Summer Fun

If you are depressed, you are living in the past.
If you are anxious, you are living in the future.
If you are at peace, you are living in the present.
– Junia Bretas

Summer is going full blast and we have lots to do so let’s enjoy this precious and special moment. Of course, summer and July for West LA temple members means Obon Festival and we are definitely ready to offer another weekend of great festivities for everyone to enjoy. As I have mentioned in the past, Obon takes on its own unique and almost magical form and energy once it begins, and we can only watch and experience it in amazement.

All throughout the year our life is directed by seasons and scheduled events. Whether we participate in them or not they are there for our convenience and benefit. So there is no reason why we shouldn’t keep active and enjoy the various activities that are provided for us. As stated in the passage, human emotions can challenge us in every moment, past, present, and future. We can become a hostage to them or be free to enjoy everything that is in front of us. This choice can only be made by each of us. Whether we are depressed, anxious, or at peace depends on our mental and emotional approach to life. It is simple but it is also an eternal challenge.

Civilization, throughout history, has given us holidays, festivities, and special observances so we can take a break from our everyday lives for celebration, mindfulness, and simply for fun. Can you imagine if we had no birthdays, anniversaries, memorials, or seasonal vacations? Foremost, we would not be able to enjoy the camaraderie of our family and friends. At such time we could easily become moody and difficult. What a sad thought. Today, we live from one holiday to the next with our minds and bodies attuned to an inner clock that builds up our anticipation for a change from the busy-ness or possible monotony of work and daily chores. We have perfected this routine and many of us seem to live by it. Obon, with its delicious foods, dancing, music, bingo, exhibits, and pure joy is a unique pleasure we can only experience firsthand. During all the fun we can also sit in the hondo for a quiet and contemplative moment.

However, we must not forget that the very important purpose of Obon is to remember with gratitude all those who have passed on before us. Because of these individuals who have been a significant part of our lives, and thanks to their sincere efforts and concern for others to be safe and happy, we naturally feel this heartfelt energy to celebrate with humility and appreciation. In turn, we share our joy for this interdependence of life with others in the community.

All civilizations have taken great care to remember people of the past. We can never cease to be mindful of their contributions to family and society. All of us are the stewards and caretakers of all life at this very moment. Whether we care about clean air, water, plants, animals, the homeless, or ongoing conflicts, we are part of it all. With mindful compassion, we can contribute to the welfare of this entire universe with a deeply sincere wish for everyone to be

(cont’d on page 2)
safe and happy. Obon represents all of this. We do make a difference with our thoughts, words, and deeds that will resonate through the ages long after we ourselves are gone.

Shinshu Corner

*Practice of Hearing*

_The Jōdoshinshū Book_, The Nembutsu Press (pages 46-51)

**The Nembutsu**

Shinran Shōnin’s first achievement was to refine the essence of faith from the various practices which existed in his day, and to express it in the form of tariki (Buddha-centered power).

At that period of Japanese history, art, medicine, government, science, and everything that would come under the general classification of culture, was considered to be religious. As these areas of activity and study began to be investigated independently of their religious significance, however, the sphere of religion became vague.

Shinran Shōnin’s predecessor scholar-monks had begun the process of discarding the non-religious elements from Buddhadharma, and groped toward the idea of “faith.” The Shōnin inherited this tradition, and carried it to its highest development, that of faith based on absolute Buddha-centered power. It is impossible to go beyond this level. Anything further than the point to which Shinran carried Buddhadharma will result in a “nonfaith” deviation from the religious sphere.

The second thing that Shinran Shōnin did was to simplify Buddhadharma so that even unenlightened persons such as you and I could participate in the teachings, and gain birth in the Pure Land.

The teachings left by the historical Śākyamuni Buddha are remarkable for their profundity. However, because his teachings are intended for monks who have the leisure that can come only from abandoning home and family, for a homeowner with a family to support, they are extremely difficult to follow.

... Until Shinran Shōnin, everyone who wished to attain enlightenment had to follow what is referred to as “The Path of Sages” (shōdōmon), in which devotee had to spend every moment of his life in his religious quest. Shinran Shōnin himself diligently pursued this path for 20 years. But regardless of how ideal this path may be, we must seriously consider whether it is one we can tread.

Although we may be able to physically go through all the prescribed forms of religious activity which others can observe, it is extremely difficult to develop the heart which motivates these actions. ...

“But, for this ignorant Shinran ...” This is the attitude with which Shinran Shōnin started.

“But”—this skeptical and doubting attitude toward our self is where our quest for spiritual enlightenment begins. Where this doubt is pierced, is where the world of the Nembutsu begins. Or rather, when this doubt is enwrapped in the Causal Vow, is where the entrance to the Pure Land opens up.

Doubt is basic to the teachings of Jōdoshinshū, for without it the experience of the Causal Vow will not be had. Experiencing the Causal Vow is usually referred to as having “faith” in it. There is nothing wrong with the word faith except that it connotes having to believe in something because it is impossible to know about it. But experience of the Causal Vow is knowledge of it. ...

