

# LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

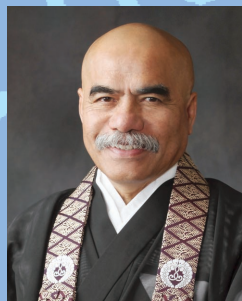
# jihō

WWW

No. 467

July - August 2021

## RIMBAN'S MESSAGE



Rimbhan William  
Briones

*"I, Shinran, have never even once uttered the Nembutsu for the sake of my father and mother. The reason is that all beings have been fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, in the timeless process of birth-and death. When I attain Buddhahood in the next birth, each and everyone will be saved."*

—Tannisho Chapter 5

The season of Obon is upon us once again and once again we are unable to come together due to the ongoing concern of COVID-19. And while we are unable to enjoy Obon as we know it, we can still enjoy Obon, by participating in our **Obon Drive-Thru** or **Betsuin Raffle** drawing or you can bid on some wonderful items at the **BWA Virtual Silent Auction**. Lest we forget, Obon is, especially, another opportunity for all of us to listen and reflect upon the *dharmā*.

Obon is a time to pay tribute to our loved ones who have passed away — to reflect upon all that continues to influence our lives and those benefits we have received from the lives of others. It is a time to express our gratitude for being given those conditions to live this life. It is an opportunity to truly reflect upon my life and it is with this understanding that we visit the graves of our loved ones and attend memorial services. So, when we visit the cemetery and conduct memorial services, it is no more than an expression of the gratitude that arises when we embrace the Truth of those causes and conditions of your life.

Yet the story of Bon *odori* as an attempt to appease or petition the "gods" and the tale that

## THOUGHTS ON OBON

Obon is a time to welcome our ancestors back for a reunion with the living is continually perpetuated every year during the Obon season by many newspapers, social media and even misinformed members.

The above reading I began with is from Chapter 5 of the *Tannisho*. Here, Shinran expressed his view towards filial piety towards his parents, in other words ancestral worship. Prior to and during Shinran's time it was customary to hold services, build temples and statues, chant sutras and recite the Nembutsu for the sake of those who had passed on, in the hope of increasing their merits and securing for them a higher and happier state of existence. Shinran felt that these practices were superficial and unimportant. He discouraged the idea of saying Nembutsu to gain merit for other beings, even for the sake of one's parents.

For Jodo Shinshu Buddhists, Obon is a time to contemplate on impermanence as shown by departed ones, and it is also a time for self-reflection and a time for rejoicing in the Nembutsu.

It is this overwhelming sense of joy and gratitude that is the source for dancing during Obon. Unfortunately, we are unable to dance to the beat of the taiko, under the evening stars and lights of the city skyline. Please take a moment and reflect upon all that continues to influence your life and those benefits that you have received from the lives of others.

And when such a feeling flows through our hearts and minds, we are overwhelmed with a sense of joy and gratitude. Therefore, in our Jodoshinshu tradition, we call *Obon*, *Kangi-e*, or "*Gathering of Joy*."

*Namo Amida Butsu*

Los Angeles  
Homba Hongwanji  
Buddhist Temple  
815 East First Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
TEL: 213.680.9130  
FAX: 213.680.2210  
WEB: [nishihongwanji-la.org](http://nishihongwanji-la.org)  
EMAIL: [info@nishihongwanji-la.org](mailto:info@nishihongwanji-la.org)

## THE SOUNDS OF SUMMER

by Rev. Hibiki Murakami



Rev. Hibiki  
Murakami

**Summer** – The temperature is high. The sun is heating the ground. I often drive my convertible, that I've been working on, with the top down. Recently, I'm finding that my skin is getting burned by too much sun. So, I've been driving with the top up. But, then, it's strange — It's so silent in the car without the sounds of the traffic. It doesn't feel like I'm really driving my car.

