



GATEWAY



August 2013 -- Vol. XLVII No. 8

Living Dharma News www.livingdharma.org

The Seeker, Part 2, the second installment of the life story of Shinran Shonin, will soon be available. You can purchase it in person at any WCBT Sunday Service or online from our Living Dharma website bookstore if you can't come to service. There are many biographies of Shinran already out there, but as Rev. Tomoyuki Hasegawa, the book's English translator has pointed out, *The Seeker* incorporates only the very latest research on Shinran's life (even today, new information is being discovered) and also, the wonderfully illustrative "manga" style of the book makes it a captivating read.

Gassho,
Rev. Peter Hata

Selected E-mail

To: dharma@livingdharma.org

From = Angelica Gamboa

Subject = WCBT Sangha

Message = Healing by embracing a new holistic lifestyle has led me to continue embracing and accepting change. Plans change but what has not changed is my desire to see every chal-

Please see L.D. NEWS, con't on page 9

The (Other) Significance of Obon

By Rev. Peter Hata

I want to thank all of our members and friends who worked together and did the seemingly countless things that need to be done in order for our Obon Festival to be successful. This is difficult enough as it is, but the work was especially hard this year due to the triple-digit heat, and I'm sure we all heard many complaints and groans throughout the day. Are you maybe asking "Why do we all work so hard for the temple every year?"

Please see SIGNIFICANCE, con't on page 8



Above: Bon Odori dancers enjoy dancing at WCBT's 2013 Obon Festival; the festival had a good turnout despite very warm temperatures (more Obon photos on pages 4-7).

2013 Obon Thanks

By Merry Jitsho

On behalf of the WCBT Obon committee, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for everyone's hard work and dedication at our 2013 Obon. We saw the incredibly dedicated sangha members from Friday's setup through Saturday's Obon and Sunday's clean up. It was sheer endurance of survival through fatigue, heat exhaustion, muscle aches and headaches.

The result was a very successful Obon in spite of the heat. We thank all those who came out in yukatas and happi coats and danced and supported WCBT temple. We thank all the participants who enjoyed the many kinds of delicious food, entertainment and exhibits we offered. Most of all we thank those of you who came to our Obon just to support our sangha.

This Obon was successful due to our wonderful sangha and the amazing endurance of many volunteers. It was great to see our former Dharma school

kids and Jr YBA kids, now young adults, come out to support their parents and our temple. A special thank you to those out of town relatives and friends, who are not even members of WCBT, who came out on Friday and Saturday to help out in the extreme heat and said they are coming back again next year.

My definition of a successful Obon may be different than others. It's not only the financial success, but the ability to have a fantastic turnout of odori dancers

Please see OBON THANKS, con't on page 2

Temple Event Highlights:

- August 4 Shotsuki Service
- August 9-11 Vegas Trip
- August 18-Sept. 1 No Service
- Sept. 8 Shotsuki Service
- Please See Temple News



T H E G A T E W A Y

DHARMA SCHOOL NEWS

As you can see, this issue of the *Gateway* is dedicated in great part to all the countless individuals who made our Obon Festival possible. Here's our way of saying "Thank you!" to the help we were given specifically to the Dharma School game/raffle booths. Please find the names of Deanna, Lauren, Brian, Joy and Diane in the word search below:

O	N	B	E	O	N
D	E	A	N	N	A
B	R	I	A	N	J
O	U	B	I	O	O
N	A	O	D	B	Y
O	L	N	O	B	O

With Gassho,
Diane Hata



Quote of the Month

To obtain human life is difficult in the extreme; to meet a Buddha in this world is also difficult; it is difficult, too, for a man to attain faith and wisdom. Once you have heard the Dharma, strive to reach its heart. If you have heard the Dharma and do not forget it, but adore and revere it with great joy, you are my good friend. For this reason, you should awaken aspiration for Enlightenment. Even if the whole world is on fire, be sure to pass through it to hear the Dharma, then you will surely attain the Buddha's Enlightenment. And everywhere, deliver beings from the river of birth-and-death.
-The Buddha

Farewell to Rev. Bansaka!

On Sunday, July 7, 2013, the Los Angeles Higashi Betsuin organized a farewell dinner for Rev. Takafumi Bansaka at a restaurant in the City of Industry. Many of the people were Betsuin members, but members from Newport Beach and West Covina also came to express their appreciation.

