

LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

jihō

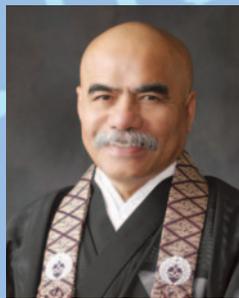
WWW

No. 477

March - April 2023

RIMBAN'S MESSAGE

THOUGHTS ON THIS HANAMATSURI



**Rimban William
Briones**

According to their custom the Queen returned to her parent's home for the birth, and on her way, in the beautiful spring sunshine, she took a rest in the Lumbini Garden,

All about her were Ashoka Blossoms. In delight she reached her right arm out to pluck a branch and as she did so a prince was born. All expressed their heartfelt delight with the glory of the Queen and her princely child, Heaven and Earth rejoiced.

— The Teaching of the Buddha,
Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai

On April 9th, our temple will be joining the Los Angeles Buddhist Temple Federation (AKA: Butsuren) Hanamatsuri celebration, here, at the Betsuin hondo. Butsuren is a unique group of Japanese Buddhist temples from different traditions in the Little Tokyo area. The group includes Higashi Honganji Buddhist Temple, Jodo Shu North America Missions, Koyasan Buddhist Temple, Long Beach Buddhist Church, Nichiren Shu Beikoku Betsuin, Nishi Hongwanji Buddhist Temple, Senshin Buddhist Temple and Zenshuji Soto Mission. And while many of our rituals and practices vary, there is a commonality we all share as Buddhists — the birth of Shakyamuni Buddha.

Japanese Buddhists in the west call the Birth of the historical Shakyamuni Buddha, Hanamatsuri or Flower Festival.

According to legend, Siddhartha was conceived when his mother, Maya, dreamed that a white elephant entered her body through the side. With her delivery time approaching, as with tradition of the time, she returned to her

parents' home to give birth. On the journey home, however, her entourage came to rest at the wooded garden of Lumbini. There, standing with her outstretched right hand on the branch of a tree, at which time, she gave birth. There upon, the newborn Siddhartha rose to his feet, took seven steps forward and declared "Upon the heavens on all the earth, I alone am the World Honored One." Soon, a gentle sweet rain fell upon the garden and bathed the infant.

Of course, we all know it is impossible for a newborn infant to not only walk, but also to speak immediately after birth. Thus, the question then is, not whether it's true or not, but what does it mean?

At the time, it was believed that there were six realms of human existence —hell, realm of hungry ghost, animals, asuras (evil and fearsome spirits fond of fighting), men and heavenly beings.

By taking the seven steps forward, the newborn infant had gone beyond the six realms and into the world of truth. And it is within this world of truth that we are all born.

As with all newborn children, the baby Siddhartha was born a common human being. The legend that surrounds his birth is meant only to remind us that the birth of any newborn infant is an extraordinary event. "Under the heavens, on all the earth, I alone am the World Honored One." This is the cry of all newborn babies. It reminds us that through numerous causes and conditions, we have been born into this life. Each birth is an extraordinary event. As we reflect upon our own birth, we can easily see that we are a product of two people—our mother and father. My parents were a product of their mother and father — a total of six peo-

(continued on page 6)

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NEW RYOGEEMON

by Rev. Hibiki Murakami



Rev. Hibiki
Murakami

Hōonkō is, in the tradition Jodo Shinshu the observance of the memorial of its founder, Shinran Shonin. From January 9th through 16th, a memorial service for Shinran Shonin's legacy was held at Nishi Hongwanji in Kyoto and via the internet. This year's Hoonko was different from previous years. On the last day of the observance, a ceremony a ceremony was held to announce the new "Ryokegemon" by

Gomonshu-sama.

The new Ryogemon was rewritten in modern language, with the hope that the Buddha-Dharma would be easily understood by newer generations in time for the commemoration of the 850th anniversary of Shinran Shonin's birth and the 800th anniversary of the establishment of Jodo Shinshu in March of this year.

