



# GASSHO



To promote a greater understanding and appreciation of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism and to continue to live the nembutsu as a warm and friendly temple

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Los Angeles, California

Spring, 2016

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## NENBUTSU GROWS WHERE WATER FLOWS

*Rev. Kory Quon*

Water Water Water... I borrowed the term above. Recently, some of our members and I were able to attend the BCA's National Council Meetings in Visalia California. If you take a drive through central California you will see signs with the phrase "Food Grows Where Water Flows." It is to awaken us all to the urgency of the drought that we are all experiencing. This message is a call to the world. The drought is affecting us all. How many of us are doing our part? When I used think of water I thought of the limited understanding of my own need. I thought of the faucets, hoses, and toilets in my home. Now, when I think of water I think of something greater. You may think that this article is about water for food. I am addressing something far more important.

Picture in your mind a block of ice. This Block will have to last for the REST OF YOUR LIFE. Is your block Big? Large? Humongous? Let's envision it to be the size of the world or even the sun? How big will your Block be? In my mind I have A Big Block of ICE all the time! It would have to be at least the size of the polar ice caps.

Shinran the founder of our branch of Buddhism wrote,  
"Obstructions of karmic evil turn into virtues;  
It is like the relation of ice and water:  
The more the ice, the more the water;  
The more the obstructions, the more the virtues."

In this passage from the Hymns of the Pure Land Masters or Koso Wasan, Shinran expresses our egocentric nature or the passions that give us and others mental, physical, and psychological suffering and pain which obstructs or prevents us from finding true inner peace or Enlightenment. How Big was your Block of Ice? When I think of the Polar Ice Cap in my mind it is literally greedy and selfish to wish for so much. Shinran then relates the ice melting into water. When we truly feel this connection of our passions or Ice, we have the great opportunity to learn the Buddha's virtues. This does not discount our own "human nature." With each bit of melting gives a wonderful and meaningful life, there is also the daily amount of from our "human nature" that is added as well. In realistic terms according to the National Snow and Ice Data Center, in February 2016 the polar ice cap added 7,600 square miles of ice per day. I can honestly ask myself, "Will my block ever disappear? Will my Enlightenment ever be obtained if I were to do it all on my own? I highly doubt it."

"Through the benefit of the unhindered light,  
We realize shinjin (True Heart) of vast, majestic virtues,  
And the ice of our blind passions necessarily melts,  
Immediately becoming water of enlightenment."

This passage is also from the Koso Wasan and precedes the previous. It explains with the help of Amida Buddha's unstoppable light there is nowhere we are not touch by his compassion. Through this we receive the Buddha's heart and virtues that dissolve our self-centeredness and brings Enlightenment.

CONCLUSION: "Food Grows Where Water Flows" Truly try to conserve water. Awaken to the state of the source. Many times our only concern is of the end result and we only care about this problem if the water stops flowing or the price gets too high. Please do not wait too long.

This happens to us in our everyday Buddhist lives as well. How often do we only use the Buddha's teachings when life really is hard to bear? Awaken to the source of the wisdom, the source of the light. When I look deep within my mind there is ice that needs to be melted through the Buddha's compassionate light. The ice turns to water through the Buddha's virtues. I am grateful that we have the Buddha's teachings to guide us all in this way.

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## FUJINKAI

*Judy Hopfield*

The New Year started off on a busy note for our Venice BWA. Just prior to the New Year, our ladies prepared toshi koshi soba for our annual Joya-e service on December 30, 2015. Mrs. Tatsumi Omote and a crew of ladies in made the soba, and she added delicious shrimp tempura as a final touch. Everyone participated in “ringing the bell” after service that night and we all enjoyed the wonderful otoki afterward.

On New Year’s Day, Mrs. Omote came early to the temple to lead a crew of ladies in preparing dashi for the ozoni that was served after our Shusho-e service. There was plenty of leftover mochi to use from our mochitsuki, and we also used kamaboko that we’d purchased from the Pasadena BWA’s kamaboko sale. Mrs. Omote generously donated clams to include in the soup, and everyone brought delicious side dishes to enjoy as well.