Bansaka-sensei came to the North America District about two years ago as a replacement for Rev. Ryoko Osa, who had to temporarily relocate to Hawaii. Now that Osa-sensei is returning to the NAD office, she and Bansaka-sensei are trading places.

We will miss Bansaka-sensei and

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and see our young adult kids come out and work together with the sangha to make a memorable 2013 WCBT Obon.

Here is the reason, we were so successful. Thank you to:
Rev. Peter for the excellent job he did in providing us both the spiritual and organizational leadership necessary for a successful Obon. The fact that this was his first Obon as our new sensei tested his deft skill at working with the many personalities required in such a massive undertaking.

Young Adults (former kids):
Hata, Martinez, Haraguchi, Jitoshu, Kawawata, Sato, Shiota, Ogino, Kato, Ezaki, Maekawa, Kagawa, Takahashi, Aoki and Harrison. (Welcome back gang. See you next year.)

Non WCBT members:
Yoshihara family, Jenny Yoshihara's friends, Delatorre family, Elaine Harada, Steve Toyoshima, Mrs. Uyechi, Francis Nakayama and Dick and Hisako Koga's out of town relatives.

And all our chairpeople for each booth:
Supplies: Diane Hata
Teriyaki: Dick Koga and Ted Kato and the whole Kato clan

Chowmein/ rice/ gyoza: Dick Koga

Asian Chicken Salad: Hisako Koga

Tamales: Lee Ezaki

Okonomiyaki: Mei Ling Chen

Beer: Richard and Claudia Haraguchi

Somen/sushi: Howakia members, Rev. Hata, Rev. Hasegawa, Joanie Martinez



Above: Rev. Bansaka with Rev. and Mrs. Hata. wish him well as he begins a new phase of life in Hawaii.

Bingo: James and Sachi DeLeon and Teri Bray (Arigato to the wonderful group who covered bingo during the odori.)

Dharma School games: Diane Hata

Snow Cone/drinks: Arne Hansen

Produce: Dick Koga/ Jr YBA

Dessert: Ruby Kagawa and Lillian Nishihara

Odori: Jennifer Higa, George Abe (Taiko drummer), Kishin Daiko (for borrowing their drum)

Raffle: Larry Oshima (To the seniors for sitting in direct sunshine for most of the day.)

Dango: Akemi and Chris Hatakeyama

Ring Toss: Higashi Betsuin

MC: Brian Takahashi and Aaron Aoki

Parking lot set up: Bruce Whang and Dick Koga

Gym set up: Merry Jitoshu

MC for gym demonstrations: Dr. Roy Takemura

Trash pickup: Merry Jitoshu and Bruce Whang (and the incredible Chico Masai)

Treasurer: Frank Tanji

Ministers: Rev. Peter Hata, Rev. Fred Brenion, and Rev. Hasegawa

PA: Rev. Peter Hata, Dr. Roy Takemura

Obon Chairpeople: Merry Jitoshu and Bruce Whang

Of course, these booth chairpeople could not have run their booths without the help of all the sangha members.

We have one year to recover, until Obon 2014!! Now let's enjoy the Obon at the other temples for the rest of the summer!

In gassho,

Merry Jitoshu and Bruce Whang



T H E G A T E W A Y

T E M P L E N E W S

Las Vegas Trip

WCBT's annual Las Vegas trip is set to begin on Friday, August 9, from ES-GVJCC. The bus will leave promptly at 1:00 PM so please arrive early enough to tag and load your luggage and to get your seating. Feel free to bring snacks to share. Some drinks will be provided. The return bus departs on Sunday, August 12, promptly at 11:30 AM from the Main Street Station Hotel.

August Schedule

The August board meeting will be held 8:30 AM on August 7 followed by the Shotsuki Service at 10:00 AM. We will then take our annual summer break so there are no Sunday Services on August 14, 21, 28 and September 4. Regular services will resume again on September 11.

NAD Committee Meeting

The first meeting of the year for members of the North American District Committee will be held on Saturday, September 14, at the Betsuin at 10:00 a.m.

Fall Ohigan

The Fall Ohigan Service will be held on September 15 at 4:30 PM. Joining us, as our special speaker, will be Rev. Patti Usuki from San Fernando Valley Buddhist Temple. Please help us welcome Rev. Patti and stay for the complimentary otoki dinner following the service.