Let us review Ryogemon once again. Ryogemon is a short document written by Rennyo Shonin, the eighth abbot of the Shin Buddhism sect, in making the doctrines of Shinshu understandable to the general public at that time. In less than 200 words, Rennyo explained the basic tenets of the doctrine that shinjin is the true cause of birth in the Pure Land and that the subsequent nembutsu is in gratitude. He clarified the tradition in which this doctrine has been handed down as well.

Rennyo's Ryogemon, which was composed in simple and plain language, is an important text that has been read from the time of the Yamashina Hongwanji era in the 15th century to the present day. With the modern era, Ondokusan was put to music and became popular. In the present time there are hardly any opportunities to read the original Ryogemon. I grew up listening to Ondokusan, so I cannot say that I am familiar with the original Ryogemon.

When I compare the new Ryogemon with the original one, it is undeniable that the words we use today are definitely different from the words of Rennyo's time. The transition from the old to the new words is what makes it even more interesting to read.

For example, the first line of the new Ryogemon begins with "Namuamidabutsu." This is the part that corresponds to the original sentence, "casting aside all auxiliary-mixed practices and the mind of self-centered effort." By comparing it with the original passage, the fact that the work of nembutsu is the Other Power and one takes refuge in

the nembutsu comes to the surface more clearly upon one word, namuamidabutsu.

The next sentence, "I rely upon Amida Tathagata for enlightenment" (in the original Japanese Ryogemon, it's said tasuke tamae) is equivalent to the call of the Buddha, "Leave it to me, and I will save you as you are since my suffering and the Buddha's enlightenment are essentially one." Tasuke tamae is the response to the fact that Amitabha has rushed forward to save the unsaved beings. The latter part of the sentence, "my suffering and the Buddha's enlightenment are essentially one," is an expression that from the standpoint of enlightenment, there is no boundary between suffering and enlightenment. What this means is that my suffering is Amida's suffering and my suffering will eventually be as one as Amida Buddha.

In the last paragraph, the "rules" of life as a nembutsu practitioner, as given by Rennyo Shonin, are presented. Being convinced the principal of Engi, it urges us to share our joys and sorrows with those around us and to have a mind of shame for our arrogance and jealousy, and to be aware that we are finally saved by the Nembutsu.

Shinran Shonin concludes his Kyogyoshinsho by saying that even if we have doubts and critical thoughts about the working of Amida Buddha, these thoughts will eventually lead us to develop shinjin. Some of you may still be puzzled by the new Ryogemon, but let us take this opportunity to deepen our belief. By comparing the new and the old, you may discover something new.



ADOPT-AN-OBUTSUDAN

Connect the family to the Buddha-Dharma

A donation of \$100+ would be appreciated.

BETSUIN BOARD PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Pam Tabata

I can only guess that this year will move faster than the previous years because of my age and we continue to meet in almost pre-pandemic fashion.

I would like to thank everyone for your support of our Surf & Turf Fundraiser. The monies made from this go toward our continued growing expenses. Just like at home, prices continue to go up and money coming in is either the same or less. It was a difficult decision to raise the price of the meal, but the expenses we incurred for the meal did increase substantially and its purpose is to help offset general expenses for the temple. Your continued support is deeply appreciated, and words cannot convey our gratitude.

BWA is also sponsoring, perhaps their final, online auction in March. This auction money is for the purchase of a new refrigerator in the main kitchen. The most recent past auction money will go toward improvements to the kaikan kitchen. Thank you to BWA, under the leadership of Junie Obi, and her committee. The first improvement to the kaikan kitchen was Hollywood Buddhist Church donation of the much-needed counter. These improvements would have taken a very long time to get done and we are so very grateful to these groups for their thoughtfulness.

There will be a new fence going up around the temple property. We feel it has become a necessity for the safety of our Nishi Center children and everyone that works or comes to the temple for various reasons. As I write this, the contractor says it will be up by April. There will be changes in entering the property and it's for safety and security reasons. Like everything, change isn't always a welcome event, but it is part of life. So, please understand that entering the temple property may be a little more difficult, but security is our priority and we want everyone to be as safe as we can make it.