**How to Approach the Gate of the Teachings**

In order to decisively encounter the Buddha’s true intentions (Causal Vow), we must have a seeking heart. Each of us must approach the gate of the teachings ourselves and enter in ourselves. But how do we approach the gate in order for it to open up for us?

There are religions that require you to pray before the gate opens. There are others that require you to fast and perform ascetic rituals before you can enter in. Some religions require sitting in meditation and yet others require you to repent before you can enter into the gate.

How did Shinran Shōnin approach the gate? His approach was to use his ears. He entered into the gate of the teaching through hearing.

In Japanese, the character “to hear” is written with the character for “ear” placed inside the character for “gate,” thus perfectly symbolizing
for us Jōdo Shinshūists the way to approach the gate of the teachings.

“Hearing” is both the beginning and the end of Jōdo Shinshū. A follower of Jōdo Shinshū always listens diligently, whether at the temple or at home, whether the subject is religious in nature or not, for it is not what is said that is as important as what is heard. A wise man can learn even from a fool.

The Japanese term used to refer to the way a Jōdo Shinshūist hears a sermon, is “monpo,” written with the characters for “hearing” and “law” or “dharma.”

A Jōdo Shinshūist who does not “hear” is a Jōdo Shinshūist in name only.

Although not a Buddhist, Confucius passed a state where he “paid obedience to my ears” (mimishitagayu). “At forty I was ignorant,” he said. “At fifty I understood Heaven’s will.” And when he was sixty, Confucius “paid obedience to his ears,” before attaining perfection at seventy. This illustrates the humble attitude Confucius had before realizing his goal, and illustrates how important it is “to hear.”

Just what is it that we listen for, and how do we hear it?

[Note: 耳=ear, 門=gate, 聞=hear, 法=law or dharma, 聞法=hear-dharma]

Next issue: “What Do We Listen For?”

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

It’s Obon Season!! All you members of the Temple: please come out to our Obon Festival. If you have some time to spare, we could use your help in some of our booths. You don’t have to belong to BWA, Buddhist Men, etc. to participate. Come out and enjoy the camaraderie; we would greatly appreciate your help.

Come and support our Taiko Group at San Fernando Valley Obon on June 28 and 29, 2014. Also, this year the Taiko group is playing at Pasadena’s Obon for the first time—for one night on Sunday, July 20, 2014.

August is our time for rest and recuperation from the Obon season. Have a great vacation and see you all back in September.

We look forward to your help in our Obon Festival booths!

With Gassho,
Beverly Yahata
West Los Angeles Buddhist Temple presents
the 66th Annual
Obon Festival
JULY 26/27
2014
SAT. JULY 26
Festival • 4pm to 10pm
WLA Taiko • 5:30pm
Obon Dancing • 6:30pm

SUN. JULY 27
Festival • 3pm to 9pm
WLA Taiko • 5:30pm
Obon Dancing • 6:30pm

Games, Raffle, Udon, Beef & Chicken Teriyaki, Wontons, Imagawayaki, and much more!

FREE COVERED PARKING at the Trident Center (at Corinth Ave and Olympic Blvd)

Obon Dance Practice Dates (7:30-9pm)
June 24 & 26
July 1, 3, 8, 10, 15 & 17

2003 Corinth Avenue, West Los Angeles, CA 90025
310.477.7274 • www.wlabt.org • www.facebook.com/wlabt
UPCOMING SERVICES AND EVENTS

SAVE THE DATE: Sunday, November 23, 2014
Kieshiki Affirmation Ceremony and Thanksgiving Service
Guest speaker: Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop
All BCA temple members welcome.
If you don’t already have a hōmyō, please sign up for the Kieshiki.
See the application form on page 8 (cost: $25 to cover BCA fee).

Sunday, June 15
Father’s Day & Graduation Service

June 20 (Friday): Bingo

80 Plus Lunch YARD SALE
9 am - 3 pm, Saturday, June 21

Thank you very much your support!

June 22 (Sunday): Regular family service
June 24 (Tuesday): First bon dance practice
(last practice: Thursday, July 17)
June 26 (Thursday): Bon dance practice

July 8 & 10 (Tue. & Thu.): Bon dance practice
July 13 (Sunday): Obon/Hatsubon service
Rev. Tetsuo Unno (Eng./Jpn.)

