

HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE

505 East Third Street
Los Angeles, CA 90013
(213) 626-4200 - FAX (213) 626-6850

Address Service Requested

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Los Angeles, CA
Permit No. 24616



HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE | LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

TEMPLE SCHEDULE

APRIL

- 8 10:00am Sunday Service
- 8 1:30pm LABTF Hanamatsuri @ Nishi Hongwanji
- 14 NAD Local Retreat
- 15 10:00am Hanamatsuri Family Service

MAY

- 6 10:00am Shotsuki Service
- 13 8:30am Mother's Day Breakfast & Family Service
- 20 10:00am Tanjo-e/Hatsumairi Service
- 27 10:00am Sunday Service Discussion Group

JUNE

- 3 10:00am Shotsuki Service
- 10 10:00am Sunday Service
- 17 10:00am Father's Day/ Graduation Family Service & Lunch

hanamatsuri craft fair

SUNDAY, APRIL 29

10AM - 3PM

COME OUT TO SHOP AND ENJOY!

Mother's Day

Breakfast & Family Service

Sunday, May 13th, 2018
BREAKFAST | 8:30 - 9:45 am
SERVICE | 10:00 am

Tanjo-e + Hatsumairi Service

Sunday, May 20, 2018
10:00am



The Way



Volume 70 | Number 3 | April & May 2018

HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE • LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

This Fleeting World – This Burning House

Rev. Frederick Brenion

By the time you read this Ohigan will have passed. Ohigan comes but twice a year, at the start of Spring and Fall. Ohigan means “the Other Shore.” but you cannot come to terms with the Other Shore until you stand at the edge of this shore. When you understand this you will know the deeper truth, that Ohigan is not twice a year. It is every day, every night, every hour, minute, and second. Because whether we know it or not, we are always at the edge. We are always on edge. This is our Dukkha, our suffering, our distress, and our dis-easement. The First Truth from which all other Truths flow.

In January an unusual event happened. A large number of people in the State of Hawaii, including many at our sister temples, felt the blast of the Winds of Impermanence. On people’s cellphones, smartphones, computers, and whatever other means of communication available, a message was sent and received by thousands on the Islands: “BALLISTIC MISSILE THREAT INBOUND TO HAWAII. SEEK IMMEDIATE SHELTER. THIS IS NOT A DRILL.”

Panic, dread, horror, fear was in the minds of many. Was this a hoax? Real? Do you ignore it? Can this be verified? What does one do? Many looked for shelter. Many wanted to go find their loved ones, spouses, friends, children. For about 40 minutes the threat of immediate death was in the hearts and minds of many throughout Hawaii. The Garden Paradise was about to become the Wasteland of Hell. Meanwhile, those in authority were trying to verify if this message was for real or not. The Governor of Hawaii determined that this was a false alarm but could not send out a message to the Twitterverse because he could not remember his password! Meanwhile, Washington was clueless

about what was happening. Why am I not surprised? Such is the real fragility of our civilization.

The Buddha understood clearly how people react when they realize that they are at the edge of the shore of their life. “Few cross over the river. Most are stranded on this side. On the riverbank they run up and down. But the wise, following the way, crosses over, beyond the reach of death.” On that day in Hawaii, people were ready to run up and down looking for shelter in fear and anguish, wondering what has brought this upon them.

For many in Hawaii this was a wake-up call to what was really important. They had stood at the edge of this shore and finally encountered for themselves the matter of the Other Shore, Nirvana, Pure Land, Refuge.

In reflecting on this event, and the events of my own life during the Cold War – how well I remember the air raid sirens, the drop and cover drills, wondering through many a night whether The Bomb was going to drop. I was shown certain words from Shinran that spoke to this matter, all our matters. I thought those days gone, but now there is serious talk about nuclear war actually happening. What’s gone wrong with the world? What’s gone wrong with us? Shinran understood clearly what the reality of our situation was. All situations. He knew fear and disaster. His time and life was not immune to the winds of reality.

“In this fleeting world – this burning house – all matters without exception are empty and false, totally without truth and sincerity. **The Nenbutsu alone is true and real.**”

These words of Shinran appear near the end of The Tannisho. I remember when I first read them, and my first thought was, “What the hell does this mean? How does this even work?” I

suppose my explorations into Shin Buddhism, into the ministry, into everything is to answer this, or at least come to some kind of understanding of it, because I feel emphatically the weight of Shinran in these words. I’m embracing this and I don’t understand it. That may be the point. The Nenbutsu is not for understanding. Shinran says that it is not even our practice. It’s not a mantra, a magic phrase, what have you. It is the practice of a Buddha trying to reach you. Maybe the only understanding we can have, if any, the only doing, if any for us, is to live it, or rather have it live us. And you are probably all wondering, “What the hell does this even mean?”

