

HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE

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

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The Way

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April & May 2020

HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE | LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

TEMPLE SCHEDULE

*Please note:
Services will be streamed
online. The temple remains
closed until further notice.*

APRIL

- 5 10:00am Shotsuki Service
- 12 10:00am Hanamatsuri Family Service
- 19 10:00am Sunday Service
- 26 10:00am Sunday Service

MAY

- 3 10:00am Shotsuki Service
- 10 10:00am Mother's Day Family Service
- 17 10:00am Tanjo-e/Hatsumairi Service
- 24 10:00am Sunday Service
- 31 10:00am Sunday Service

**THE TEMPLE IS CURRENTLY CLOSED
FOR THE DURATION OF THE
CORONAVIRUS COVID-19
STAY-AT-HOME ORDERS.**

These are difficult and unprecedented times and we thank you for your support and patience as we navigate these developments that continue to change daily. We wish for you, your family, and friends to please stay safe.

**FOR UPDATES,
PLEASE SUBSCRIBE
TO OUR EMAIL LIST
BY VISITING OUR
WEBSITE AT
HHBT-LA.ORG**

**STREAM OUR
SUNDAY SERVICES
LIVE ON
FACEBOOK**

[FACEBOOK.COM/HHBT.LA](https://www.facebook.com/HHBT.LA)

SUNDAYS | 10AM

**OR WATCH LATER ON
FACEBOOK OR YOUTUBE**

YOUTUBE SEARCH:
"HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE"



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A MESSAGE FROM OVERSEAS DISTRICT ABBOT CHŌYŪ ŌTANI

March 30, 2020

The rapid spread of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has caused so much anxiety in the last few weeks. My deepest condolences go out to the families of those who lost their loved ones due to the disease, and extend my best wishes for a speedy recovery to those who have contracted the virus. At the same time, I wish to express my deepest gratitude to all of the caregivers who are sacrificing their own well-being to combat this horrific pandemic.

Since all services, Dharma gatherings, and study programs have been cancelled or postponed at our temples throughout Japan as well as in the overseas districts, it is disheartening we are unable to gather together to listen to the teachings of Shinran Shōnin. We were looking forward to seeing all of you at the 13th World Dōbō Gathering that was scheduled to occur in April of this year. I was saddened to hear that the event would be cancelled in consideration of health considerations. At the same time, however, it gave me a chance to remind myself of the truth that everything that occurs in our lives is nothing other than impermanence. Right at this moment, this viral disease is quickly and steadily spreading throughout the world almost as if it were mocking our desperate efforts to stop the pandemic. Seeing the escalation of the devastation it continues to bring, I cannot help but realize how fragile and fleeting our lives are.

The coronavirus epidemic has already caused so much suffering to all of us who live on this planet regardless of such differences as race, nationality, gender, or age. This challenge has confronted us with the indisputable fact that all of us are nothing but ordinary, unenlightened beings. The reality is that

(Please see ŌTANI, page 4)

Refocusing on the Deep Wish Given to Us - Turning a Crisis into an Opportunity to Restore our Humanity

Bishop Hiroshi Tajima
Chief Administrator

Shinshū Ōtani-ha (Higashi Honganji)
March 23, 2020

We cannot predict what will happen to the world due to the recent outbreak and rapid spread of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Having taken this situation very seriously, we have decided to conduct our annual Spring Service at the Shinshū Honbyō (our mother temple) as scheduled. However, attendance will be limited to the headquarters office staff only. In addition, in consideration of public health, we have suspended all of the volunteer programs (Hōshidan) at the Dōbō Retreat Center since March 1.

We offer our sincerest apology to our temple members who were looking forward to participating in the retreat center programs. Our apologies are also extended to our members in our overseas districts who were planning to participate in the 13th World Dōbō Gathering, and also to the head priests and church administrators from throughout Japan who were preparing for a group tour to the Shinshū Honbyō. All of those events and activities have been postponed or cancelled.