July 15 (Tuesday): Bon dance practice
July 17 (Thursday): Last bon dance practice

July 19 (Saturday): Cemetery services
9:30 am Woodlawn
11:00 am Inglewood

July 20 (Sunday): NO service - booth construction
WLA Taiko plays at Pasadena Obon

Pasadena Obon
WLA Taiko performs July 20 (Sunday)

WLABT OBON FESTIVAL
Saturday, July 26, 2014, 4-10 pm
Sunday, July 27, 2014, 3-9 pm

Saturday 5:00 pm
Sunday 4:30 pm

Mark your calendar!
Southern District Buddhist Conference (SDBC)
43rd FBWA Conference  SDDSTL Conference
Sharing Our Life Stories as Buddhists
October 10-12, 2014  Hotel Irvine Jamboree Center
(1-day [Oct. 11] option available for SDBC and SDDSTL)
Registration information available at the temple office.
~ early bird deadline for WLABT: Sunday, August 10 ~
July-August 2014

JULY SHOTSUKI HOYO, 10:00 a.m. Saturday, July 5, 2014

Arimoto, Kotsuyu
Deguchi, Taizo
Fujihiro, Shigeko
Fujiyama, Ben
Hada, Saichi
Harada, Shimano
Hayashi, Ikutarō
Hayashi, Shizuko
Ichikawa, Shoji
Ikeda, Alice
Ikeda, Fuyue
Ikeda, Minosuke
Ikenaga, Kumaji
Inabu, Minoru
Ishihara, Haruo
Iwasaki, Masamitsu
Kaizuka, Fred
Kajiwara, Shimo
Kato, Shigeko
Kikuma, Satoye
Kishi, Asako
Kiyohiro, Kenso
Kurosaki, Kazuma
Machida, Michiko
Maruyama, Robert
Matsumoto, Chiyo
Mayeda, Kimiyo
Mayeda, Sankichi
Morioka, Yuiko
Nagao, Eddie
Nagao, Mary
Nakagawa, Shio
Nakamura, James
Nakamura, Toshio
Naramura, Glenn
Niida, Kosue
Nimori, Shizuka
Nishi, Kikuo
Nishikawa, Katsumi
Nishikawa, Yoshio
Nishiyama, Setsuko
Nunokawa, Henry
Oshinomi, Sumiko
Osumi, Terry
Otani, Tomoo
Ozamoto, Tominosuke
Shimasaki, Lillie
Sumida, Evelyn
Suzuki, Kanenori
Takahashi, Larry
Takahashi, Noboru
Takemoto, Natsuko
Takemoto, Shigeko
Tanabe, Shinkichi
Tanaka, Masaki
Tanaka, Sato
Tashima, James
Teruya, Zenichi
Tochioka, Ryuhachi
Tonai, Grace
Toya, Fusajiro
Uto, Masayuki
Watarida, Ayame
Yahata, Kuniye
Yamanaka, Ben
Yamanaka, Gregory
Yamanaka, Hisako
Yoshiwara, Haruko

AUGUST SHOTSUKI HOYO, 10:00 a.m. Saturday, August 2, 2014

Baba, Nobu
Baba, Sensuke
Deguchi, Aiko
Dohi, George
Hada, Hikoichi
Hada, Kyokichi
Hada, Yoshiko
Hara, Chiizuko
Higa, Itsuko
Ifuku, Kinuko
Ishihara, Chizuko
Ishii, Hideo
Kakimoto, Sankuma
Kamibayashi, Hanbei
Kamibayashi, Hiroshi
Kamibayashi, Kazuye
Kamibayashi, Mamoru
Kiriyama, Hisataro
Kitajima, Hideye
Kondo, Yaye
Kushida, Frank
Maeda, Sasami
Maeda, Toyoshige
Marumoto, Satsuki
Maruyama, Seiji
Mayetani, Kikuye
Miyata, Motochika
Morikawa, Marjorie
Murakami, Pier
Muramatsu, Morisada
Nakamura, Jim
Nakamura, Kisayo
Nakamura, Koharu
Nakashima, Jack
Narahara, Ryochi
Nishikawa, Yuriko
Nishina, Masao
Nunokawa, Frank
Nunokawa, Hisao
Ohara, Mineshi
Ohashi, Hisano
Onami, Kiyo
Onami, Tadashi
Ouchi, Kichiyemon
Ozaki, Yukio
Sakata, Momoyo
Sasai, Ichiro
Sasai, Masaru
Satake, Koura
Shimomaye, Miyoko
Shintaku, George
Stambul, Sylvia
Sunada, Masaru
Takahama, Fuyutaro
Takeda, Ishi
Takimoto, Masuko
Tanaka, Riko
Tanaka, Tetsu
Tanimura, Mary
Toma, Jiro
Totani, Yoshihiko
Tsuzukiwara, Kajuro
Umeda, Paul
Umeda, Tsuginori
Uye Kubo, Kuichi
Uye Kubo, Yomi
Yamamoto, Yoshino
Yamauchi, Tsuru
Yanokawa, Teru
Yonemura, Mitsugi

CONDOLENCES TO THE FAMILY OF:

Ken Masuda
January 20, 1954 - April 4, 2014
BWA NEWS by Connie Yahata

The following is a recap of our meeting of May 11, 2014. a) In memory of Kyuja “Kay” Kafka, BWA made a donation to the Robinson Jeffers Tor House Foundation. b) July 20 – BWA in charge of booth construction lunch; at our next meeting, Shirley Ito will ask for volunteers to help prepare the lunch. c) Kayo Ohkawahira reported that there are now 53 paid and 4 honorary members. d) BWA will contemplate a second publishing of the existing WLA cookbook by adding new recipes. e) Connie Yahata will be in charge of Curry Rice booth and will ask for volunteers to help with the preparation. Selling price will be $6 per plate.