Yet the world is burning around us as we ask. It has always been burning one way or the other. As I write this, a friend wrote to tell me that a person she knows had read Shinran and did not see how she can apply his teachings to her life. I thought, exactly! That’s the problem. Her problem. My problem. Everyone’s problem when they come to Shin Buddhism. You can’t apply Shinran to your life. Shinran is not a bandage, or a salve. He is not an encyclopedia to consult. But when you go through all his writings, over and over, and yes, you can garner a ton of teachings, but beneath it all he says, forget all this, just say the Nenbutsu, just take it. Shinran isn’t offering a teaching to a burning world. He is offering a lifeline. For this burning world, Shinran is our firefighter offering a net and a ladder. You don’t study it. You call it as it calls you. The calling **IS**

(Please see FLEETING, page 5)

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



Betsuin News



Introducing

Rev. Akiko Okada
North America District Office



Hello everyone. My name is Akiko Okada and I'm a new staff minister at the North America District office. I arrived in Los Angeles on February 12th. Let me introduce myself briefly.

I was born and raised in Osaka. My home is a temple named GANSHO-JI. I took TOKUDO ordination when I was 10 years old. Currently, my father is the resident minister of my home temple and I will succeed him in the future. I came to the United States because I want to study English and learn about the history of Jodo Shinshu in this country. Before coming here, I worked as a staff minister at the Honzan in Kyoto since 2014. I'm really looking forward to learning together with all of you. Thank you.

MEMBER
spotlight

WEDDING
ANNOUNCEMENTS

Jenny & Ryan Taketomo
March 10, 2018

Gaku Ito & Aya Ino
March 24, 2018

CONGRATULATIONS!

Mother's Day Breakfast & Family Service

Please join us on Sunday, May 13th 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 Service

On Sunday, May 20th, 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.

Father's Day & Graduation Family Service & Luncheon

Please join us for our Father's Day and Graduation Family Service on Sunday, June 17th at 10:00am. This service will celebrate and honor both our Dads and 2018 Graduates. We welcome all graduates to attend and families to bring their fathers for this special service! Following service, there will be a light lunch served to honor our grads and dads. We hope that you and your family will be able to join us!

Spring Ohigan Service & Seminar

The Spring Ohigan Service was held on March 18th, with a Dharma Talk by Bishop Hitoshi Doi, Cabinet Member of Higashi Honganji Shinshu Otani-ha in Kyoto, Japan. Toban 1 served curry rice and salad for otoki lunch. Following otoki, we set up for the Spring Seminar. Rev. Peter Hata, Ana Nakano-Sanchez, and Rev. Gyokei Yokoyama were the speakers for our Spring Seminar and spoke on the theme "Mindfulness: An Introduction to its Benefits and Practice." Thank you to all of our members who attended our Spring Ohigan events.

Our deepest condolences

to the family and relatives of ...

Mrs. Kazuko Chiyo Sasaki (86)
January 10, 2018

Mrs. Asa Nomura Golden (93)
January 12, 2018

Mr. Ben Toshio Nagano (71)
February 7, 2018

Mrs. Sunao Alice Yoshizaki (86)
February 11, 2018

Mr. Harry Kazuto Inao (87)
February 12, 2018

Mrs. Masaye Shimizu (95)
February 27, 2018

Namu Amida Butsu

18TH ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

Higashi Honganji volunteers arrived at the Via Verde Country Club in the early morning of March 5th, 2018. Volunteers prepared for the arrival of over 100 golfers early Monday morning. They unloaded trucks while the coffee brewed and goodie bags, donuts, spam musubis, mini pastrami sandwiches, apples, oranges, and bananas crowded the check-in area.

The registration tables were placed outdoors this year. The weather was nice for early March. It was cold in the morning, but warmed up to the mid-70s during the day. Tee signs were displayed on the course at all of the holes. Sponsorships raised funds for our youth programs and temple maintenance. Thank you to all of our generous tee sponsors!

After 18 holes out in the sun, golfers were eager to sit down for a Western-style barbeque 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 corn on the cob, baked beans, rolls, and salads. While stories of the narrow course were shared amongst the golfers, Shin Ito announced the tournament and raffle winners.

Closest-to-the-pin winners were Ryan Asao, FM Josue, Tracy Okida, and Jon Utsunomiya. The Low Gross winner was Bobby Jefferies. The Ladies 1st place winner was Olivia Nevarez. The top three tournament winners were Steve Murata in 3rd place, Kevin Yamamoto in 2nd place, and Olivia Nevarez in 1st place. This year we had more women golfing in the tournament than ever before and also a record number of golfers. It was the first time a women has ever been the tournament champion! Congratulations to Olivia and all of the other golfers!