In gassho



BETSUIN CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MARCH

- 04 Surf and Turf Dinner Fund Raiser (pre-order only)
- 05 Regular Service 10:00 am
- 12 Regular Service 10:00 am
Eitaikyo Shotsuki Hoyo 1:00 pm
- 18 Spring Ohigan Seminar
- 19 Spring Ohigan Service 10:00 am
- 26 Rennyō Shonin Memorial Service 10:00 am

APRIL

- 02 Regular Service 10:00 am
- 09 Joint Betsuin/Butsuren Hanamatsuri (@ Betsuin) 10:00 am
Eitaikyo Shotsuki Hoyo 1:00 pm
- 16 Regular Service 10:00 am
- 22 BWA Kokoro Dance (see ad page 10)
- 23 Regular Service 10:00 am
- 30 Regular Service 10:00 am

MAY

- 07 Regular Service 10:00 am
- 14 Mothers' Day Service 10:00 am
Eitaikyo Shotsuki Hoyo 1:00 pm

In order to access any of these services via Zoom, contact the Betsuin for information:

213-680-9130 or

NishiDharmaCenter@gmail.com

*When catching a cold, cough comes out.
Saichi caught a cold of Seeker and Dharma,
and cough of Nenbutsu comes out again and again.
— Asahara, Saichi*

かぜをひけば せきがでる
才市が 御ほうぎの かぜひいた
念仏のせきが でるでる
— 浅原才市

DID YOU KNOW?

by Eiko Masuyama

HEART MOUNT[AIN]

NISHI HONGWANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE

(information/written by Yutaka Shinohara and Kaoru Inouye)

World War II commenced on 7 December 1940. Immediately picked up by the FBI were Japan born Betsuin ministers: Rimban Kow, (father of Kuniye Kow Odama;) Reverends Bunpo Kuwatsuki, Miyoshi Okita, (father of Seibi Okita and grandfather of Lina Okita Shimizu, great grandfather of Dustin/Jordyn Shimizu); Daitetsu Hayashima, Giko Abiko, (father of former Rimban Hiroshi Abiko); Koro Maehara, Giko Yamamoto, Jotetsu Ohno.

Executive Order No. 9066 was issued by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on 19 February 1942, [Day of Remembrance] to evacuate all Japanese nationals, including American citizens from the West Coast to relocation centers.

Public Proclamation No. 5 issued 30 March 1942, by General J L DeWitt, Presidio of San Francisco, to cover regulations on conduct of all alien Japanese. [Could not be physically out of 5 mile radius from place of residence]

The Western Defense Command and Fourth Army Wartime Civil Control Administration issued instructions to all persons of Japanese ancestry living in the Los Angeles Japanese Town area for evacuation procedures. [One of gathering places was in front of the Betsuin, 119 North Central Avenue, across from present Japanese American National Museum*]

The Nishi Hongwanji Family #18390, consisting of 42 members, departed for Santa Anita Assembly Center, Arcadia (Santa Anita Race Track) on 9 May 1942.



1942, First Street and Central Avenue, 119 North Central Avenue, Nishi Hongwanji Temple, meeting/loading area for transport to assembly centers.



Heart Mountain Sunday School Teachers 1943

Row 1: x, Shizuko Yokota Nii, Masako Kohno Shingu, x, x, Rev Mohri, Yutaka Shinohara, x, x, Sachiko Okumoto, x; Row 2: x, Kooru Namekawa Morioka(?), Mrs. Okita (?), x, x, Mrs. Matsumoto, Mrs. Kow, x, x, x, x; Row 3: Mitzi Kakuuchi Misaya, x, x, x, Meiko Fujihiro Murakami, x, x, x, x, Kaoru Inouye; Row 4: x, x, x, x, x, x; Row 5: x, x, x, x, x, x, x, Isao Yuge