Oldies Dance XLVI

"Come Out to the Stix for Oldies XLVI (46)!" will be held on Saturday, September 28. Steve Kikuchi & High Resolution will be back again to provide our favorite hits from the 60's, 70's and 80's. The dance begins at 8:00 PM and will end at 12:00 AM with plenty of dancing and fun in between. Presale tickets are \$12 or \$15 at the door. For info and song requests call Joanie (626) 300-8947 or Lillian (626) 780-9866.

Your Toban chairs will contact you about work shifts and assignments. Plan to come by the center about 6 PM to help with the set-up. Donations are welcome for raffle prizes and drinks. Sign-up sheets for drinks will be at the Sunday service.

GATEWAY Staff

Layout & Editing: Rev. Peter Hata, Hisako Koga, Claudia Haraguchi, Rev.

Tomoyuki Hasegawa,

Contributors: Rev. Fred Brenion, Mei-Ling Chen, Diane Hata, Merry Jitoshu, Joanie Martinez

Circulation: Mary Hatakeyama, Joy Kitaura, Kimberly Kitaura

West Covina Buddhist Temple Mission Statement:

In the spirit of universal brotherhood, West Covina Buddhist Temple provides the opportunity for all to listen to and share the Teachings of the Buddha in order that we may awaken to our true selves, living our lives fully and dynamically.

The Temple's mailing address is:

West Covina Buddhist Temple

P. O. Box 1616

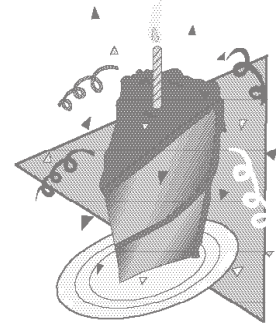
West Covina, CA 91793

(626) 337-8373

Website: www.livingdharma.org

Facebook: [facebook.com/westcovinabuddhisttemple](https://www.facebook.com/westcovinabuddhisttemple)

E-Mail: dharma@livingdharma.org



AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

Barbara Shirota, John Shirota, Brittany Kato, Wesley Hamachi, K.C. Koga, Mark Mayeda, Brian Iwama, Aaron Aoki, Rick Fujimoto, Sachi Ezaki, Sharon Kuwahara, Chico Masai, Vicki Takemura, Joy Ormseth, Frederic Brenion, Gregory Williams, Bill Dubble, Karleigh Nakata



Rev. Bansaka opens one of his many gifts at his Farewell Dinner in the City of Industry



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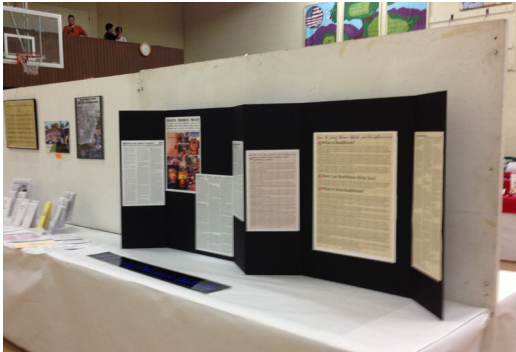
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I think that there's a basic reason why and it's one we can all understand: It's of course because we all have some sense of commitment to WCBT. We all know the Obon Festival is the most important fund-raiser for the temple and we want to help it be successful so that the temple can keep going. But to at least some extent, many of us may also be motivated—it's quite common in the Japanese-American culture—by a sense of duty and obligation, known as *on* or *giri* in Japanese. I think that perhaps for some people, their commitment may mainly consist only of this sense of *on-giri*. But I actually doubt this is true for most WCBT members. I think that a temple where most people are working out of a sense of *on-giri* is one that is doomed to failure. I think if we operated only on that basis we would probably not be able to put on the Obon. I don't think that operating out of a sense of duty would provide enough of a motivation for most of us. Instead, in observing the dedicated work that our members do for the Obon Festival, I was struck by the realization that something else must be behind everyone's effort.

Rather than *on-giri*, whether we are consciously aware of it or not, I think we are actually relying on something that is at the core of our Shin Buddhist tradition. This core principle is known as *tariki*, which is also referred to as "other-power," or "power beyond self." Of course, since *tariki* is associated with some rather "cosmic" or abstract concepts in Jodo Shinshu—for instance, Amida Buddha—you may wonder why I'm bringing it up in relation to the hard work we do at Obon. But I think this teaching of *tariki* relates directly to our work at the Obon Festival. And perhaps especially so at this past Obon, with its doubly difficult conditions. This is because *tariki* really is something like a great power or force that works through us. We may not even be aware of it, but when we find ourselves working really hard at something—and often in spite of our ego-mind, our inner dialog perhaps saying to us, "Wow,

this is so hard, why am I doing this?"—our effort is not actually something we are generating solely through our own power.