As of today, more than 400,000 people throughout the world have become ill from the virus and nearly 18,000 people have died from COVID-19. We offer our deepest condolences to the families of those who have passed away and extend our best wishes to the countless people who have contracted the virus and wish for their speedy recovery. Also, we express our deepest gratitude and respect to the healthcare professionals who have been striving to

(Please see TAJIMA, page 4)

Greetings from Rinban Noriaki Ito

Every day, I look to see if we are moving towards an end to the crisis at hand. And every day, I learn that we're in worse shape than yesterday. It's been quite a while since the "safer at home" mandate was put in place. COVID-19 has created a world that we have never seen before. We offer our condolences to the thousands of families who have lost loved ones and hope that those who are sick regain their health as soon as possible. We thank all of the caregivers, the nurses, the doctors who sacrifice their lives, and all of the people who continue to work full time to ensure that the rest of us are able to live everyday safely despite the challenges we all face.

The temple has been quiet for some time now. We've had three Sunday services that were conducted with no members present but were available

(Please see ITO, page 4)

Message from Rev. Peter Hata

It was only recently, on Thursday, March 19, that we heard our mayor and governor both declare that effective at midnight, all non-essential businesses and services were to close indefinitely. Now, as I write this only two weeks later, so much has changed, and most of it not for the better. I certainly hope this issue finds you and your loved ones in good health, and that you are following the social distancing and stay-at-home mandates, and are doing your best to follow all personal hygiene practices.

Of course, we know the Buddha's teaching of impermanence. And that, as he often emphasized, his teachings were not to be simply "believed" or taken "on faith," but were to be experienced first hand. This is certainly what we are experiencing in the unexpected

(Please see HATA, page 5)



Betsuin News



PAPER RECEIPTS ARE GOING AWAY

Donors are the lifeblood of the temple, and we continue to be grateful for your generosity and support. In an effort to maximize the support you give us, beginning April 2020, we will no longer be sending printed receipts for every donation; rather, in time for tax purposes, you will be mailed one receipt at the end of the year summarizing all of your donations. Paper receipts will be mailed through March 2020. We will continue to recognize your donations in the monthly newsletter. If you have a compelling reason for needing a receipt for an individual donation, please contact the office and one can be e-mailed to you. Again, thank you for your contributions and support.

**Please note that due to current temple closures due to COVID-19 "Safer at Home" orders, our staff is currently working remotely and will not be able to provide acknowledgements in this issue. We will resume including acknowledgments once conditions have improved and our staff and volunteers can safely work in the office. Thank you for your understanding.*



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

*Mrs. Li Cheng Yeh (93)
August 2, 2019*

*Mr. Li Wei Han (95)
December 28, 2019*

*Mr. Lloyd Harumi Tanabe (87)
January 20, 2020*

*Mr. Kiyoshi Goya (90)
February 1, 2020*

*Mrs. Sumiko Sakamoto (92)
February 3, 2020*

*Mr. Shosaku Oseki (91)
February 12, 2020*

*Mr. Isamu Sam Kawahira (90)
February 18, 2020*

*Mr. Mitsuru Koyama (71)
February 20, 2020*

*Mr. Roy Atsumi Ota (75)
March 8, 2020*

Namu Amida Butsu



visit our website at
hhbt-la.org



facebook.com/hhbt.la



[@higashihonganjila](https://www.instagram.com/higashihonganjila)



Higashi Honganji
Buddhist Temple

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TO HIGASHI HONGANJI
BUDDHIST TEMPLE AT
HHBT-LA.ORG

HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE

20th Annual GOLF Tournament

Higashi Honganji volunteers arrived at the Via Verde Country Club in the early morning of March 2nd, 2020. 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, and fresh fruit crowded the check-in area.

Our cheery volunteers registered golfers outside. The weather was cold and much windier than usual for early March. New 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 long holes out in the cold and windy sunshine, 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 generous members and merchants in the community. Everyone was treated to a well-deserved lunch with lots of meat, chicken, and sides of baked beans, rolls, and salads. While stories of the narrow course were shared amongst the golfers, Shin Ito announced the tournament and raffle winners.

The Low Gross winner was Takashi Ena. The Ladies 1st place was a tie between Jeanne Tong and Olivia Nevarez. The top three tournament winners were Roy Takemura in 3rd place, James Korin in 2nd, and George Sugimoto in 1st place. Congratulations to all of our 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.