The following week, our Venice BWA held our annual installation service, and we happily welcomed our new President, Phyllis Hayashibara! Phyllis has recently become a Grandma, and although she has babysitting duties, she has agreed to be our President. We’re counting on all of our ladies to give Phyllis 100% of their support!

The busy January continued with our annual ojinjo services and otoki on January 14-16, 2016. The otoki was different on each of the days, with the traditional shoujin-ryouri being served on Go-shoki Ho-onko, January 16<sup>th</sup>. Thank you to Mrs. Omote and Mrs. Arlene Hamashita for heading the otoki crew, and for preparing two kinds of okayuu (regular and with brown rice) on the final day. Thank you also to all the ladies who brought various kinds of tsukemono and other side dishes for our otoki on the three days.

Our ladies participated in our temple Shinnen Enkai, and Phyllis presented her first speech as our BWA president. She did a great job, and is sure to do so again next year, when our BWA will be in charge of the event.

On February 13, 2016, we held our annual Fujinkai Memorial, in conjunction with memorials for Eshinni-sama, Kakushinni-sama and Lady Takeko Kujo. In this combined service, we honored our departed Fujinkai members, as well as the ladies who so influence us today as Jodo Shinshu women. As guest speaker for the service, we were fortunate to have our newest BWA member and Minister’s Assistant, Amy Umezu. Amy delivered a poignant, yet

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## FUJINKAI

*(Continued from previous column)*

meaningful Dharma message about the life of Hisako Nakamura, a woman from the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, who tragically lost her arms and legs. Through heartbreak and immense hardships, Ms. Nakamura was able to use the teachings of the Nembutsu not only to survive, but to live a life of joy and gratitude. Listening to her story was truly inspirational. Following the service, we all gathered to have lunch together, and we enjoyed the homemade chirashi (freshly prepared that morning by Mrs. Tatsumi Omote and Fujinkai ladies), chashu, chicken and beef dishes, various salads, jello and desserts. To-go lunches were packed and delivered to Fujinkai and other temple members who were unable to make it to the event.

On February 21, Phyllis represented our BWA at Cub Pack 79’s annual Blue and Gold dinner and enjoyed seeing the ceremony and all the scouts.

A joint Southern District Council/BWA conference entitled “American Shin Buddhism: New Voices,” was held on June 18<sup>th</sup> in San Diego, and both our VJCC and Obon festivals. We did have good people to be in charge of our Obon wonton and sushi committees. Please step up and let Phyllis know if you can help!

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## NENBUTSU GROWS

*(Continued from page 1)*

Every time you see water think of the saying, “Nenbutsu Grows Where Water Flows.” Nenbutsu means to think about the Buddha. We say Namo Amida Butsu to relay our appreciation to Amida Buddha for the Gift of Infinite Wisdom and Infinite Compassion. Please think of the Buddha as the source, and not as a limited reservoir. As Nenbutsu grows within us all we will find an infinite drinkable body of Light that melts our passions, and give us value and meaning. Be grateful not only for the water in this concrete understanding of conservation, but also see it as the vehicle that gives us our life purpose. I wash my hands and say Nenbutsu. I quench my thirst and say Nenbutsu. I give my children a bath and say Nenbutsu. In each instance I can try my best to save water. I know in life I cannot be perfect, but we can all find gratitude in the life and food the water grows. With the water that we use for ourselves be appreciative and joyfully say, “Namo Amida Butsu.”

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## ABA

*Tom Yamaguchi*

ABA is starting another busy year. We will be having our 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Aloha Breakfast on April 17, 2016 from 7am to 1000 am at the VHBT temple. We will be preparing our famous "Chashu" fried rice, accompanied with eggs, sausage, Hawaiian Sweet bread, oranges and pineapple. Come join us before temple service.

In March, ABA had two seminars, under direction of Keiro on Medicare and Long Term Care. Thank you Keiro for the presentation. It was informative and educational.