Of course, it's natural to believe that everything we do is simply a result of our effort. I'm sure we all believe and take pride in the results of the hard work we've done which has enabled us to achieve personal accomplishments in the past. For example, say we studied hard in school and when we graduated, we were able to get a higher paying job than if we hadn't worked hard. We would believe very strongly in our self-effort. But in Shin Buddhist thinking, this is actually an example of *jiriki* or self-power thinking. *Jiriki* thinking isn't wrong or bad though; it's just an incomplete and inaccurate understanding. Our successes in life are actually due to a multitude of fortunate causes and conditions.

Shinran Shonin is one person who really understood the problem of *jiriki* thinking. I think Shinran felt that after 20 years of his *jiriki* or self-power practices as a Tendai monk on Mt. Hiei, he came to the stark realization that he could not awaken himself. His ego-self kept getting in the way. It was at that point, at his darkest sense of failure, after giving up and descending down Mt. Hiei, that he was able to receive the insight to seek out a completely different path. It was at that point that he met his teacher Honen Shonin, who showed him the path of the Nembutsu, of Namu Amida Butsu. I think it would be accurate to say that the Nembutsu path is the path of *tariki* thinking. This is the path for which the only prerequisite is that, like Shinran, one realizes the limitations and flawed nature of the ego-self within; only then is one ready to give up their *jiriki* thinking. It is precisely at the moment that one deeply sees one's own limitations that one awakens to *tariki* thinking.

Let me share a personal example of *jiriki* thinking with you, and one which I experienced at our Obon. As I mentioned, at the Sunday Obon cleanup, we have to clean the community center

property where we hold our Obon and put everything back in storage. When we finish, the property must appear as if the Obon never happened. However, generally speaking, much less help shows up for the Obon cleanup than for the Obon itself or for the Friday setup. Many people probably already reached their physical limit on Saturday and on top of that, this year I think it was even hotter on Sunday than on Saturday.

Towards the end of the cleanup, we had just finished transporting the booth tents, the grills, the yagura, and a seemingly endless assortment of boxes back to our storage in Covina, and I was driving back to the center with Stephanie Jitosh. Somewhere during that drive, I began to realize my mouth was extremely dry, and I couldn't remember the last time I'd had any water. Naturally, I didn't remember to bring any water to the storage facility! And by the way, the upper floor of our garage storage must have been 120 or 130 degrees. In the car, I remember however seeing that Stephanie had brought her own water in a thermos, which she would periodically drink from as we were talking. It was quite tempting. For a moment, I thought, hmm...most people wouldn't share their personal thermos with others, but should I ask her for a swig? Or maybe, take a quick drink while she's looking the other way? But anyway, we were almost back at the center, so I just waited.

When we arrived, the first thing I did was drink an entire water bottle in one gulp. The next thing I noticed, after coming out of the air-conditioned car, was how hot it was. And then, it started to hit me. I started to feel kind of queasy and like I needed to sit down. I felt faint and it was a little hard to walk. I sat down and some people brought me more water, and one member actually brought me a couple of wet towels to cool myself down, which helped. But as I was sitting there, unable to get up, I began to feel kind of guilty, like "Gee, I'm the minister and I should be help-

Please see SIGNIFICANCE, con't on pg. 9



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ing them finish the cleanup." But then, another member came in and seeing my condition said, "Don't worry, just relax for awhile; the rest of the people are finishing everything up."

It's embarrassing to admit, but I think that my frustration at not being able to help was, in a sense, my overestimating my self-importance, because in reality everything got put away and the cleanup was completed without me. In that moment—kind of helplessly sitting on the floor almost like someone with a disability and watching everyone else busily clean around me—I saw my own *jiriki* thinking and at the same time, I felt a real sense of gratitude for the Sangha that supported me.

I think the rising of a sense of gratitude is in fact the rising of *tariki* thinking within us. Even though we are normally unaware of the support we receive from others, from time-to-time, as I experienced at the Obon cleanup, a sense of gratitude can arise within us, and this signals our becoming aware of the lives around us that are in fact supporting us.

