno Betsuin.

Sincerely in *gassho*,

Chikako Matsubayashi



(Fall Ohigan Service - continued from page 2)

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: Shinjin and Nembutsu*” on Saturday, September 14, 2019. 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.

2019 NISHI YOUTH TOUR OF JAPAN

by Eileen Nozaki, Nishi Girl Scout Troop Leader

In mid-June, Rev. Kazuaki Nakata led a group of the temple's youth including the dharma school, Nishi Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts and their families to Japan. The purpose of the trip was to visit various Hongwanji temples and have "meet and greets" with Scout members in Japan. The trip was meticulously planned by Rev. Nakata. Also escorting the group with Rev. Nakata was Mari Kawasaki.

The "2019 Nishi Youth Tour of Japan" was a 14-day tour planned and led by Rev. Kazuaki Nakata. We were the self-proclaimed "fortunate and the frugal troopers" in Japan. We were 'fortunate' in that we were lucky enough to be included. We were "frugal" for our willingness to use only public transportation, to stay in hostels and airbnb, and to eat prepared foods from 7-Eleven convenience stores, and train station *bento*. And we were "troopers" in that we trekked an average of 6.7 miles each day, climbed an average of 14 flights of stairs, rode up to 7.9 trains and buses a day, and managed to visit 17 temples and at least 9 cities. We were six Girl Scouts, two Scouts BSA, six Scout leaders, and an assemblage of family and friends, and including our organizer Rev. Nakata, and our indispensable interpreter, Mari Kawasaki.

Landing at Narita Airport in the evening, we were introduced to Tokyo by night. We made our way through the web of Tokyo subway trains, following Rev. Kaz like lemmings. Mari was our lemming tail, ensuring no one was left behind. The seemingly endless search for the "right" train platform would become our daily routine. That first night, we were welcomed with only a drizzle, which proved good tidings for most of our trip. Despite the weather forecasts for at least seven days of rain during our 14-day stay, we encountered but three days of rain including one short downpour. As for the summer humidity, we survived by hydrating on drinks from plentiful street vending machines and convenience stores.

The hostel Tokyo 2020 House served as our home sleeping base. It had been recently renovated, and was Japan-



Tour members in front of the Hiunkaku Pavillion on the Nishi Hongwanji

ese-quality clean, with readily available laundering services. Per Japanese-style, sleeping quarters were tight, literally wall-to-wall beds with minimal room to open a suitcase. With shared bathroom and shower facilities and many passes in our nightwear, our group experienced the side benefit to hostel living - getting to know one another. Later in the trip, we would sleep a few nights on *tatami* bedding, which most agreed were our best nights' rest. For one night only we indulged in a Western style hotel, where the advantage was not the privacy, but the breakfast buffet of Japanese foods, plus the relaxing public baths.

Before our early morning starts from home base to the nearby Akado train station, families fell into their morning routines. One had breakfast doughnuts from a local baker, others woke very early for brisk hikes to nearby markets, and many relied on nearby 7-Eleven for *onigiri* and coffee or bottled green tea. And consistent amongst all families,

the kids slept in to the very last minute.

Rev. Kaz planned our itinerary well. Intentionally, he had scheduled our most rigorous days in those the first six days, while our troopers were their freshest. We rose early to get catch a train, and walked long but visually interesting marches from station or bus stop to our destination temples. Many temples are UNESCO World Heritage sites, and fortunately only one appeared besieged with barricades, protecting its altars from the endless line of tourists. For me, the names of the 17 temples became a blur, yet each greeted us with some unique memorable feature – the natural simplicity of the rock garden at Zen Ryoan-ji temple, the wedding parties with robed priests and the iris flowers planted as rivers at Shinto Meiji Jingu, and the Indian architecture of Tsukiji Hongwan-ji. At Ohtani Mausoleum we paid respect to the holdings of the names of honored dead from our BCA temples, and were privileged to witness the presentation of new ashes to share the Hombyo with Shinran Shonin's tomb. After viewing the 11-

(continued on page 14)

BETSUIN PHOTOS



Rimban Briones looks on as BWA President, Pam Tabata, presents a donation to the 50th Anniversary to Ernest Hida, 50th Anniversary Chairperson.



Dharma school students who have received attendance awards for the 2018-2019 school year. Left: Rev. Nakata holding certificates for his three daughters; Center: Rimban Briones; Center - right: Seibi Okita accompanying grandson; Right: Koichi Sayano, dharma school superintendent.



High school graduates holding recognition certificates from BCA. L-R: K. Tashiro, K. Chavez, L. Kanai, J. Naito, K. Takata, and Rimban Briones.