Los Angeles is a big metropolis. Living here, you can't ignore the sounds of all the vehicles, A/C compressors, emergency sirens, and all the other sundry sounds. Even when you're inside a building there are many sounds there, too. For example: the telephone, smartphone notices, radios, vacuum cleaners, and even people chatting — all serving as distractions.

There are many sound variations. There is bass to high-pitch and loud to quiet. With this, especially with the combination of high-pitch and loud volume can easily distract me while I am writing an article or reading a book to collect information for my message. When I focus on my work in my office, it is relatively quiet. Then, when a big sound like a siren or a phone call rings, my thinking stops. If you are in a quiet place, even the tiniest, insignificant sound can reach your ears as a distraction. So, in order to help keep my focus, I turned my phone's volume down.

Sounds can attract one's attention.

For many people in Japan, the cicada's buzzing sound is recognized as a symbol of summer. The male cicada makes a buzzing sound to attract the female cicada. Even as an adult the buzzing reminds me of my childhood when I would spend time at my grandfather's house in a country. As a teenager, I would go to the local public swimming pool on very hot days riding my bicycle, hearing the buzzing of the cicada. Interestingly, there are different species of cicada, each making different sounds during different parts of the day. When bicycling to the pool, I would hear a certain sound of a cicada. On the way home, while on the same path, I will hear a slightly different cicada sound.

Also, in regards to "the sounds of summer in Japan," we can't overlook the Japanese wind chime. The chimes are hung in the summer to catch a cooling breeze. Nowadays, the chime's soft sound is enjoyed by many Japanese. Historically, however, chimes were used to ward off evil spirits during summer. It was believed that the warm and humid-

ified wind carried the plague. This is why people believed that when the wind would blow the chime would ring to protect against diseases. Japanese chimes are made of glass or iron. Not only are the sounds pleasing but also their appearance is pleasant for those who want to enjoy a cooling mood in the steaming Japanese summer. Today, chimes are sometimes hung by the air conditioner which would definitely associate the sound to "cooling."

A "listener" is affected in many ways to sound. Some sounds attract your attention and some sounds keep you away. Let's say, you express yourself through music. A music group can attract and connects with its audience through its music. The image of beauty is created by a classic concert. The sound of a streaming river can evoke a sense of nature. Sound has the power to let us focus and/or create an image.

In *The Larger Sutra* and *The Amida Sutra*, each sutra explains the jeweled trees that create sound in the Pure Land.

Furthermore, it is stated in *The Amida Sutra*, in the Pure Land, when a gentle breeze begins to blow and causes the arrayed jeweled trees and decorative jeweled nets to stir, they produce subtle harmonious sounds.

Being Shin Buddhists, we do not meditate to try to listen to the sound of the jeweled trees creating the sound in the Pure Land from being this world. Still, we hear that sound. [Rev. Yasuda Rijin](#), an important Pure Land thinker belonging to Higashi Honganji, said, "*Nembutsu is the language of the Pure Land.*"

Language is one of the closest sounds to us. We hear the sound of *namoamidabutsu* of the *nembutsu* in daily life, which lets us focus on the Pure Land here and now. When you listen to the sound, your mind will spontaneously be mindful of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, which will always serve as guidance.

**JULY 10**

**OBON DRIVE-THRU**

*Remember to pick up your  
pre-ordered items*

## BETSUIN BOARD PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



**Pam Tabata**

Greetings,

I haven't danced at our Obon for decades. Most members are working so hard for their own temples that they don't get to dance at their own Obon. I had hopes and dreams that I could dance at 2021 Obon. "As president, it is my obligation to be out there and dance." At least that is what I told myself. It was my excuse

to not be working in the booth and get to dance.

As Spring came and we began to discuss Obon. I pushed to dance, but Rimban insisted, "It's everyone or no one." I didn't want to accept this and some of us discussed how we could get it done. There were various ideas, but in the end I had to agree with Rimban. How could we tell someone that they are not allowed to join the others to dance? Everyone has loved ones that passed before them and have reason to dance. So, we couldn't possibly say, "No." As we will be together next year and I look forward to joining everyone in Bon *odori*.