TOURNAMENT SPONSORS

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Jerry Kozai • Michael Hayashi
Ron Shimoido • Rick Yoshida

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George Sugimoto
JACOM Credit Union
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Marv Kozai • Rudi Gomez
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Yamamoto Family

GOLD TEE SPONSORS

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Happy 68th Anniversary

Uncle Tosh & Auntie Tomi Kozai
Elaine, Heather, & Tiffany Barbod

Hatakeyama Family

In Memory of Pichi Pie (Mas Kozai)

Elaine, Heather, & Tiffany Barbod

In Memory of Uncle Joe Mudrick

Elaine, Heather, & Tiffany Barbod

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Hiromichi Sakioka

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| Carol Tanita

In Memory of Mary Yamada | Elaine Harada

In Memory of Masaharu Kozai | Rudi Gomez

In Memory of Shig & Miyo Nakagawa |

Henry & Lin Miyake

Jeanne Tong

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Keith & Grace Yamashiro

Leland Lau, CPA

Lumbini Child Development Center

Mr. & Mrs. Ken & Pat Sato

Mas & Grace Kurihara

The Mas Umemoto Family

Produce International

Rev. Toshihisa Enoki

Ron & Becky Sato

Roy K. Takemura, OD

Sushi-Gen

The Tom Umemoto Family

Wayne Itoga; David and Mitchell

Wednesday Night Study Class

West Covina Buddhist Temple

The Wong Family

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Mika Ito & Byron Yamada

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Bishop Noriaki & Janet Ito

Catalina Kamimura

Carol Tanita

Elaine Barbod

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Higashi Honganji Dharma School

Higashi Honganji Jr. YBA

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James Matsumoto

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Rosa Kawahira

Sakura Gardens

Shin Ito

Star Mazda | Tad Okumoto

Stuart London

Toyo Miyatake Studio

Union Bank

Via Verde Country Club

Warren Okada & Karen Lau

Wayne Nagao

Yamasa Enterprises

(Please see our list of Golf Tournament volunteers on page 6)

(*ŌTANI, cont. from page 1*)

we have to understand that the suffering and anxiety we are experiencing in this pandemic has always been a part human existence. When I reflect on this truth, however, I am able to renew and to deepen my appreciation of the compassionate heart of the Tathāgata which is always reaching out to each and every one of us, embracing us as companions regardless of who we are.

It is my sincerest wish that we will be able to bring an end to the novel coronavirus pandemic as soon as possible so that we can once again join together before Amida Buddha to listen to the Dharma together.



(*TAJIMA, cont. from page 1*)

treat people during this unprecedented situation. We hope that our combined wisdom and care will bring an end to this crisis as soon as possible.

In retrospect, we human beings have suffered from numerous infectious diseases of unknown origin throughout our history. Despite the uncertainty of what must be done in such difficult situations, we have courageously faced and overcome those crises. At such a time, what is important is that we not socially and emotionally isolate those who are ill and their families. Unfortunately, there seems to be the deplorable trend of blaming those who are suffering from the disease. At such times, it is even more crucial for us to learn from the wisdom of the Buddha who vows to always bear our anxieties and suffering together with us. Even though we must eradicate this virus, we should never separate those who are suffering from our society.

It is natural for us to wish that we and our loved ones can be spared from misfortune. However, this pandemic of the coronavirus has reminded us of the fundamental truth that no one in this world can be free of suffering. Therefore, we should try as best we can to understand the anxieties and the feeling of isolation that those who have contracted the disease must have. We believe that this is the attitude we must have as human beings.

In times of crisis in history, our ancestors took on these opportunities to show the spirit of the *nenbutsu* sangha

that regards every one of us as companions living together instead of enduring the impermanence of life alone. At this moment, all of our districts, subdistricts, local temples, and chapels across the globe are having no choice but to cancel or suspend their services, study sessions and other gatherings. In light of our ancestors' spirit, it is important for us to realize that this crisis is an opportunity to reflect on how we should live rather than remaining pessimistic regarding the situation. Because of the restrictions put in place regarding interacting with other people, we should focus even more on deepening and cultivating the relationships we have with each other as encouraged by the Buddha's wisdom. By returning our focus to the deep wish the Buddha made for us, we should regard this crisis as an opportunity to work together toward restoring true humanity among us.