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.

DHARMA SCHOOL UPDATE

Dharma School will participate in the LABTF Hanamatsuri Art Contest again this year. In April, we will have our Hanamatsuri Family service at the Betsuin where we will have a chance to pour sweet tea over the Buddha and celebrate Hanamatsuri with our members here. At the end of the month, we will help at the Hanamatsuri Craft Fair.- Please come out and support our youth groups!

Our ministers give talks to the Dharma School children at every Shot-suki and Family Service. Please join us on Sundays for Dharma School lessons! Both new and active members and friends are always welcome!

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, 2018. Submissions may be subject to printing restrictions and staff approval. Thank you and we look forward to hearing from you!



THANK YOU TO OUR GOLF TOURNAMENT DONORS & VOLUNTEERS!

TOURNAMENT SPONSORS

Arthur & Marilyn Sakioka
Faria Farms, LLC.
George & Lisa Sugimoto
Team Pichi Pie (Mas Kozai)
Rudi Gomez • Scott Webb
Wayne Nagao • Stuart London
Team Shang
Michael Hayashi • Ron Shimoido
Tadashi Okumoto • Rick Yoshida

GOLD TEE SPONSORS

AGRX | Chris Oliva
Hatakeyama Family
Plum Vista, L.P. | Murata Family
Union Bank

SILVER TEE SPONSORS

Bishop Noriaki & Janet Ito
David & Kathy Ikeda
Ena Realty Group
Fukui Mortuary
Higashi Honganji ABA
Higashi Honganji Fujinkai
Higashi Honganji YABA
Jacom Credit Union
Toyo Griffith Park Florist
Yamamoto Family

TEE SPONSORS

Aihara & Associates Insurance
Services, Inc.
Craig & Haruko Harada
Eddie & Emi Imoto
Elite Graphics
Gary Kanemoto
George & Susan Kashiwabara
Glenn M. Nakatani | A Professional
Law Corp
Go & Kazue Funai
Higashi Honganji North America
District
Higashi Honganji Otani Choir
In Memory of Bill Shigeru Matsumura
| Carol Tanita
In Memory of Mary Yamada | Elaine
Harada
In Memory of Masaharu Kozai | Rudi
Gomez
In Memory of Shig & Miyo Nakagawa
James K. Kurata, OD, Inc.
Jeanne Tong
John & Irene Ota

Keith & Grace Yamashiro
Leland Lau, CPA
Lumbini Child Development Center
Mas & Grace Kurihara
Nakasone Family
Nancy Kurihara-Johnson
Produce International
Rev. & Mrs. Toshihisa Enoki
Rimban William Briones & Rev.
Nobuko Miyoshi

Ron & Becky Sato
Ron & Diane Kato
Sakioka Wholesale Nursery
Shiz Mori, We Miss You!
Sushi-Gen
Takemura & Hashimoto Optometry,
Inc.

Tom Umemoto Family
Trish & Chuck Nicholson
West Covina Buddhist Temple

FRIENDSHIP SPONSORS

Emily Matsumura
Johnny Mori
Mie, Byron, & Mika (Ito) Yamada
Tom Fukuman

IN-KIND DONORS

Ace Beverage Company
Annette Kitayama
Arthur Sakioka
Bachan's Takeout
Bishop Noriaki & Janet Ito
Carol Tanita
Elaine Barbod
Elaine Harada
Food Connect
Fugetsu-Do
George & Susan Kashiwabara
Grace Yamashiro
Higashi Honganji Dharma School
Higashi Honganji Jr. YBA
Higashi Honganji Sangha Teens
Japanese American Cultural &
Community Center

Kathy Ikeda
kisanoreen | Kisa Ito
Mutual Trading
New Japan Travel Center
Plum Vista, L.P. | Steven Murata
Qris Yamashita
Red Shell Foods
Ron & Becky Sato
Sam's Town Hotel | Las Vegas
Star Mazda | Tad Okumoto
Tokio Marine Management, Inc.
Union Bank
Via Verde Country Club
Warren Okada & Karen Lau-Okada
Wayne Nagao
Yamasa Enterprises

GOLF VOLUNTEERS

Annette Kitayama
Diane Hata
Elaine Barbod
Elaine Harada
George Kashiwabara
Grace Yamashiro
Hiro Kanamaru
Janet Ito
Jon Kitayama
Karen Lau-Okada
Kathy Ikeda
Leslie Nicho
Linda Taylor
Lindsay Kashiwabara
Mie Yamada
Mika Ito
Nancy Kurihara-Johnson
Qris Yamashita
Rev. Peter Hata
Rev. Steve Toyoshima
Rinban Ito
Ron Sato
Shin Ito
Susan Kashiwabara
Warren Okada



(FLEETING, con't. from page 1)

the teaching, the only way out for us in this, our burning world.