Also, during this time, as we have been organizing the **Obon Drive-Thru**, all those that came before us are running through my mind, again. Mr. Hanada and Mr. Nagao would always be in the kitchen helping BWA with *sushi* rice. They would welcome everyone, especially the young moms, as we came to work our shifts. Those that knew Ms. Joyce Koda will understand when I thought to myself, "When I grow up, I want to be like her." Keep in mind that my children were in grammar school, but in that kitchen, while mixing the *su* into the rice, I wanted to be like her. She was the one that taught me to "cut the rice," otherwise it will turn into dough. Then, I went to Japan for the 1998 BWA World Conference and I met the most wonderful, thoughtful, gregarious person. Yes, it was the same Joyce Koda. I knew I could never be like her. It takes too much effort for me to be like she was when we were in Japan OR in the kitchen mixing the *sushi* rice. However, I do hear her when I'm in that same kitchen making that rice. My friend, Mrs. Yuri Yamasaki, and I reminisce about Ms. Koda and we smile. Great memories.

I will dance with everyone virtually and be very grateful to those that came before me.

*In gassho*



## HAPPY 100+ YEARS TO SEVEN BWA CENTENARIANS

by Jean Kawakami

Many of us wonder what the future holds. Will we have enough money for retirement? Should I fix my home so I can live here for another 30 years? Will I live to be a hundred?

Seven of our BWA members no longer needed to wonder – they all reached the 100 year milestone, having celebrated 100 years of birthdays, a century of New Year's breakfasts, and are part of an elite group of people, making up less than 1% of the U.S. population. In addition to our seven BWA members, temple member, **Isao Hatakeyama**, recently celebrated his 103rd birthday in May! Congratulations to him, and our following BWA members:

**Sakaye Aratani**

**Masako Kaneko\***

**Mitsue Kodama\***

**Sunaye Sakamoto**

**Shizuko Shibata**

**Masaye Shigemura\***

**Masako Yamamoto**

So what is the secret to their success? Science has shown that there are Five Blue Zones that are home to the greatest concentration of Centenarians: (1) Ikaria, Greece, (2) Okinawa, Japan, (3) Sardinia, Italy, (4) Loma Linda, CA, and (5) Nicoya, Costa Rica. The following "pearls of wisdom" may help you achieve a longer life. Which pearls might you adopt?

- The Greek Ikarians enjoy sharing long meals with family and friends, of wild greens, olive oil, legumes, and fish, while taking naps, five days per week.
- The Okinawan diet, rich in sweet potato, soy, bitter melons, turmeric, brown rice, green tea, shiitake, and seaweed, contributes to the world's longest living women. But it's what they recite before every meal that may be key: "Hara Hachi Bu" – a reminder to stop eating once they're 80% full.
- The Seventh Day Adventists of Loma Linda encourage a vegan diet, free of alcohol and coffee while observing Sabbath, a day of rest and worship.
- The Costa Ricans have adopted the motto "plan de vida," or "reason to live" by keeping active, drinking plenty of water, and enjoying the outdoor sun.

*(continued on page 8)*

## “ARE WE THERE YET?” ABA MOUNTAIN TREK

by Richard Odagawa

After over a year of confinement, seven brave ABA members ventured out into the wilderness of the San Gabriel Mountains. Making reservations to hike the Eaton Canyon Trails, they made the 3.5 mile trek to the waterfall at the end of the trail. After several treacherous crossings over a fast moving mountain stream (not really), they reached their destination to find families with their dogs and young children playing in the water. Actually it was a pretty easy hike with beautiful weather. I’m sure we will do it again soon.

If you’re interested in joining us, talk to an ABA member.



**ABA TREKKERS**

L-R (insert) Richard Odagawa, Denise Otani, Reiko Ikkanda, Vance Ikkanda, Dianne Odagawa, Cindy Nakamura, and Lonny Quon.