May 21, ABA will be joining West LA ABA at the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual "Wine-a-Palooza". The event will be exploring Spanish Wines, and special Tapas. It is a great opportunity to join our WLA friends, to build close relationships. If interested, please contact ABA.

In June, we will participate in the festival season. First the VJCC Summer Festival, and in July our own Obon. I recalled at wonderful message from our President, Emily Kariya in last year's Gassho. I think a reprise would be a good time to reflect and remember it.  
(from gassho 2015 by Emily Kariya):

*The other day, I came home to see a piece of mail from the Venice Hongwanji. I opened it up and it was the work schedules for the upcoming VJCC Summer Festival.*

*When I saw it, at first I thought, "It's that time again." I'm sure many of you had the same reaction? Memories of long days and hard work flooded me.*

*After the initial shock wore off, I began to think about how many booths the Venice Hongwanji has at the VJCC Festival and how many of our families and friends come out and support us at the booths. The temple is by far the organization with the largest number of booths at the festival. It is no contest.*

*Why do we work so hard at our festivals?*

*I think it has something to do with a fundamental teaching in Buddhism. After the primary teaching of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism, which is that the Amida Buddha vowed that we will all become buddhas, the teaching that most resonates with most of us is the teaching of "Interconnectedness".*

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## ABA

*(Continued from previous column)*

*We are all part of a community. In the words of our sect's founder, Shinran Shonin, "we are never alone." I think we all understand that each and every one of us is an integral member of the temple and VJCC community. This understanding about the truth of Interconnectedness and the importance of maintaining the temple as a community is what I think keeps us committed to working hard for the VJCC Summer Festival and our own Obon festival.*

*Besides, being together with friends is fun! I hope you can join us by helping at the upcoming VJCC and Obon festivals and be a part of the temple community.*

Hands humbly together in gassho, Emily Kariya

## DHARMA SCHOOL

Dharma School's first big event of 2016 was our annual Scout Sunday on February 7th. The event was well attended by Cub Pack 79 and Girl Scout Troop 5325. At Scout Sunday we started to color pictures of roosters in preparation for this year's joint service project in December. There are still plenty of roosters to color, so we will continue to color throughout the year! Thanks to Judy Hopfield for coordinating this event!

On February 21<sup>st</sup> we had Pet Memorial which is always a favorite service for our students and friends of the Dharma School. After class the students enjoyed yummy animal cupcakes and goldfish crackers. Thank you to Judy Hopfield & Richard Modiano for coordinating.



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## 2016 CALENDAR OF MAJOR SERVICES & ACTIVITIES

### APRIL, 2016

- 2 TEMPLE SPRING CLEAN UP
- 7 ABA ALOHA BREAKFAST-7:00 A.M.
- 10 HANAMATSURI/ HASUMAIRI SERVICE – 10:00 A.M.

### MAY, 2016

- 8 MOTHER'S DAY SERVICE – 10 A.M.
- 15 GOTANYE SERVICE – 10:00 A.M.
- 29-30 MEMORIAL DAY GRAVESITE SERVICES

### JUNE, 2016

- 5 DHARMA SCHOOL PICNIC
- 19 DADS & GRADS SERVICE – 10 A.M.
- 25-26 VJCC SUMMER FESTIVAL

### JULY, 2016

- 9 OBON FESTIVAL SET UP & TEMPLE CLEAN UP – 8:00 AM
- 10 OBON/HATSUBON SERVICE – 10 AM
- 16-17 VENICE OBON FESTIVAL**
- 7/30-8/6 LABCC SUMMER CAMP

### AUGUST, 2016

- 7/30-8/6 LABCC SUMMER CAMP
- 2 A BOMB/ VIET NAM MEMORIAL SERVICE – 9:30 A.M.
- 8/29-8/30 JR. YBA CONFERENCE

### SEPTEMBER, 2016

- 6 DHARMA SCHOOL "SUNDAE" SUNDAY SERVICE – 9:30 A.M.
- 20 FALL OHIGAN SERVICE – 10 A.M.
- 26 ABA MEMORIAL SERVICE – 7:30 P.M.