Head of Family:

Rev Newton Ishiura [born in Hawaii]

[Rev] Reichi Mohri** and family

Mrs Jokai Kow and Family

Mrs Abiko and Family (wife of Rev Giko Abiko)

Mrs Ono and Family

Mrs Daitetsu Hayashima

Mr K Kimoto and family

Mr Kawamoto and family

Mr M Tasaki and family

Yutaka Shinohara*

Tadayoshi Sera*

Tsutomu Sera*

Mrs Kimiko Hirano (Shiota)*

** Rev Mohri was not arrested, because his name was not on the arrest warrant; "Mori" was listed, but not "Mohri"

* Betsuin YBA Gyotoku Kai members [Kibei-born in US, educated in Japan]

From Santa Anita Assembly Center, this group was transferred to Heart Mountain Relocation Center, Heart Mountain, Wyoming on 9 September 1942.

A Buddhist Temple was established in October, 1942, in a

(continued on page 5)

(KNOW? - continued from page 4)



April 18, 1943 Nyubutsu Keisan Hoyo Kinen,
Dedication of Nishi Hongwanji Buddhist Temple commemorative service, Heart Mountain, Wyoming, Relocation Center

recreation hall in Block 30 by Rev R Mohri.

Heart Mountain Bukkyodan [Buddhist Center] was established on 29 November 1942, in Block 17 Recreation Hall.



Rev. Reichi Mohri, Heart Mountain Buddhist Church Butsudan, built by Nishiura brothers of San Jose, and Wisteria design by Yutaka Shinohara

The Buddhist temple established by Rev Mohri was re-established as the Nishi Hongwanji Buddhist Temple with Rev Mohri as head minister and Nyubutsu Keisan Hoyo Kinen* [Dedication of Altar Commemorative Service] was held on 18 April 1943.

Rev Mohri and Yutaka Shinohara [superintendent of Sunday school] transferred to Tule Lake Relocation Center in September, 1943.

Rev Tesshin Shibata arrived from Tule Lake Assembly Center in October to head the Nishi Hongwanji Buddhist Temple.

Notes: Family #18390 was organized for evacuation purposes so that the Los Angeles Betsuin group of ministers and wives and children of ministers who were taken to concentration camps at the onset of war can be together.

In Heart Mountain, many of the Los Angeles Betsuin leaders decided to form the Nishi Hongwanji Buddhist Temple to include Buddhists from San Jose and Yakima. The Sunday school attendance increased remarkably under the new organization.

Mr Shigeichi Kawano was the Riji-cho (president) of the temple. Rev Reichi Mohri was the first minister and Rev Tesshin Shibata was the second minister.

I believe Rimban Jokai Kow, when he returned to Heart Mountain from Crystal City [Texas], was the third minister in charge.

In August 1944, the Sunday school teachers of Nishi Hongwanji Buddhist Temple gave a farewell party to Mr Kaoru Inouye who was inducted into the United States Army.

* * * * *

Thank you to: Linda Inagaki for donation of a 30 pack DVD discs; and an anonymous donor who donated nenjus, montoshikishos, and other memorabilia.

We have an older model reel to reel player but are in need of an amplifier that goes with it to play tapes. If you have one that works, please share (or donate) with Nishi Archives.



CALLING ALL SHOPPERS!

The Buddhist Women’s Association (BWA) is planning their fourth and final silent auction fundraiser. We thank all of you for your ongoing support during this pandemic, and would like to wrap up our final auction with surprise items you have not yet seen!



Large and small, we have many one of a kind treasures. Buy now, or Bid now — **The auction opens on March 12, and closes at 9pm on March 26th.** Won items will be

scheduled for pick up on April 1st and 2nd.

Part of this year’s auction’s proceeds will be utilized towards the replacement of the outdated ailing commercial refrigerator in Nishi’s main kitchen, as well as some overdue repairs. Whether it’s essential food for nourishment, or food for events, the temple affiliates and Nishi Child Development Center, all utilize the temple kitchen with high frequency for the benefit of the temple members, community, and families.