Family Fun Day pot luck food line



Family Fun Day Kindergarten students trying their best to keep their ping pong ball in their spoons



Family Fun Day - Happy preschool-aged children and their game prizes.

OBON 2019 PHOTOS



Joyous dancers during the balmy Summer evening under the lights of the memorial chochin. (photo by Elaine Fukumoto)



The Betsuin's new singing band – ABAsonics



Taiko Ichiza



Ho'Aloha Polynesian Dancers



Youngest bon daiko players in training

OBON 2019 PHOTOS II



Bon odori at dusk with the Los Angeles downtown skyline in the background



The Nishi Betsuin's young bon daiko players trained by Taiko Ichiza members, Denise Okimoto (top left), Daniel Yaguchi (top right), and led by Yuki Inoue (middle right).



Nishi Hongwanji Child Development Center's Odori Class being led by director Susan Mukai



Mark Montoya (left) and Matt Chavez frying up slices of Spam for musubi.



Dining and BINGO in the Kaikan



Packing futomaki and inarizushi made from scratch by the Betsuin BWA.

(Did You Know? - continued from page 5)

Myokonin Disciples," "Three Great and Extraordinary Lay Shin Buddhists as Our Guide on that Journey toward Salvation, Enlightenment and Freedom from Dukkha," "Turning, Once Again to Shinran Shonin and His Great Myokonin Disciples," "What We Shin Buddhists Might Learn from Other Traditions: Zen, Psychology, Literature, etc.," "The, At Times, Unrecognized Depths of Shinran Shonin's Writings"

• **Rev. George Matsubayashi (Jpn):** *"Life of Shinran Shonin and his Teachings," "Lady Eshinni, Wife of Shinran Shonin," "Myokonin," "Rennyō Shonin"*

• **Rev. Yoshiko Miyaji (Jpn):** *"Shinran Shonin's Hymns," "Pure Land and Nembutsu, Rennyō Shonin"*

• **Rev. Nobuo Miyaji (Jpn):** *"Shinran's Determination for His Life," "Preparation for the End of One's Life through the Nembutsu," "Relationship between Amida Buddha and Shakyamuni Buddha, Relationship between Shinran and Us"*

* * * * *

Refurbished Ornaments (by Rev Koho Takata)

To show the extent of the refurbishment, the following lists the altar ornaments which were repaired or refurbished: statue of Amida Buddha, stand and back light of statue, scroll of Rennyō Shonin, scroll of Seven Masters, scroll of Myōnyō Shonin, scroll of Prince Shotoku, main house of statue, *sumeru* throne (main stand for main house), stand for *sumeru* throne, upper table in front of statue, front table in front of statue, golden lantern in front of statue, corner ornaments in front of statue, stand for incense burner, metal floral decoration in front of statue, main house for Shinran Shonin, stand for the house of Shinran Shonin, front table in front of Shinran Shonin, golden lantern in front of Shinran Shonin, corner ornaments in front of Shinran Shonin, front table in front of Rennyō Shonin, tiger tables, ceremonial dais, golden box for sutra, incense vessel, incense burner with handle, stands for *kakocho*, tables for sutras, stand for *sawari* bell, incense burners for *gejin*, tables for incense burner for *gejin*, *kasuga* tables, stand for big bell, folding screens, heavenly canopy, candle holders, flower vases

Newly Purchased Ornaments: Also, in order to properly bring the altar to Hongwanji standards, some missing ornaments and articles were purchased and added: table for Prince Shotoku, rice vessel, offering vessels, tier-stacking stands, *kansho* bell, bamboo curtains, *uchishiki* sets

With the completion of this major restoration, the altar will continue to serve the Los Angeles Hōmpa Hongwanji Betsuin for many years to come.

If you have any questions about the refurbished ornaments or newly purchased ornaments, please ask any of the ministers to point them out to you and explain their use and purpose.

* * * * *

FIVE YEARS OF PLANNING

In preparation for the 50th celebration at the present site, plans began five years ago, with the establishment of the Central Committee of the 50th Anniversary at the Current Temple Site, with general chairperson Ernest Hida, and Projects Committee chairperson, Shoichi Sayano. During these five years, many auspicious events were celebrated by Nishi and its organizations:

Five Years Theme (by Rev Koho Takata)

2015: Life of Awakening: True Teaching (*kyō*); 110th Anniversary of Nishi Temple (1905 – 2015); 100th Anniversary of Hollywood Buddhist Temple (1915-2015); 10th Anniversary of Muryo Kojyu Do/Mini Chapel (2005 – 2015)

2016: Life of Awakening: Namo Amidabutsu (*gyō*); 85th Anniversary of Betsuin Status (1931-2016); 60th Anniversary of Adult Buddhist Association-ABA (1956-2016)