### OCTOBER, 2016

- 17 FALL TEMPLE CLEAN UP DAY – 8 A.M.
- 17 FUJINKAI ESHINISAMA MEMORIAL SERVICE – 7:30 P.M.
- 24 DHARMA SCHOOL HALLOWEEN PARTY – 5 P.M.

### NOVEMBER, 2016

- 7 ABA STEAK FEAST – 6 P.M.
- 15 EITAIKYO SERVICE – 10 A.M.
- 28 MOCHI TSUKI SETUP – 8 A.M.

### DECEMBER, 2016

- 3-4 MOCHI TSUKI – 7 A.M.
- 6 MOCHI TSUKI WRAP UP & CLEAN UP – 8 A.M.
- 20 OSEIBO APPRECIATION SERVICE – 10 A.M.
- 30 JOYA-E END OF YEAR SERVICE – 7:30 P.M.

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## **REGULARLY SCHEDULED SERVICES & MEETINGS**

- FAMILY DHARMA SERVICE – Sundays, 9:30 A.M.  
Classes & Adult Service – Immediately following Family Dharma Service  
High School Students Class
- TEMPLE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – First Friday of each month – 7:30 P.M.  
(Except the General Member's Meeting scheduled for December, 2016)
- BUDDHIST WOMENS ASSN. (FUJINKAI) MEETING – Tuesday following Temple Board Meeting
- ABA MEETING – 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday Following Temple Board meeting.
- DHARMA SCHOOL STAFF MEETING – First Sunday of each month – 8:00 A.M.
- JR. YBA MEETING – First Sunday of each month following Family Dharma Service
- MORNING SERVICE – Every Monday, Tuesday, Friday & Saturday at 9:30 a.m.
  - (Except 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesdays when Sensei attends So. District Minister's Meeting.)
- MONTHLY TSUKI TSUITO SERVICE – Fourth Saturday of each month – 9:30 A.M.
- MEINICHIKO SERVICE – 16<sup>th</sup> of each month – 7:30 A.M.
- CUB SCOUT PACK 79 PARENT'S MEETING – First Thursday of each month – 7 P.M.
- CUB SCOUT PACK 79 MEETING – Every third Thursday of each month – 7 P.M.
- FUJINKAI SEWING CLUB – Every second Sunday of each month. – 12 Noon – 1 P.M.
- VHBT DANCE CLASS – Every Sunday – 3:00 P.M.
- HALAU HULA 'O NALIKOKAUIKAWEKIULANI CLASSES – Saturdays 12:15 P.M. – 3:30 P.M.
- GIRL SCOUT TROOP 5325 – TWICE MONTHLY ON MONDAYS, 5:30 P.M.



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Los Angeles, California

Spring, 2016

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You are cordially  
invited to  
**Wine-A-Palooza 2**

A fundraiser hosted by  
Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple &  
West Los Angeles Buddhist Temple.



**When:** Saturday, May 21st 2016

**Time:** 7:00pm-9:00PM

**Where:** West Los Angeles Buddhist Temple: Sangha Hall  
2003 Corinth Ave. Los Angeles, CA 90025

The Evening Includes:  
Wine Education Presentation, Sampling of Spanish wines,  
Hors d'oeuvres & Wine glass

\$40 Donation per person (includes raffle ticket)

**PAYABLE TO:** West Los Angeles Buddhist Temple

**MAIL TO:** Connie Yahata/Wine-a-Palooza  
2006 Butler Ave. Los Angeles, CA 90025

**SPACE IS LIMITED-RESERVATION REQUIRED**

**DEADLINE: MAY 14th 2016**

For more information, send inquiries to: [aznmom22@gmail.com](mailto:aznmom22@gmail.com)

Please tear off the bottom and mail in with your check.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# of attendees: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_