## 2021 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Valid from January 1 through December 31, 2021

**\$250 FOR EACH ADULT FAMILY MEMBER**

CHECKS ARE PAYABLE TO:  
**L.A. HOMPA HONGWANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE**

Payments may be made in full or by installments throughout the year of **2021**

## MEMORIAL DAY

### Los Angeles Buddhist Temple Federation (LABTF) Service at Evergreen Cemetery

The LABTF is comprised of eight temples: Jodo Shu, Higashi Honganji, Nishi Honganji, and Senshin Buddhist Temple (Pure Land), Zenshuji and Long Beach Buddhist Church (Soto Zen), Koyasan (Shingon), Nichiren Shu (Nichiren). During the Memorial Day weekend, the temples share the duties of conducting memorial services at various cemeteries in Los Angeles and Riverside Counties.



Rimban William Briones is third from the right. Rinban Noriaki Ito of Higashi Honganji is bowing on the left. Rev. Ryuta Furumoto is on the far right.



Rimban Briones can be seen second from the left.

## DID YOU KNOW?

by Eiko Masuyama



**Eiko Masuyama**

**LA YBA SANGHA**, Official Publication Los Angeles Young Buddhist Association February, 1957, vol. XII no. II, Monthly Publication

*"Three Contestants Vie for Oratorical Honors (SD YBL Conference)"*

.....Three judges will determine which one of the contestants will represent the SD YBL at the WYBL Conference next month.....West Los Angeles..... Margaret Uyeki..... Senshin..... Grace Wada ..... Los Angeles..... **June Wakasa** will represent the LA YBA in the Oratorical Contest. She is a winter graduate of Roosevelt High and will continue her studies in teaching at East L.A.J.C. June is the recording secretary of the Jr. YBA and she has often rendered her services as organist for both the Sunday School and YBA. Listed among her hobbies are painting and costume designing.

June, 1957, vol. XII no. VI

*"Odori Keiko [practice] in Full Swing"*

With the Obon festivities a month away, the tempo of the program has picked up. As usual, the odori will be held on Weller Street, both nights.

*Odori* practice, under the supervision of the Sunday School division, is now in progress with **Nancy Naito** and her assistants instructing the dancers. *Odori keiko* is held every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 7:30 p.m. at the Hirohata Parking Lot, Second St., near Central Ave.

Three new dances have been added this year. They are *"Minori Ondo," "Heiwa Ondo"* and *"Kappore."*

July, 1957, vol. XII, no. VII

*"Big Throng Expected at Obon Festivities This Weekend"*

Here it is time again for the colorful Obon Carnival, July 13th and 14th, dates to remember. The County parking lot at 2nd and Weller Streets is the location. There will be over 150 dancers clad in kimonos and happis participating in the *odori*. The street dancing will be held on Weller Street both nights commencing from about 7:00 p.m.

We have many participating groups this year with a variety of games and lots of food to eat. The various booths available this year are Nickel Toss on plates, Balloon Darts, Ring Toss on coins, Tic Tac Toe, Dime pitch, Nickel Pitch, Under 12- Over 22, Penny Pitch, Panda Pitch, Coke Bottle Toss, Ping Pong Toss, Record Pitch, Fishing, Lucky Strike, Shoyu Pitch, Dime Pitch on Electrical Board, Add-on-up Darts, Gold Fish Toss. Food concessions are sushi, corn dog, corn on the cob, snack bar, tamale and



**1957 Sunday School Teachers Staff**

**Seated:** Ben Jinkawa, Harry Shibata, Joe Watari, Ichiya Tsuchiyama (Nagae?), Mary Hatakeyama Iwamoto, Grace Kato Kudow, Toshi Kusumoto; **standing:** Kayoko Morimoto Kanomata, Marie Hirata Gruber, Tootsie Yamamoto Yoshimura, Joanne Hirata Onaga, Nancy Naito Shibata, Eiko Masuyama, Min Ota, Mas Okino, Mary Uyeda Inatomi, Kimi Shimizu, June Wakasa Kizu, Barbara Mikami Keimi, Mitsue Kato Oshita

hamburger, soda pop, coffee and hot dog.