2017: Life of Awakening: Shinjin (*shin*); 100th Anniversary of Dharma School-formerly Sunday School (1917-2017)

2018: Life of Awakening: Perfect Peace (*shō*); 100th Anniversary of Young Buddhist Association-YBA (1918-2018); 100th Anniversary of Buddhist Womens' Association-Fujinkai (1918 – 2018)

2019: Life of Awakening: Reflection and Gratitude 50th Anniversary at present site (1969-2019); 50th Anniversary of Nishi Boy Scout Troop 738 (1969 – 2019); 35th Anniversary of Hui Aikane (1984- 2019); 35th Anniversary of Nishi Girl Scout Troop 12135 (1984- 2019)

*(Rimban - continued from page 1)*

friends that contributed to our 50th Anniversary Fundraiser. May our endeavors today strengthen the foundations of Los Angeles Betsuin and may we continue to share the Nembutsu Teachings for another 50 years and beyond.

Namo Amida Butsu

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 2019

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 18 Toshiko Terry Loaiza | 10 Shwu Fen Yang |
| 19 Jack Noboru Miyaki | 12 Seiki Toma |
| 22 George Masatoshi Tamayose | 13 Stanley Akira Yagi |
| 27 Sally Hideko Norihiro | 14 Shizuko Wagner |
| 29 Tamaye Mizutani | 21 Rina Sakura Siwinski |
| | 21 Hatsumi Kawana |
| | 22 Atsuko Izuno |
| | 25 Yoneo Matsubara |
| | 27 Yasushi Haneda |

JUNE 2019

- 1 Hirofumi Matsumura
- 3 Ruby Toyoko Yamasaki
- 9 Mieko Mimi Chin
- 10 Tamio Mitsunaga

JULY 2019

- 1 Yoshiko Mary Iwaki
- 5 Ted Tachi Iwaki

OBON 2019 RAFFLE WINNERS

Grand Prize \$2,000

2nd Prize \$1,000

3rd Prize \$500

4th Prize \$250

iPad

donated by Star Auto Group

LA Dodgers 4 tickets, parking included

donated by Irwin & Judy Wong

LA Dodgers 4 tickets, parking included

donated by FIA Insurance

Gift Certificates

donated by Kubota Nikkei Mortuary

\$50 Roy's

\$30 Coffee Bean & Tea

\$15 Krispy Kreme

\$15 Krispy Kreme

Yonsei Basketball

HydroFlask

Mark Oune

Frank & Hiroko Iwata

Karen Escano

Viola Nakagawa

Eiji Masuyama

James H. Machikawa

Kim Shimizu

June Kondo

Emiko Wexler

Saburo Daikoku

Fumio Oshita

Aaliyuh Lam

Renee Tajima

(Eshinni Kakushinni - continued from page 4)

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 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.

(Youth Tour of Japan- continued from page 9)

headed, wooden statue of Hasedera's Kannon, the goddess of mercy, we enjoyed the walk through Kamakura's traditional narrow streets and small shops, to the bronze Great Buddha for a rare photo shot with clear blue skies in the background.

In that packed first week, along with temple visits, we squeezed in four formal gatherings, where in each we were the honored guests. In Kyoto, at the mother temple, Nishihongwan-ji, we attended the early 6:00 a.m. service where the experience felt palpably spiritual. After the service we toured the temple's back halls and gardens, led by one of Rev. Kaz's ministerial classmates. That night, Kyoto Girl Scout Troop 37 welcomed our Scouts, despite it being a busy school night. Our Scouts were dragging after a full day, but managed to be attentive guests, in a memorable venue – a century old guesthouse, model-worthy for a Totoro movie.

The next day at Tsukiji, fellow Hongwanji temple members welcomed us with lunch and traditional music performances of *biwa* and *shakuhachi*. Immediately following, our Scouts had their second meet up. They made fast friends with the Tsukiji Girl and Boy Scout troops, while we leaders talked about the many parallels between our troops.

"Youth Tour Of Japan" will continue in the next Betsuin Jiho issue



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 14, 21, 28, November 11, 18 (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 17, 24, October 1, 15, 22 (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 11, 18, 25, October 9, 16 (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.

Jodo Shinshu and Christianity

Monday, 7:00-8:30 PM

Rev. Masao Kodani

September 19, 26, October 3, 17, 24 (5 week class: \$50)

法座『今の時代、私達は真宗から何を聞くのか?』(Japanese)

Saturday, 10:00-11:30AM

Rev. Nobuo Miyaji

September 28, October 26, November 23 (3 week class: \$30)

Gaining Insight into Buddhist Truths Thru Photos, (New Yorker) Cartoons, Poetic Images Etc.