FBWA CONFERENCE – OCT. 10-12, 2014
Registration packets are now available. We are encouraging all temple members and sangha friends alike to participate and experience this unique conference. Please contact Connie Yahata (aznmom22@gmail.com) or Haru Matsu-mune at the temple office for more information.

Reminders: PANKO FOR SALE $2.00 per 12-oz bag AND recipes are still being collected for the BWA cookbook. Please contact Connie Yahata at: aznmom22@gmail.com

This month, I thought I would feature a recipe I received from my mother, Kazuko Asao. Hope you enjoy it and much as we do!

NEXT MEETING: JULY 6, 2014  11:00 a.m.

MISO SAUCE FOR FRIED CHICKEN

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<td>¼ c. red miso</td>
<td>¼ c. sesame oil</td>
<td>2-3 crushed garlic</td>
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<tr>
<td>¼ c. ketchup</td>
<td>1 tbsp. soy sauce</td>
<td>¼ tsp. salt</td>
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<tr>
<td>¼ c. sugar</td>
<td>1 c. water</td>
<td>Few drops of Lai Yu (chili oil)</td>
<td>Toasted sesame seeds may be added</td>
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Place all ingredients in a small pan and cook over low heat until thickened. Cool.
Cut chicken breast into bite-size pieces. Mix together 3 tbsp. sake, 3 tbsp. soy sauce, and salt and pepper to taste. Pour over chicken and set aside for 15-20 minutes. Coat chicken pieces with panko and fry in oil.
Dip chicken in sauce and enjoy.

[Note: Mrs. Asao’s recipe uses PANKO, which you can purchase from Connie to support fundraising for the combined conference in October.]

FROM THE DESK OF: DR. JACK FUJIMOTO
Publicity Chairman

BUSY MONTH FOR BUDDHIST MEN: Obon Season

With our dwindling able-bodied Buddhist Men, we need help from volunteers. Those in charge are taking yeomen responsibilities.

Our peerless leader, Milton Iwamoto, is being supported by Hidemi Ohkawahira at the Hot Dog booth, along with Rick Stambul and Masao Sasaki at the Udon booth. A separate assignment schedule shall be published and distributed to Buddhist Men who, we hope, will be able to fill gaps with our volunteer friends. A beer or two might give incentive to volunteering.

In addition to the Obon Festival booths, Buddhist Men are encouraged to help at the Obon practice sessions by serving refreshments, participating in the Obon street dance, as well as assisting with the orderly street dancing.

Recall that this is a time when many younger folks are interested in helping us to have fun at the Obon Festival.

Be sure to mark your calendar for July 26 and 27 for the Obon Dance and Festival. Your help is also requested for the Friday, July 18 Tent Setup and Sunday, July 20, Booth Construction as well as Monday, July 28 General Take Down.

We take a rest in August.
The Affirmation Ceremony

The teachings of Śakyamuni Buddha are so extensive that they are said to number 84,000. It is no surprise, then, that after the Buddha’s death, various schools developed based on the different aspects of his teachings. Shin Buddhism (Jodo Shinshu) is the Buddhist path of great compassion clarified by Shinran Shonin. Shinran teaches that Śakyamuni appeared in this world in order to reveal the Vow of Amida Buddha to save all beings; it is the salvation of all people by Amida Buddha that is Śakyamuni’s fundamental teaching.

The Affirmation Ceremony in Shin Buddhism, therefore, shares a common meaning with the precept of the three refuges administered in the time of Śakyamuni Buddha, but it also has a special meaning. In the Affirmation Ceremony, the Buddha of the three refuges is not simply Śakyamuni, but refers especially to Amida Buddha, who is the heart of Śakyamuni’s teachings. Śakyamuni came into the world to teach the Vow of Amida Buddha, and our salvation is brought about by Amida. Thus, “Dharma” is the teaching of Amida’s compassionate working to save all beings, and “Sangha” refers to people who have entrusted themselves to Amida.

Since there are no precepts in Shin Buddhism, instead of receiving the precept of the three treasures, one participates in the Affirmation Ceremony.

Also, Shin practitioners do not shave their heads, but undergo a ritual and symbolic shaving which has similar meaning. This is part of the Kikyoshiki Confirmation Ceremony. For the Kieshiki Affirmation Ceremony, the Bishop of the BCA touches the head of each recipient with a scroll inscribed with the words of the Buddha. This is referred to as “Chokyo” or “receiving the teachings” and takes on a similar meaning.

By participating in the Affirmation Ceremony, one receives a Buddhist name (homyo). These names are in the form of Shaku and two Buddhist terms which follow. The word “Shaku” means “disciple of Śakyamuni” and signifies that the person has joined the followers of the teachings of Śakyamuni Buddha, a community that transcends race or nationality.

