

HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE

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HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE | LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

**TEMPLE
SCHEDULE**

APRIL

- 17 10:00am Hanamatsuri Family Service
- 24 10:00am Sunday Service
Discussion Group
- 24 10:00am Hanamtsuri Craft Fair
- 30 NAD Local Retreat (E/J)

MAY

- 1 10:00am Shotsuki Service
- 8 8:30am Mother's Day Breakfast
10:00am & Family Service
- 15 10:00am Tanjo-e/Hatsumairi
- 22 10:00am Sunday Service
- 29 10:00am Sunday Service
Discussion Group

JUNE

- 5 10:00am Shotsuki Service
- 12 10:00am Sunday Service

**Mother's
Day**

Breakfast &
Family Service

Sunday, May 8th, 2016
BREAKFAST | 8:30 - 9:45 am
SERVICE | 10:00 am

**Tanjo-e +
Hatsumairi
Service**

Sunday, May 15, 2016
10:00am

hanamatsuri craft fair

SUNDAY, APRIL 24TH
10AM - 3PM

COME OUT TO SHOP AND ENJOY!



The Way

Volume 68 | Number 4 | April 2016



HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE • LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

The Shin Buddhist Way of Life

Rinban Noriaki Ito

During the past year, I have had many opportunities to share my understanding of Buddhism according to the teachings and interpretations of Shinran Shōnin. Oftentimes, though, if other Buddhists are present, I feel that my comments sometimes go against the explanations they give. So I often question whether the teaching of Shin Buddhism is different from other forms of Buddhism.

Recently, I participated in a Buddhist-Catholic dialogue meeting. One topic that came up was regarding the possibility of building a new homeless shelter in Los Angeles supported by the two religious communities. Other Buddhists said they can offer classes in yoga and meditation which could help those who face serious challenges in their everyday lives. There is no doubt that such practices have helped many people to rebuild their lives and their relationships with others.

We, however, have no such practices that we can do on a regular basis. We often say that our practice is living everyday life. But the real practice is self-examination together with the reciting of the Nenbutsu as encouraged to us by Shinran Shōnin.

So in simple terms, what we might be able to offer to those people who would enter such a facility is the encouragement to reflect on their lives, to see how we look at life and the world from a self-centered perspective. We are disappointed when things do not go our way. We get angry when people do not agree with us. And that cycle of disappointment that arises from not having our wishes fulfilled leads to depression and to separating ourselves from others.

We think that happiness comes from having our hopes and dreams fulfilled. But we also realize that our insatiable thirst leads us to want more soon after we receive what we wanted. So that

also is a never-ending cycle that brings no true happiness to us.

Every four years, I look forward to the Presidential election. In this year's campaigns, what we refer to as political correctness seems to have been totally discarded. Pent up emotions are being vented by people who are so upset with the status quo. Prospective voters are lining up behind candidates who say what they want to hear. But basically, the changes they want to see made are those that they think will improve their individual lives. I say they, but actually, it includes me as well. On the surface, I want a functioning government that will take care of the needs of all people living in this country. I want a country that can regard all other nations compassionately. I want a country that is inclusive and welcoming to newcomers. But in reality, I am just as selfish and self-centered as anyone else. What's happening in the election, therefore, reminds us of the Buddha's teaching of the three poisons, greed, anger, and ignorance, that he said afflicts us all. The Buddha reminds us that the affliction is not just in other people, but that it is inside of all of us as well. Such negative attitudes arise primarily because of our ego-centered way of looking at life.

In realizing that such negative attitudes are ever-present, we begin to see ourselves as Shinran did, as beings burdened with insatiable thirst unable to feel any appreciation for the gifts we have already received, our lives being the most precious. It was through his encounter with the Buddhadharmā that he was able to admit to himself that he is, indeed, a being unable to climb up the ladder towards enlightenment, unable to polish himself into the person he wished to be. He used such words as a "foolish being burdened with blind passions," or "evil person" to describe himself.

Through his honest evaluation of himself as an ordinary unenlightened being unable to show genuine compassion to anyone, he came to the realization that he is already embraced by Amida. He was already illuminated by the great compassion that Amida represents. It was then that the path toward living a life interconnected with all beings and with appreciation for his own life began for him.

I remember the words of the great Buddhist teacher, Shuichi Maida, who wrote, "The conviction that all human beings are equal comes from the realization that one is the most evil person in the world. When I become the only evil person in the world, everybody else becomes a good person. I no longer have the luxury of judging others — calling some 'good' and others 'evil.' I form the conviction that all human beings are equal."

I know that we all have a problem regarding ourselves as evil. But what Maida is saying is, if we put ourselves somewhere in the middle on the range of good and evil, we will always be looking down upon others thinking ourselves to be superior. The only way we can see all human beings, all living things, as equal, is to put ourselves down at the very bottom and look up. This is Maida-sensei's interpretation of Shinran Shōnin's awakening.