With expectations that this situation will be resolved in the near future, we hope to resume our normal activities such as welcoming visitors and restoring our volunteer programs. All of the staff at the headquarters offices are striving to maintain services and other events so that you can visit the Shinshū Honbyō again soon to listen to the Dharma together.

Even though we are in the midst of uncertainty, it is our sincerest wish that every one of us can find an opportunity to return our focus to the wish of the Buddha.



(*ITO, cont. from page 1*)

for members and friends to access live through streaming on Facebook or to watch and listen to on YouTube at a later time.

It is interesting that we had been talking about using new technology to record our services and have them available to watch for those who are unable to come to the temple on Sunday mornings. It took something like this pandemic for us to activate plans we had been talking about for some time. We are lucky to live in a time where internet is available to most Americans and we are able to remain connected without physically being in the same place.

The need to listen to the teachings of the Buddha is always present. But when things are going well, we get busy doing other things. At times like this, though, I think we all realize how important it is that we take every opportunity to access those teachings that serve as our guides as to how we can find meaning in our lives. Please join us to continue to learn from the teachings through our virtual Sunday services. If you are able to watch along with us live on Facebook, you can contribute by sharing and reading comments throughout the service. It is a nice way to interact with both the ministers and other members and viewers.

For those looking for reading material or other forms of spiritual guidance, please check out our Shinshu Center of America website (shinshucenteramerica.org) and see what books are available. Most of the books are available in Kindle format and are quite inexpensive.

We hope that you stay well and maintain good hygiene, keep at least 6 feet between ourselves and others when outings are necessary to purchase food and other home items, and, most importantly, stay home until this pandemic is under control. Together, we can have an impact that will save lives.

Thank you for your continued support of our temple.



Help The Way

The Way needs your help and welcomes your contributions. With the cost of printing and postage steadily increasing, we request your support in helping to make our newsletter available in the years to come. Please consider making a donation to *The Way* to offset some of the cost. Thank you for your continued support and readership.

Onegai-shimasu!

(HATA, cont. from page 1)

and incredible disruption the pandemic is causing in our lives. But I also find it ironic that because of the shutdown of our temple, we are not able to listen to this teaching and discuss it together at the temple itself.

Still, if you haven't already done so, please consider checking out the temple's online offerings. The talks from our services are at the temple's new YouTube Channel (go to YouTube.com and type "higashi hongani buddhist temple" in the search box). Also, our services are live streamed at the Betsuin's Facebook Page (facebook.com/hhbt.la). Here are some comments from our recent services (names omitted):

"I thought this format was excellent in staying connected yet practicing social distancing."

"I really enjoyed the live stream service to chant with you and the dharma talk. I like this up-close service better than the Zoom service from last week."

"Maybe the temple should consider making this a permanent part of Sunday Services for those who are shut-ins."

"This was really wonderful. Feel happily connected with everyone."

"Thank you so much. This is exactly what our family needed this morning."

"Really enjoyed this connection today. Facebook works great."

"Thank you for your wonderful service!"

"It is really funny, but this 'new normal' has allowed me to attend the service every week!"

Well, we certainly hope the author of that last comment will consider attending in person when the temple reopens! But yes, we hope to be able to resume our services and activities soon, but in the meantime, please join us online.

Gassho,
Rev. Peter Hata



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS UPDATE

Due to the coronavirus Stay-at-Home orders, our staff is currently working remotely. We will resume the listing of acknowledgments in the newsletter when it is safe for our staff and volunteers to return to the office on a regular basis. We apologize for the inconvenience and thank you for your understanding.



The Way

THANK YOU TO OUR GOLF VOLUNTEERS

- Annette Kitayama
- Becky Sato
- Carol Tanita
- Clayton Tamura
- Diane Hata
- Elaine Barbod
- Elaine Harada
- Elaine Jackson
- Elaine Tamura
- Gary Kanemoto
- George Kashiwabara
- Grace Yamashiro
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- Jodi & Shelby Hashimoto
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