Saturday, 10:00-11:30AM

Rev. Tetsuo Unno

September 21, 28, October 19, 26, November 2 (5 week class: \$50)

The attempt here will be to convey and to gain insight into Buddhist Truths such as Dukkha or Suffering; Bonno or Defilement; Satori or Enlightenment; Shinjin or Faith; Jodo or Pure Land etc. thru the use of Photos, (New Yorker) Cartoons, Poetic Images and other such means.

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

SEPTEMBER 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>Regular Service 10:00 am 1</p> <p>BCA FBWA 16 World Buddhist Women's Convention @ San Francisco (Day 3)</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Labor Day Betsuin Closed</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Visitation by Japan BWA</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Visitation by Japan BWA</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7</p> <p>50th Anniversary • Dharma Center Opening Ceremony Gomonshu • 50th Anniversary Banquet</p>
<p>8</p> <p>50th Anniversary • Group Photo • Chigo Procession • Commemoration Service • Kikyoshiki</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Contemporary Issues & Jodo Shinshu Perspective Discussion Rimban William Briones 7:00-8:30 pm</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Board Meeting 7:30 pm</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p> <p>Ohigan Seminar</p>
<p>15</p> <p>Ohigan Service 10:00 am Eitaikyo Shotsuki Hoyo 1:00 pm</p>	<p>16</p> <p>Go-Meinichi-ko 1:30 pm</p>	<p>17</p> <p>The Basic Teaching of Jodo Shinshu Rev. Ryuta Furumoto 7:00-8:30 pm</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Contemporary Issues & Jodo Shinshu Perspective Discussion Rimban William Briones 7:00-8:30 pm</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Jodo Shinshu & Christianity Rev. Masao Kodani 7:00-8:30 pm</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p> <p>...Buddhist Truths... Rev. Tetsuo Unno 10:00-11:30 am</p>
<p>22</p> <p>Regular Service 10:00 am Dharma School Registration</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p> <p>The Basic Teaching of Jodo Shinshu Rev. Ryuta Furumoto 7:00-8:30 pm</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Contemporary Issues & Jodo Shinshu Perspective Discussion Rimban William Briones 7:00-8:30 pm</p>	<p>26</p> <p>Jodo Shinshu & Christianity Rev. Masao Kodani 7:00-8:30 pm</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p> <p>法座 (In Jpn) Rev. Nobuo Miyaji 10:00-11:30 am ...Buddhist Truths... Rev. Tetsuo Unno 10:00-11:30 am</p>
<p>29</p> <p>Regular Service 10:00 am</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p>				

OCTOBER 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
		<u>The Basic Teaching of Jodo Shinshu</u> Rev. Ryuta Furumoto 7:00-8:30 pm		<u>Jodo Shinshu & Christianity</u> Rev. Masao Kodani 7:00-8:30 pm		
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Eshinni-Kakushinni Memorial Service 10:00 am			<u>Contemporary Issues & Jodo Shinshu Perspective Discussion</u> Rimban William Briones 7:00-8:30 pm	Board Meeting 7:30 pm		
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Regular Service 10:00 am Eitaikyo Shotsuki Hoyo 1:00 pm	<u>Reason to Live the Shin Buddhist Way</u> Rev. Koho Takata 6:30-8:00 pm	<u>The Basic Teaching of Jodo Shinshu</u> Rev. Ryuta Furumoto 7:00-8:30 pm	Go-Meinichi-ko 1:30 pm <u>Contemporary Issues & Jodo Shinshu Perspective Discussion</u> Rimban William Briones 7:00-8:30 pm	<u>Jodo Shinshu & Christianity</u> Rev. Masao Kodani 7:00-8:30 pm		<u>...Buddhist Truths...</u> Rev. Tetsuo Unno 10:00-1130 am
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Regular Service 10:00 am	<u>Reason to Live the Shin Buddhist Way</u> Rev. Koho Takata 6:30-8:00 pm	<u>The Basic Teaching of Jodo Shinshu</u> Rev. Ryuta Furumoto 7:00-8:30 pm		<u>Jodo Shinshu & Christianity</u> Rev. Masao Kodani 7:00-8:30 pm		<u>法座 (In Jpn)</u> Rev. Nobuo Miyaji 10:00-11:30 am <u>...Buddhist Truths...</u> Rev. Tetsuo Unno 10:00-1130 am
27	28	29	30	31		
Regular Service 10:00 am	<u>Reason to Live the Shin Buddhist Way</u> Rev. Koho Takata 6:30-8:00 pm					