Perhaps a softer, gentler way of sharing this teaching comes from an American Buddhist named Jack Kornfield. He once said, "Imagine that every person in the world is enlightened but you. They are all your teachers, each doing just the right things to help you learn perfect patience, perfect wisdom, perfect compassion."

These teachings are the hints we can receive to practice self-examination and put us firmly on the path of a true Shin Buddhist follower. It's been said
(Please see SHIN BUDDHIST, page 2)



Betsuin News



Mother's Day Breakfast & Family Service

Please join us on Sunday, May 8th for our annual Mother's Day Breakfast! We will be serving breakfast from 8:30am until 9:45am (about 15 minutes before service), so come early and bring your whole family! The delicious breakfast will be prepared by YABA, ABA, and other young non-mothers, so be sure to bring mom to service early!

Following breakfast, we will have our Mother's Day Family Service with a special message in honor of our mothers.

Tanjo-e & Hatsumairi

On Sunday, May 15th, we will have our Tanjo-e and Hatsumairi Service. Tanjo-e is a special service that celebrates the birth of Shinran Shōnin, the founder of our Jodo Shinshu Buddhist tradition. Shinran was born around this time near Kyoto, Japan in the year 1173. Special sermons will be delivered by our ministers for this occasion.

At our Tanjo-e service, we will also observe Hatsumairi, which is held to welcome all new children into our Sangha. The Hatsumairi presentation is traditionally for newborns, but we welcome all children up to six years of age to participate. If you are interested in having your child participate, please contact the temple office to register.

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(SHIN BUDDHIST, con't. from page 1)

throughout history that the Pure Land path is the easy path. There is no monastic practice. But a true encounter with the self may be as difficult as any other Buddhist path. It's been nearly 50 years since I began my study of Buddhism. But I still find myself often straying away from the path. The reminders from my Buddhist teachers help me to find the way back.



16TH ANNUAL BETSUIN GOLF TOURNAMENT

Higashi Honganji volunteers arrived at the Via Verde Country Club in the early morning of March 7th, 2016. Despite the rain, volunteers prepared for the arrival of about 80 golfers early Monday morning. They unloaded trucks while the coffee brewed and goodie bags, spam musubis, apples, oranges, and bananas crowded the check-in area.

The registration tables were placed indoors this year in case of rain... and rain it did during that check-in period. Heavy rain delayed the tournament start time by about an hour, but soon enough the weather cleared up enough for the golfers to make their way out to the course!

The weather wasn't ideal, but that didn't stop the golfers from having a good time. Tee signs were displayed inside the banquet room this year to keep them dry. Sponsorships raised funds for our youth programs and temple maintenance. Thank you to all of our generous tee sponsors!

Due to the delayed tournament start time and, therefore, delayed banquet time, volunteers rushed quick lunches out to the golfers while they were on the course! It was just enough nourishment to get them through the full course.

After 18 holes out in the finicky weather and just as it was beginning

to rain again, golfers were eager to sit down for a late Western-style barbecue buffet lunch! They made their way to the banquet room that overlooks the course where tables were overflowing with valuable prizes for our raffle and donations from merchants in the community. Everyone was treated to a well-deserved lunch with lots of meat, chicken, and sides of potatoes, baked beans, rolls, and salad. While stories of the narrow course were shared amongst the golfers, Shin Ito announced the tournament and raffle winners.

This year's 1st place champion was Tracy Okida, 2nd place went to Richard Asao, and 3rd place to Matt Bryant. The Ladies 1st place award went to Olivia Nevarez. Low Gross was awarded to Bobby Jeffries. Other notables were board members Ron Sato in 66th place, Craig Harada in 25th place, Rinban Noriaki Ito in 48th place, and Tournament Chairman Mr. George Kashiwabara in 55th place.

The Higashi Honganji Golf Tournament continues to grow thanks to all of the volunteers who do so much behind the scenes work before and during the tournament as well as our tee sponsors and donors. Thanks to the support of our golfers who continue to come out year after year, we were able to put on another fun and successful event.

visit our website at
www.hhbt-la.org
and "like" us on facebook at
<http://www.facebook.com/hhbt.la>

SUBMISSION DEADLINE!
Submissions for *The Way* are due the 10th of each month for the following month's issue. Articles and announcements for our June Issue are due May 10th, 2016. Submissions may be subject to printing restrictions and staff approval. Thank you and we look forward to hearing from you!

Our deepest condolences
to the family and relatives of ...

Mr. Kurt Harumi Hiroshima (94)
February 23, 2016

Mrs. Ruri Sugimoto (90)
February 24, 2016

Mrs. Miyoko Takagishi (88)
February 24, 2016

Namu Amida Butsu

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