What is this Nenbutsu that puzzled me so, and made a puzzle of me? When it comes down to it, it is a name. When you call me by name, I answer, I come. At least I try to most of the time – well, some of the time! When we say Nembutu what comes? In our tradition we often say that the Nenbutsu calls us. Is it we then that come? It is a name, a name that is not just given but is shared. I have called it the name that bridges. It comes to us that we might come over. I must confess that when I first heard the name, *Namu Amida Butsu*, I thought this funny, peculiar. Because Buddhas are often called by their family name, like Gautama Buddha, or a descriptive like Shakyamuni Buddha. In most other Pure Land traditions, *Amida Buddha* is referred to as such. But here, with Shinran, we are given *Namu Amida Butsu* as the name. *Namu* is a part of the name. Many of our teachers often speak that the name is in two parts, ours is the *Namu*, and *Amida Butsu* is *Amida*. That's why I call it the name that bridges.

I get this. But I'm not totally satisfied with this. Because names are also a unity, whatever their components are. Most of us have a first and last name. I have an assortment of middle names too! But they all go together. My name is me. As yours is you. I'm driven in our tradition to seek out the depth of that full name. *Amida* of course is Wisdom without end, Compassion without limit, united forever and forever directed towards us. *Namu* however is what? In Japanese culture it is associated with bowing, with being humble. On a deeper Buddhist level it is the bowing of accepting / receiving

refuge. It is the praising of one who is able and does give refuge to you. We see this in the Vandana Ti-sarana: *Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Samma Sambudhassa* - Homage to the Blessed One, the Worthy One, the Fully Enlightened One. This is a Nenbutsu. *Namo* is homage to one who is giving all to all.

This full name of *Namu Amida Butsu* in my very limited understanding of its meaning for me is that *Namu Amida Buddha* is forever and always the Refuge Buddha. I cannot know a Buddha except by taking refuge. Any other way for me is not to know a Buddha. I am not knowing the Buddha as my Buddha. I may study about Buddha, read about Buddha, and goodness knows I've done plenty of that, but if that is all I do, then I will never know the Buddha at all. I can only know a Buddha in the meeting together of refuge. It is when I break, when I need to flee the burning of my world that I seek refuge from the winds of impermanence. Then the lifeline of the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha extends and surrounds, upholds and shelters. That is why I may begin to see that Nenbutsu alone is the only true and real thing in this our fleeting world and our burning lives. My aspiration is that you may come to see it as well.



LUMBINI CORNER

In March, we celebrated Girls Day by eating sweet pink sticky rice and red bean. We also went upstairs to visit the Hinamatsuri doll display in the temple foyer. In April, we will observe Hanamatsuri by participating in the Hanamatsuri Art Contest and learning about the Buddha's birthday and going upstairs to the hondo to pour sweet tea over the baby Buddha. We got to see the beautiful hanamido and elephant from the Buddha's birth story. Earlier in the month, we celebrated Spring with parties and lots of colorful crafts!

If you are interested in enrolling a child between the ages of 2½ to 5 years of age in Lumbini's program, please contact the temple office at 213-680-2976 or visit the temple website for a brochure.



Higashi Honganji
Buddhist Temple

hanamatsuri
craft fair

Sunday, April 29, 2018
10:00am - 3:00pm
Higashi Social Hall

Come SHOP with us!

info@hhbt-la.org
213-626-4200
www.hhbt-la.org

LUMBINI
CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

**APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE
CONTACT US FOR A VISIT!**

FOR CHILDREN AGES 2 1/2 TO 5 YEARS
TEL: 213-680-2976
FAX: 213-626-6850
EMAIL: lumbini.missleslie@gmail.com
WEBPAGE: <http://LumbiniCDC.org>

OPEN YEAR ROUND:
MONDAY through FRIDAY
7:30am to 6:00pm
closed national holidays

MEMBERSHIP Update

Paid 2018 Temple Members will receive the following benefits *upon request* from the office

- 10% off coupons
- Fugetsu-Do - Toyo Miyatake

Membership dues for 2018 are \$300.00 for couple/family and \$150.00 for single members. **We no longer send out membership cards. Please keep your receipt as proof of membership.** Thank you for your continued support.