Please support our BWA Temple Fundraiser. Take a look – you never know what you may find!

<https://www.32auctions.com/LAHHBT2023SpringAuction>

BWA ACTIVITIES



Jean Kawakami (L) and Pam Tabata and other BWA members prepare ozouni for after the Gantan-E/Shusho-E (New Year’s Day) Service



BWA is making sekihan for the Ho-onko observance because it is purported that Shinran Shonin had a penchant for this rice dish.



BWA, wearing their “uniform” and holding their “tools” dance “Kitchin Ondo” at the Oseibo program.

(Rimban - continued from page 1)

ple to make my birth possible. My grandparents were a product of their mother and father — a total of 14 people. If we continue calculating, it becomes mind boggling. Within ten generations there are 1,024 people involved in my birth and within the twenty-five generations there are 33,554,432 people that are responsible for who I am! If only one of those 33,554,432 people did not exist, I would not be here today. As you can see, each birth is unique and remarkable — beyond comparison to anyone or anything.

For all Buddhists throughout the world, the birthday of the

human being, Siddhartha, is a significant event. As a human being, he had been born into this world and through the experiences that confront all living beings, awoke to the very Truth of the universe or Ultimate Reality.

Today, we are able to receive the teachings of this truth through the words and experience of a human being — Shakyamuni.

So as we commemorate the birth of Buddha, it gives us an opportunity for all of us to express our gratitude to the Buddha and reflect on his Teachings ... the Teachings that (continued on page 9)

BETSUIN PHOTOS



Rev. Hibiki Murakami (left) and Rimban William Briones performing special rituals in the onaijin during the Ho-onko Service.



Installation of Organization Leaders
L-R: Matthew Hayashi, Judy Izumo, Reiko Kondo, Les Toguchi, Pam Tabata, Francois Chau, Jean Kawakami, Nancy Nakashioya, Janet Hasegawa-Chu, and Geneva Chao



Rev. Murakami striking the bonsho following the Jodo-E (New Year's Eve) Service



Winter Pacific Seminar 2023 at the LA Betsuin
Ministers (l-r) Reverends Gibbs, Wondra, Turner, and Matsumoto



Okasane mochi placed in the onaijin for Gantan-e/Shusho-e, the New Year's Day Service.



Winter Pacific Seminar 2023 at the LA Betsuin
Japanese lecture by Reverend Yasushi Kigoshi in the Wisteria Chapel

BETSUIN PHOTOS



Year-end cleaning of the Wisteria Chapel



Year-end washing of the temple van



Year-end cleaning of the well-used kitchen



Newly installed handrail to ensure safe descent from the onaijin



ABASonics entertain the Oseibo luncheon attendees.



Nishi Girl Scout parents organize the Girl Scout cookie shipment

LOWER YOUR TAX LIABILITY

It is “tax season” right now and some of you have financial issues to consider. If you have an IRA (Individual Retirement Account), you are taxed on the amount you withdraw from your account. If you are at the age where you must withdraw a minimum amount from your account (RMD—Required Minimum Distribution), it will be considered as taxable income.

There is a way to minimize/eliminate your tax liability on your RMD. The **Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD)** enables you to designate the distribution (up to \$100,000 annually) to a qualified charitable organization (ie: *Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple*), and you will not need to pay income tax on that distribution. Note: The QCD will be nullified if you withdraw the funds to yourself and then write a donation check which will then be subject to being taxed

Stock Donations – If you have stock that has appreciated, donating the stock directly to the Betsuin may have tax benefits for you. If the stock has been held over a year, by donating the stock you would not have to pay the long-term capital gains tax like you would if you sold the stock and donated the proceeds.

Requesting Forms - If you would like to consider a QCD or stock donation, you may email the treasurers at:

bshino@NishiHongwanji-LA.org

or contact the temple office and the appropriate form(s) can be mailed to you.