In Shin Buddhism, as stated earlier, this ceremony is referred to as the Confirmation Kikyoshiki Ceremony when performed by the Monshu of the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ka. However, depending on the circumstances, the ceremony may be performed by a representative of the Monshu, as in the case of the Affirmation Kieshiki Ceremony being conducted today by the Bishop, Socho of the BCA.

Please enclose a check for $25 (BCA fee) payable to “West Los Angeles Buddhist Temple” and send to: 2003 Corinth Avenue, Los Angeles CA 90025-6221

Temple (BCA): ________________________________

Name: ______________________________________

First Middle Last

Address: ______________________________________

City: __________________________ State: ______ Zip: ______

E-mail: ______________________ Phone: __________

Age: _____ Birthdate / / Female: ___ Male: ___

MM DD YYYY

Parent or guardian (if under 12): __________________________

Signature of Applicant Date
Dear Sangha Members and Friends:

West Los Angeles Buddhist Temple (WLABT) is offering all Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) temple members the opportunity to receive a Buddhist name (hōmyō - “dharma-name”). Receiving a Buddhist name affirms one’s intention to live as a Sangha member, guided by the Buddha-dharma.

Participants receive a Buddhist name by taking part in a Kieshiki (affirmation ceremony). WLABT is holding a Kieshiki during its Thanksgiving Service on Sunday, November 23, 2014 at 10:00 a.m. Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop, will be officiating at the Kieshiki.

If you or your family members would like to receive a Buddhist name, please submit the application form (see page 8) to WLABT by October 1, 2014. Rev. Fumiaki Usuki will select the Buddhist name and submit it to BCA for processing.

Please take a moment now to see if you have a Buddhist name, and if you don’t, please don’t miss this rare opportunity to receive one. Families often keep such records in an obutsudan [home altar] drawer. If you need help reading kanji, please stop by the office for assistance.

We look forward to your participation.

親愛なるメンバー及びご友人の皆様へ

この度、ウェストロスアンゼルス仏教会(WLABT)で、米国仏教団(BCA)に加入しているすべての方に、法名授与の機会をご提供いたします。法名授与は、その方が仏法をよりどころとして生きる意志を表明する大切な儀式です。

参加者の皆様は、帰依式において、法名を授与されます。来る2014年11月23日午前10時より、WLA仏教会での感謝祭（サンクスギビング）法要の一環としてBCA総長、梅津広道師の手により執り行われます。

もし、ご自身及びご家族、御友人等、法名受領をご希望される方は、申込用紙にご記入の上、2014年10月1日までにWLA仏教会までご提出ください。WLA仏教会開教使、宇宿文章師が、法名をお選びし、BCAに申請いたします。

もうすでに法名をお持ちでないかどうかお確かめください。しばしば、お仏壇中に法名が収められている場合があります。もし、法名の漢字がお読みになれない場合は、お気軽にお寺にお立ち寄りください。もし、まだ法名をお持ちでない場合は、ぜひこの貴重な機会をお見逃しなく願います。

皆様のご参加を心よりお待ちしております。

80-PLUS LUNCH
Monday, May 19, 2014

Happy Birthday to
Emiko Matsumoto
Mabel Tsukuda
SHARING OUR LIFE STORIES AS BUDDHISTS

OCTOBER 10-12, 2014
HOTEL IRVINE JAMBOREE CENTER
IRVINE, CA

A CONFERENCE FOR ALL SEEKING THE LIGHT OF THE BUDDHA DHARMA
PRESENTED AS:
BUDDHIST CHURCHES OF AMERICA
43RD CONFERENCE OF THE FEDERATION OF BUDDHIST WOMEN’S ASSOCIATIONS
SOUTHERN DISTRICT BUDDHIST CONFERENCE
SOUTHERN DISTRICT DHARMA SCHOOL TEACHERS LEAGUE - ANNUAL CONFERENCE

For more information, contact Haru Matsumune at 310-477-7274, email: fbwa_haru@ymail.com
“SHARING OUR LIFE STORIES AS BUDDHISTS”

OCTOBER 10-12, 2014 – HOTEL IRVINE, IRVINE, CA
BCA CONFERENCE – SPONSORED BY FBWA, SDC, SDBWA, SDDSTL

YOU ARE INVITED TO ATTEND THIS CONFERENCE!!!
REGISTER NOW FOR EARLY BIRD DISCOUNT

Does your calendar show that you are attending this Conference? Why not? Is it because you are not a BWA member? You are not part of Southern District? You are not involved with SDDSTL? You don't want to hear great speakers?

The Conference, “Sharing Our Life Stories as Buddhists,” offers a unique opportunity to hear powerful speakers from different Buddhist traditions. This Conference marks a significant step in our Jodo Shinshu practice to reach out and find common roots. The practice of Buddhism is not a single vision: it is life and how we live it. Hopefully, this conference will let us discover ourselves and learn about our similarities and differences with other Buddhists. How powerful is that?