Why did this sense of gratitude arise only after I had experienced heat exhaustion? I think it is because to realize the working of *tariki*, a power beyond the self, requires by its very nature the negation of one's ego-self, of one's sense of trust or pride in one's *jiriki* or self-power. This is what happened to me when I was forced to accept my limitations.

Of course, though the Obon is our major fundraiser, we know it has a deep connection to the Dharma, and we usually associate this connection with the bon odori dancing and also with the manto-e service. However, though you may or may not agree with me, I think there is also a deep spiritual significance even in our simply working hard together for our temple. To me, this is a concrete manifestation of *tariki*, of the visible effect of the power of the Dharma, of the Buddhist teachings, rising within us and enabling us to appreciate each other and work together as one. ☸

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lence through; to take it as a new opportunity. My journey within had been a journey without; without guidance, without listening, without embracing true self-love and acceptance. Going within has allowed me to heal and give truth to loss, deceit, ignorance and self-centeredness. I give thanks to the sangha of the WCBT for embracing me within without condition. Nonetheless, causes and conditions have led me through many life-altering events; it has led me through college, through loss, through immersing myself in a third world country, and now through living the WCBT gems. My deepest appreciation.
Angelica

From = Kat Garrido

Subject = Location

Message = I just moved to Brookings, OR and would like the location of the local temple or group of like minded. Would you be able to help please?

Dear Kat,

Thank you for writing. I'm going to point you out to two web links: www.buddhanet.info and www.dharmanet.org. They both have excellent directories to various temples and centers. However from my own examination it looks like there is no group listed in the immediate Brookings area. You would have to travel extensively to Ashland for Tibetan oriented groups. I would recommend that you also check at any colleges or universities in your area that may have student groups. Check their religious studies programs, as well as college chaplains who may have advice. If there is truly nothing available for you in your area you may wish to check for any Quaker or Unitarian groups—these are often Buddhist-friendly and can be supportive. Also you're not too far from Crescent City, California, across the border. Check what they may have to offer. I do hope you will find something. Of course you can still keep in contact with various Sanghas, like ours, for advice, questions, and moral support. Don't give up! Continue your own studies and reflections. Who knows, you might also find other like-minded people to join up with!

Maybe put out an ad in the local paper, or a bulletin board announcement. Have a home showing of Buddhist themed movies or programs, like the PBS special on Buddhism. I am betting that there are other people in your area who would jump at a chance for a discussion group if someone made the first move! Let us know how you're doing.

With gassho,
Rev. Frederick

From = Mariam

E-Mail = mariamabdel@hotmail.com

Subject =

Message = Hi my name is Mariam. I am hoping to visit the Shotsuki Service on July 7th. I would like to know more about Buddhism to get a better understanding of it and get information for a college project. Would there be any chance that I could talk to someone about this or attend a meeting? Please let me know, thank you.

Dear Mariam,

We often get requests from local students for info on Buddhism or to attend our service. You are welcome to attend any of our services. As far as asking questions, we usually have an informal small group discussion after service, and you are free to ask your questions at that time.

Best Wishes,
Rev. Peter Hata
The Living Dharma Website
West Covina Buddhist Temple

From = Dina Lattuga

Subject = Sunday Service

Message = Is the Sunday Service delivered in English?

Dear Dina,

Thanks for visiting our Living Dharma Website. As to your question, yes, our service is in English. Of course, at the beginning of the service, we do some sutra chanting which is not in English, but it is fine to not do it. The main Dharma talk (sermon) and all other announcements, etc. are in English.

Best Wishes,
Peter Hata
The Living Dharma Website



T H E G A T E W A Y

A C K N O W L E D G M E N T S



West Covina Buddhist Temple

From = Michael Paris
Subject = bad link
Message = Your link for the "Jodo Shinshu Center Website" is inaccurate, to say the least. Have a look and see.

Dear Michael,

Thanks, I noticed that recently also [Ed.Note: someone had hacked into their site and changed the link]. Our link isn't technically inaccurate because the BCA site still has this same link on their website and for several years at least, that was the URL of the JSC. Not sure what happened, but I'll let them know, though I think they are already aware.