The participating groups are Pasadena Bukkyo Kai, Pasadena YABA, Pasadena Fujinkai, Pasadena Sr YBA, Pasadena Jr YBA, Sun Valley Jr Matrons, LA Jr Matrons, Ti-Sarana, Chereomis, Hollywood Jr Matrons, Nichiren Jr YBA, Koyasan Jr YBA, LA YABA, , LA Jr Sangha and Busy Bees, LA Board of Directors and the Organizers.

Chairmen of the Nishi Booths are: Tosh Washizaki and **Joe Watari**, Panda Pitch; **Toshi Kusumoto** and Al Tamaribuchi, Coke Bottle Pitch; John Yamada, Add-on-up Darts; **Harry Shibata**, Fishing; Tad Matoi, Ring Toss; Sam Ariza, Soda Pop.

Raffle sales are coming along with gusto... [June, 1957, "Carnival Committee Prepares for Big Event Next Month"... The prizes are as follows: 1st prize, a Grundig Hifi Console; 2nd prize, a Danish modern dinette set with matching chairs; 3rd prize, a deluxe RCA clock radio and many other prizes...]

This carnival is now the main source of income for the YBA so your help in any form will be greatly appreciated by the committee and the members at large.

Come one and all to the Eleventh Annual Obon and make this this the success of all success.

*"Yagura Leads Juniors for 1957-58"*

*(continued on page 6)*

## BETSUIN CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### JULY

- 4-5** Independence Day - Betsuin closed
- 10** Obon Drive-Thru - Pick up items pre-ordered
- 11** Regular Service 10:00 am  
Eitaikyo Shotsuki Hoyo 1:00 pm
- 17** Hatsubon Service 10:00 am & 1:00 pm
- 18** Hakamairi Service @ Evergreen Cemetery  
9:00 am  
Obon Service 10:00 am
- 25** Regular Service 10:00 am

### AUGUST

- 01** Atomic Bomb Service 10:00 am
- 08** Regular Service 10:00 am  
Eitaikyo Shotsuki Hoyo 1:00 pm
- 15** Regular Service 10:00 am
- 22** Regular Service 10:00 am
- 29** Regular Service 10:00 am

### SEPTEMBER

- 06** Labor Day - Betsuin closed
- 12** Regular Service 10:00 am  
Dharma School Registration  
Eitaikyo Shotsuki Hoyo 1:00 pm

For information to view/participate in any of the temple services, virtually/Zoom, contact the temple office at:

**213-680-9130 or**  
**NishiDharmaCenter@gmail.com**



*(KNOW? continued from page 5)*

The LA Jr YBA held its election meeting last month. Elected as president for the fiscal year was Ken Yagura.

Others on the new cabinet are Eddie Sakata, boys' vice president; Betty Okada, girls vice president; Kiyoshi Matsuhara, recording secretary; Jane Kishi, corresponding secretary; Ruby Wakayama, treasurer; Norman Inouye, publicity-historian; Howard Miyamoto, boys athletic manager; Bessie Tanaka, girls athletic manager; and David Imai, religious chairman.

The next big event on the Jr YBA Calendar is the Southern District Jr YBA Conference scheduled for the Labor Day Weekend.

August, 1957, Vol. XII, No. VIII

*"LABCC Camping Committee Readies for 9-Day Session Aug 29 to Sept 7"*



**LABCC Summer Camp Kitchen Staff, c.1970s (?)**  
**L-R: Fumio Oshita, Rosanne Maehara Takahashi, Hideo Izumo, Judy Izumo, Kay Izumo, Cherry Okimoto, Eiko Masuyama**

The LABCC Camping Committee now has the services of some 40 – 50 personnel for their annual [Camp] Yallani excursion.