Here’s how you can save money. “Early Bird Registration” is $150 per person for the 3-day event, which includes Friday’s activities, Saturday’s opening service, speakers, lunch, discussion sessions, banquet with entertainment, and Sunday’s special closing service.* How about staying at the Hotel Irvine, the host hotel? Conference rate: $115/night (+tax) – yet another great bargain.

Not convinced that this is a conference for you? Check out the website at http://buddhistchurchesofamerica.org/2014bcaconference Open the various pages for further information and register through your temple. (WLABT members: If you have questions or need help, please contact the temple office.)

Let’s challenge ourselves to talk about our faith, our religion. Are you ready? Attend the October BCA Conference. No excuses. Let’s begin “Sharing Our Life Stories as Buddhists.”

We look forward to seeing you and saying “HI” October 10, 11, 12, Hotel Irvine, Irvine, CA.

In gassho,
BCA Conference Committee

* 1-day registration available for Southern District Buddhist Conference and SDDSTL attendees.

[Note: Modified version of submission by Rick Oishi for OCBC’s Korin newsletter]
BOOK REVIEW by Sei Shohara

Strange Places of the Heart - Stories by Rip Rense

WLABT member Rip Rense’s latest book has been published. He describes its contents as:

Love is a many bended thing. It is not roses and chocolates, and it is not sex, and it is not undying devotion, though those things are all better when love is involved. Love is cryptic and perverse, sneaky and strange. It happens when it shouldn’t, and doesn’t happen when it should. It happens inside heads where no one can see it, and it happens between the living and dead, people and cats, people and food, people and delusions, people and hope, people and themselves. And love is not even love. It can be hate. Yin-yang, the notion of everything carrying its opposite, is too often simplified as two halves of a whole. But the Chinese symbol of yin-yang has some yin in the yang, and some yang in the yin. Was the hatred that drove humans to destroy Nazi Germany an act of love? Well. All of which is to say that there are strange places in the heart, maybe nothing but strange places.

Here are twenty five stories about them.

This is Rip’s first collection of short stories. He has also written two non-fiction books of humorously biting commentary, one on inhuman acts of humanity, and the other on “bad words,” phrases, etc. that are leading to “civilized discourse and culture in this country going belly-up.”

On Rip’s website, there is a record of a lengthy Q&A session with Rip containing two questions in sequence that, in this reader’s opinion, summarizes this book quite well:

Q: There is such a range of characters in the book. I hate to use the overused word, “eclectic,” but it fits. I adored Francine, the woman who loved dessert and worried about Buddhism, and I loved the two girls in “Uncle Ice Cream.” They were a scream. Then there is the poor guy with MS—I forgot the character’s name—

A: Chance Marvel.

Q: Yes. Great name. And the old man alone in his house after his wife died, the bachelor who just wanted to fix juke boxes, oh, and I was moved by the woman flute player who couldn’t lift her arms anymore. The one that really hit me hard, though, was Mina, the songbird in “Too Many Rainbows.” I guess my question is ... are these people real? They seem real.

A: They are based in some instances on real people, but I emphasize based on. The girls in “Uncle Ice Cream” do not exist, but I knew two girls with their names who were friends. I wanted readers to feel they were meeting people, not just reading about characters.

Make no mistake in reading the first Q. This is not a book about Buddhism, though references to it are made in a few stories. But, in some sense it partly is, in that it illuminates strange places of the heart as they really are in life, through stories based on real people. As stated in the second Q, Rip skillfully presents all this in a way that can hit you hard.

Go to http://riprense.com/ for more information.
Sawtelle Japantown and the Future of America

by Randall Fujimoto

Everyday America.

That's what many of the historic Japantowns across the state have become. In 2007, the California Japantowns project identified 43 historic Japantown areas across California, but only a handful of these places still exist today as Japantowns. Most of them have turned into...Everyday America, like the San Diego Japantown (now the Gaslamp Quarter) and the Sacramento Japantown (now the Capitol Mall business district). In these former Japantown areas, instead of a Japanese grocery store, restaurant, and bonsai nursery, you're now more likely to see a Starbucks, McDonald's, and a new condo development. Yes, America is gradually turning into Everyday America.

Historic Sawtelle

In West Los Angeles, the Sawtelle area is another historic Japantown. Sawtelle has a rich Japanese American history dating back to the early 1900s when the Issei (first-generation) settled in the area. Unlike in San Diego and Sacramento, however, Sawtelle today still has the appearance of a Japantown, with a variety of Japanese restaurants and businesses, three neighborhood churches with large Japanese American congregations, and a community center with a Japanese language school and martial arts classes.

But, just as it did in San Diego and Sacramento, big development has now come to Sawtelle. Many long-standing Japanese American businesses, such as Yamaguchi Store and Safe & Save Market, are now gone, and many businesses that have no ties to Japanese American heritage or culture are moving into Sawtelle. And, much more development is on its way.

So, will Sawtelle gradually turn into Everyday America? Japanese Americans would be sad to see Sawtelle Japantown fade away because of the rich family and community history that would likely be forgotten. Japanese American culture would also be affected. Today, the preservation of Japanese American culture is becoming more dependent on Japantowns like Sawtelle as more and more of the new generations of Japanese Americans assimilate into mainstream America.