Note: State tax rules may differ from federal tax rules. It is suggested that you consult with a tax advisor for your particular situation.

IT'S TAX TIME!

LOWER YOUR TAX LIABILITY



QCD

STOCK DONATION

Contact: bshino@NishiHongwanji-LA.org

(Rimban - continued from page 6)



“Birth” in Lumbini Garden

— Mural “Life of Shakyamuni Buddha” LA Betsuin Hondo

open our eyes to the truth of impermanence and interdependence in our daily lives.

Please join us in person or virtually on **Sunday, April 9 at 10:00 AM** at the LA Betsuin for the **Joint Butsuren Celebration of Hanamatsuri**. Rev. Kodo Tanaka of Jodoshu North American Mission will be the guest speaker in both English and Japanese.

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

11/16/2022 - 01/15/2023

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| November 2022 | 24 Carolyn Yumiko Kakita |
| 16 Elaine Ayako Nishikawa | 29 Kazuhira Ogino |
| 18 Yukihito Hanada | |
| 22 Shizuko Hamamoto | |
| 24 Kanichiro Tsutsui | |

January 2023

- | |
|-----------------------|
| 2 Shizue Ura Kinjo |
| 5 Mike Masaru Imanaka |
| 9 Margie Yoshihashi |
| 13 James Yoshio Yoda |

December 2022

- | |
|--------------------|
| 8 Henry Ishikawa |
| 15 Kazuko Furutani |

Betsuin Jiho

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

HATSUMAIRI

Hatsumairi is translated as the “First Visitation” and is often referred to as the *Infant Presentation Service*.

The LA Betsuin will hold the *Hatsumairi Service* on **Sunday, May 21st** in conjunction with the *Gotanye Service* which is the observance of the birth of the *Jodo Shinshu* founder, Shinran Shonin.

Normally, the Betsuin ministers and the *dharma* school teachers would be conducting the *Hatsumairi Service* for infants up to one (1) year of age. Due to the pandemic years, children up to the age of five (5) years will be accepted.

To those who are interested in participating in the *Hatsumairi*, please contact the Betsuin office by **May 7, 2023**. (**Registration form on page 10**)



HATSUMAIRI REGISTRATION

May 21, 2023

Name of Child			
Boy <input type="checkbox"/>	Girl <input type="checkbox"/>	Birthdate	
Name in Kanji (if Known)			
Parents' Names			
E-Mail			
Phone			
Address			

Estimated Number of Family Members Attending: _____

L.A. Hompa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple
 815 E. 1st St.
 Los Angeles, CA 90012-4034
 TEL: 213-680-9130
 E-Mail: info@nishihongwanji-la.org
 FAX: 213-680-2210

Please submit by: May 7, 2023
HATSUMAIRI REGISTRATION

Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple
presents:

“You Make Me Feel Like Dancin’”

Dinner Dance FUNdraiser

to help refurbish & replace much needed Temple Kitchen equipment!

Music performed by the one and only...



Saturday, April 22, 2023

Nishi Hongwanji Buddhist Temple “Kaikan”
815 East 1st Street, Los Angeles

Lotus Sponsor Table: \$1,000 (Additional Goodies)

Wisteria Sponsor Table: \$500

Individual: \$50 Advance / \$60 at Door

Table of 10 – All tables include Dinner & Dessert

For more information please contact:

Junie: nishi2023dance@gmail.com

or

Carol: cntanita@mail.com

Please submit RSVP form with payment by April 14, 2022.

CONTACT NAME: _____ Required email for confirmation: _____

___ Lotus Sponsor – \$1000 (10)	\$ _____
___ Wisteria Sponsor – \$500 (10)	\$ _____
___ Individual – \$50 Advance	\$ _____
Cannot attend but glad to DONATE	\$ _____
Total Amount Enclosed	\$ _____

SPONSOR TABLE GUESTS (Please print)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Check Payable to LAHHBT

Return Address:
LAHHBT – 2023 Dance
815 East 1st Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012