According to the committee, there are approximately 80 kids signed up at this time. Sign-ups are still open. The age limits are 9 to 13 years. The children can be registered at the church.

Nishi Hongwanji has some 25 kids signed up for the camping program at this date. More from Nishi are anticipated before the deadline for sign-ups, August 22nd.

The camping will start on August 29th and end on September 7th, ten days of enjoyment and healthy recreation.

Many of our senior YBA and Sunday school staff members

*(continued on page 8)*

### DHARMA SCHOOL PARENTS ONIGIRI FUND RAISER



*Dharma School Parents (DSP) fundraiser ready to distribute onigiri sets pre-ordered from Jichan's Onigiriya in Monterey Park.*



*L-R: Terrie Itomura, Richard Murase, and Carole Kochi wait for customers to pick up their onigiri order.*



*Ernest and Carol Hida picking up their order.*



*Photos by Glen Tao*



*Karaage Combo Set: (clockwise) 2 varieties of onigiri, karaage, edamame, spicy miso aioli, and tamagoyaki*



*The DSP (& students) Onigiri Crew*



## IN MEMORIAM

The *Nishi Betsuin* extends its deepest condolences to the families of the following members who have recently passed away. May the family members find solace and comfort in the *Nembutsu*.

--*Namo Amida Butsu*

### March 2021

17 Roy Isamu Ishii	28 Sumiko Tanaka
20 Koko Komatsu	28 Olivia Kumi Tom
	29 Gary Kizuka

### April 2021

15 Misao Okino	3 Minoru Ogawa
15 Yoko Tsugawa	9 Roy Kazuhiro Asahi
17 Yasukazu Takushi	12 Mitsue Kodama
17 Masato Yamaoka	13 Yoshihiro Morita
19 Fujiko Nakatani	

### May 2021

(*KNOW?* - continued from page 2)

are serving as counselors as they have in the past. A few of the individuals are: Joe Watari, head Camp Director in charge of boy's division, Sats Yoshida, 2nd in command and in charge of the girls; and other counselors – Al Shibata, Eiko Masuyama, Mitsie Kato, Nan Naito, Tom Butsumyo, Ben Jinkawa, Mas Saiki, and Kiyoko Hatakeyama.

(*Centenarians* - continued from page 3)

- The world's longest living men reside in Sardinia. They spend their days herding goats and sheep, five miles at a time, enjoying two glasses of Cannonau wine daily, which contains more heart-healthy flavonoids than other wines.

Let's do this together. We can listen weekly to the Buddha Dharma messages, and recite the *Nembutsu* in reverence to Amida Buddha. And when we are able to enjoy lunch together as a sangha, free from COVID-19, let's reflect on the words *Hara Hachi Bu* and recite *itadakimasu*. Outdoor activities such as garden clean-up, *bon odori*, and fundraising events, give us plenty of *Plan de Vida*, with 10,000 steps giving us a reason to nap. Let us all grow old together, so we too can enjoy 100 years of cake, and more time with our family, friends, and *sangha*.

"*Hyaku sai no memba to Hyaku-nen no jinsei, Kampai!*"

\*After a wonderfully fulfilling life, Masako Kaneko, and Mitsue Kodama both recently passed away in 2021, and Masaye Shigemura, last year. While their physical presence is no longer with us, they continue to live on in our hearts, influencing our thoughts, words, and deeds. We will miss them dearly.

Our deepest condolences to the families.

## BETSUIN VEHICLE DONATION



**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**

## Betsuin Jiho

Editor-in-Chief: Rimban William Briones  
English Editor: Elaine Fukumoto  
Japanese Editor: Rev. Hibiki Murakami  
Photos: Koichi Sayano & Glen Tao

amazon smile

You shop. Amazon gives.

**You can shop and donate all at the same time**

[smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com)

**Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji  
Buddhist Temple**