However, the greater threat of losing Sawtelle as a Japantown may be to the American public as a whole. Losing any ethnic community means that we are one step closer to our entire country turning into Everyday America. Many people might see this as inevitable "progress," with the new replacing the old as we move further into the 21st century. However, the more we lose our ethnic identities, the more we become a homogenous society. And, this is NOT a good thing for us.

Inevitably, our descendants are all probably destined to look like a mixture of all ethnicities. This will be the "American" look, with everyone having light brown skin and a wide array of interethnic features. But, even though people may all look similar, does this mean that Americans should all think the same way?

America's Strength Is Its Diversity

The answer, of course, is absolutely not. America's true strength comes from its diversity and a society and culture in which people are encouraged to share their differences. This diversity leads to a wider range of opinions, which in turn leads to new ideas and innovation. This innovation has resulted in a continuous succession of successful business endeavors (think Google, Facebook, and Amazon) and has kept America at the economic forefront of the world.
Research has shown that diversity is a key factor in a nation's prosperity. In business, leaders are advised to surround themselves with a diverse set of people instead of hiring all "yes men" because leadership becomes stronger with different opinions flowing across the boardroom. In a 2010 study of over 1,500 business leaders, the most important quality of a leader was found to be creativity. Innovation is the key to business success, and diversity is the key to innovation.

In education, reformers are speaking out against the practice of standardized testing because "standardized testing leads to standardized children." They fear that schools are turning into homogenization factories that churn out robot-like graduates prepared for 20th century manufacturing work. Instead, we need graduates who think out of the box and have a diverse set of skills to prepare themselves for 21st century innovation.

Fortunately, America is one of the most diverse nations in the world because it is the melting pot of all ethnicities. Los Angeles is one of the most ethnically diverse cities in America, so that puts Sawtelle and all of our local ethnic communities at the center of the melting pot. We need to make sure that we keep these ethnic communities alive so that we can continue to be a city—and country—full of diverse backgrounds, cultures, opinions, and ideas.

Sawtelle Japantown

Keeping Sawtelle alive as a Japantown is therefore important not just for Japanese Americans but for the future of America. But, with new businesses and developers moving into the area and forcing inevitable change, how can we ensure that Sawtelle continues to exist as a Japantown in the future?

The goal will be to get all businesses, developers, residents, and visitors who come into Sawtelle to respect the fact that this place is a historic Japantown. They all must enter the community knowing that they are now a contributing member of the history, culture, and heritage of Japanese Americans. Getting Sawtelle officially recognized and "branded" as an ethnic Japantown is the first step we need to take toward achieving this goal.

The Sawtelle Japantown Association (SJA) is a group now working on this first step. The SJA is focusing on first getting the city to put up “Sawtelle Japantown” signs and then working on state and/or national recognition of Sawtelle as an official historic district. This branding of Sawtelle Japantown will be critical to raising public awareness that Sawtelle is and will always be an ethnic community and part of the diverse culture of Los Angeles.

We need to save Sawtelle Japantown. Everyday America may be nice but not at the expense of sacrificing our precious diversity.

About the Author

Randall Fujimoto is the director of an educational nonprofit organization in Los Angeles and a member of the Sawtelle Japantown Association.

The Sawtelle Japantown Association can be reached at sja@sawtellejis.org.
みんなの法話

「なもあみだぶつ」は不思議な言葉

奈良・正覚寺衆徒 塚村 真美

この日、私が帰ってくると、

「なもあみだぶつ」は不思議な言葉

奈良・正覚寺衆徒 塚村 真美

この日、私が帰ってくると、
お仏壇と私

私を名で喚んで下さる仏さま 豊島 学由

「大阪府・金岡寺住職」

（大阪府・金岡寺住職）
（本欄は今村氏）
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<th>Saturday</th>
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| Office hours: 10 am - 4 pm  
phone: 310-477-7274  
e-mail: westlabt@verizon.net  
website:  
http://westlosangelesbuddhisttemple.org/ | | 1  
6/30-7/02 (Mon-Wed):  
7:30 pm Bon dance practice | 2  
BCA MA Fuken  
7:30 pm Taiko  
7:30 pm Service and board mtg | 3  
1 pm Study Class (E)  
7:30 pm Bon dance practice | 4  
[federal holiday]  
Temple closed |  
5  
10 am Shotsuki hoyo |
| 6 | 7 | 8  
10:30 am SDMA mtg at LA Betsuin  
7:30 pm Bon dance practice | 9 | 10  
1 pm Study Class (E)  
7:30 pm Taiko  
7:30 pm Bon dance practice | 11 |  
12  
Obon: LA Nishi, Oxnard [1-day] |
| 9:30 am Family service  
11 am BWA meeting  
Rev. Usuki off | 13  
9:30 am Obon-Hatsubon service  
Rev. Tetsuo Unno (J/E)  
Obon: LA Nishi | 14  
Rev. Usuki off | 15 | 16 | 17  
10 am Omimai  
1 pm Study Class (E)  
7:30 pm Bon dance practice | 18 | 19  
Cemetery services  
9:30 am Woodlawn  
11 am Inglewood  
Obon: OCBC, Pasadena, Santa Barbara [1-day], Venice |
| 20 | 21  
NO service  
8 am Booth construction, garden clean-up  
Obon: OCBC, Pasadena, Venice | 22 | 23 | 24  
(no study class) | 25 | 26  
WLABT OBON  
4 pm - 10 pm  
Obon: Vista, Higashi |
| 27  
WLABT OBON  
3 pm - 9 pm  
Obon: Guadalupe (1-day), Vista, Higashi | 28  
(no 80+ lunch)  
[all-day clean-up]  
7 pm General take-down | 29 | 30 | 31  
(no study class) |  |  
31  
[NO Bulletin folding] |  |  
LABCC Camp  
7/26-8/02 (Sat.-Sat.) |
### 2014年7月