*Best Wishes,
Peter Hata
The Living Dharma Website
West Covina Buddhist Temple*





T H E G A T E W A Y

心、顛倒せず

『阿弥陀経』は、阿弥陀仏とその国土である極楽世界の意義を明らかにして、人間にその世界に生まれることを勧める経典です。極楽世界に生まれるなどと言うと、死んでから後の話に思いがちですが、そうではありません。なぜなら仏教は現に生きる私たち人間の救済を課題とするものだからです。

その『阿弥陀経』の中で、仏と出会った人の心のあり方を表す場面に説かれているのが「心、顛倒（てんどう）せず」という言葉です。「顛倒」とは、逆さまである、逆になっているという意味です。ですから、「心、顛倒せず」という一文は、仏に出会った人の心は逆さまにはならないという意味になります。そうすると、仏に出会わない人の心は逆さまであるということになります。これは一体どういうことを意味するのでしょうか。

先日、ある新聞の川柳コーナーで次のような川柳を見ました。

「自分から 回っている気のかざぐるま」

言うまでもないことですが、かざぐるまは風の力によって回っているのであって、自分の力で回っているではありません。これと同じように私たちは、様々な条件によって「私」として存在しているのであって、まず初めに「私」という存在があって、それに条件が付随しているのではないのです。それにもか

かわらず、私たちは通常、あらゆる物事をすべて「私のもの」と思っています。「私」という存在は、なにをおいても、まず「いのち」によって成り立っています。その意味では「いのち」の上に成り立った「私」とであると言えます。ところが、私たちは通常「私のいのち」と考えているのではないのでしょうか。「私の」という立場は、いのちの上に立つものですから、このような見方は明らかに逆転しているということになります。

このような逆転を「顛倒」と言うのです。それ故、人間の通常のものの見方は、仏から見れば常に逆転していると言われるのです。自分が逆立ちしていることに気がつかない人は、まわりが逆になっているように見えることでしょうか。そして、それに気がつかないことから様々な問題が生まれてくるのです。それ故、仏は、このような根本的な過ちを知らしめ、事実立って生きることを人間に教えようとしているのです。



(2009年版「真宗の生活」
- 東本願寺発行 - より引用)



お寺ニュース

日本語祥月法要 / 法話会

8月の日本語祥月法要並びに法話会は、8月1日(木)午後7時30分より厳修いたします。どうぞご家族、ご友人とお誘い合わせの上、ご参詣下さいませよう、ご案内申し上げます。

基金募集

オールディーズ・ダンス

秋の基金募集オールディーズ・ダンスは、9月21日(土)午後8時より開催されます。どなたでも歓迎致します。お気軽にご参加下さい。

秋季彼岸会法要

本年度の秋季彼岸会法要は、9月15日(日)午後4時30分より厳修いたします。法要後にはお齋が準備されます。どうぞ皆様でご参詣下さいませようお願い申し上げます。



7月21日の法話会お盆法要では、長谷川智行師が日本語の法話を行いました。

8月祥月法要 / 法話会
8月1日(木)
午後7時30分より

East San Gabriel Valley
Japanese Community Center, Inc.

West Covina Buddhist Temple
1203 W. Puente Avenue, West Covina, CA 91790
P.O. Box 1616, West Covina, CA 91793

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THE WEST COVINA BUDDHIST TEMPLE

❁ **GATEWAY** ❁

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August

1 7:30 pm Howakai Japanese Service
4 8:30 am Board Mtg.
4 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
9-11 Las Vegas Trip
11 (No Service)
18 (No Service)
25 (No Service)

September

1 (No Service)
5 7:30 pm Howakai Japanese Service
8 8:30 am Board Mtg
8 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
10 10:00 am Bombu Class
14 10:00 am NAD Cmte mtg@Betsuin
15 4:30 pm Fall Ohigan Service
21 8:00 pm Oldies Dance
22 10:00 am Sunday Service
29 10:00 am Sunday Service

8月行事予定

1日 午後7時半 日本語祥月法要 / 法話会
4日 午前8時半 理事会
4日 午前10時 祥月法要
9日 (-11日) 資金募集ラスベガス旅行
11日 日曜礼拝お休み
18日 日曜礼拝お休み
25日 日曜礼拝お休み

9月行事予定

5日 午後7時半 日本語祥月法要 / 法話会
8日 午前8時半 理事会
8日 午前10時 祥月法要
14日 午前10時 開教区委員会 (於 LA 別院)
15日 午後4時半 秋季彼岸会法要
21日 午後 8時 オールディーズ・ダンス
22日 午前10時 日曜礼拝
29日 午前10時 日曜礼拝

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今、いのちが

あなたを

生きている

宗祖親鸞聖人750回御遠忌テーマ