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<td><strong>BCA夏季布研</strong>&lt;br&gt;午後7:30タイコ&lt;br&gt;午後7:30サービス幹部ミーティング</td>
<td>午後1:00スタデークラス(英)&lt;br&gt;午後7:30盆踊りケイコ</td>
<td>お寺休み</td>
<td>午前10:00祥月法要</td>
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<td>午前9:30サービス&lt;br&gt;午前11BWAミーティング</td>
<td>午後10:30開教師会&lt;br&gt;西別院&lt;br&gt;午後7:30盆踊りケイコ</td>
<td><strong>スタデークラス</strong>&lt;br&gt;午後7:30タイコ&lt;br&gt;午後7:30盆踊りケイコ</td>
<td><strong>BCA夏季布研</strong>&lt;br&gt;午後7:30タイコ&lt;br&gt;午後7:30サービス幹部ミーティング</td>
<td><strong>スタデークラス</strong>&lt;br&gt;午後7:00ブデスト・メン・ミーティング&lt;br&gt;午後7:30盆踊りケイコ</td>
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<td>午前9:30盆踊り&lt;br&gt;初盆サービス&lt;br&gt;海野徹雄先生(日/英)&lt;br&gt;お盆:西別院</td>
<td>宇宿先生休み</td>
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<td>午前10:00おみまい&lt;br&gt;午前1:00スタデークラス(英)&lt;br&gt;午後7:30盆踊りケイコ</td>
<td>8:00ブース作り、ガーデンお掃除&lt;br&gt;お盆:OCBC、パサデナ、ベニス</td>
<td><strong>スタデークラス</strong>&lt;br&gt;午後7:00&lt;br&gt;テント take-out&lt;br&gt;午後7:00&lt;br&gt;ビンゴー休み&lt;br&gt;(80+中ランチ休み)</td>
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<td>お寺休み&lt;br&gt;午前8:00ブース作り、ガーデンお掃除&lt;br&gt;お盆:OCBC、パサデナ、ベニス</td>
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<td><strong>スタデークラス</strong>&lt;br&gt;午後7:30盆踊りケイコ</td>
<td>お盆:盆栽set-up&lt;br&gt;<strong>LABCC camp</strong>&lt;br&gt;(土-土): 7月26日-8月2日</td>
<td><strong>LABCC camp</strong>&lt;br&gt;(土-土): 7月26日-8月2日</td>
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<td><strong>WLA仏教開</strong>&lt;br&gt;お盆&lt;br&gt;午後3:00 - 9:00&lt;br&gt;お盆:グアダルペ(一日), ビスタ、東本願寺</td>
<td><strong>WLA仏教開</strong>&lt;br&gt;お盆&lt;br&gt;午後3:00 - 9:00&lt;br&gt;お盆:グアダルペ(一日), ビスタ、東本願寺</td>
<td>午後7:00&lt;br&gt;ブース take-down&lt;br&gt;宇宿先生休み</td>
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| NO Sunday family services  
Dharma School,  
study classes,  
taiko | | | Bulletin folding  
toban: BWA | | 1 | |
| 3 Temple closed  
Obon: Gardena | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| | Rev. Usuki off | Rev. Usuki off | 7:30 pm service and board mtg | | | |
| 10 Temple closed | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| | | 10:30 am SDMA mtg at LA Betsuin | | 7 pm Buddhist mtg | (NO bingo) | |
| 17 Temple closed | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| | Rev. Usuki off | Rev. Usuki off | | | | |
| 24 Temple closed | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| | 12 pm 80+ lunch  
Rev. Usuki off | Rev. Usuki off | | | | |
| 31 Temple closed  
8/30-9/01 (Sat.-Mon.):  
SD Jr Y conference | [September 1]  
Temple closed | | | | | |

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http://westlosangelesbuddhisttemple.org/
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<td>休み</td>
<td>8月30日-9月1日(土月)</td>
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<td>SD Jr Y conference</td>
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2014年8月

オフィス時間：
午前十時 - 午後四時
電話：310-477-7274