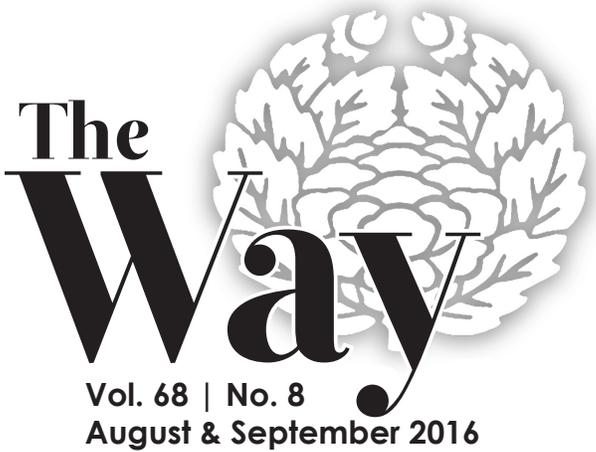


**HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE**

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HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE | LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

**TEMPLE  
SCHEDULE**

**SEPTEMBER**

- 4 No Service - Labor Day
- 11 10:00am Shotsuki Service
- 18 10:00am **Autumn Ohigan Service**
- 1:00pm **Autumn Seminar**
- 25 10:00am Sunday Service  
Discussion Group  
**Temple Fun Day**

**OCTOBER**

- 2 10:00am Shotsuki Service
- 9 10:00am Sunday Service
- 16 10:00am Family Service  
**Dharma School Halloween Party**
- 23 10:00am Sunday Service
- 30 10:00am Sunday Service  
Discussion Group

*Autumn Ohigan  
Service & Seminar*

Sunday, September 18th, 2016  
SERVICE | 10:00 AM  
SEMINAR | 1:00 PM

*thank you for supporting our*  
**2016  
OBON  
FESTIVAL**  
JULY 30 - 31, 2016



# The Way



Volume 68 | Number 8 | August & September 2016

HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE • LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

## Wednesday Night Study Class Report: The True Birth

Rev. Peter Hata

The Betsuin's Wednesday Night Study Class (WNSC) has been meeting every second and fourth Wednesday night since May of 2014. In these past two years, we've been studying just one document: the *Larger Sutra* (Sanskrit *Sukhavatīvyūha Sutra*). According to our founder Shinran Shōnin, this is the most important of the Three Pure Land Sutras and, in fact, the most important teaching of Shakyamuni Buddha. In this sutra, Shakyamuni tells the story of Amida Buddha, the eternal Buddha that is the central figure in our altar. Amida presides over the Pure Land, the "realm" of awakening or *nirvana* itself.

Actually, my extended involvement with this sutra did not begin by choice. I had read it of course, but had not seriously studied it. Then, soon after receiving my *kyoshi* ordination in the spring of 2012, Rev. Ken Kawawata, West Covina Buddhist Temple's minister, was appointed Bishop of the Hawaii District. He asked two favors of me. Would I please do my best to continue his Bombu Study Class—which was studying the *Larger Sutra*—and...would I consider taking over as minister of West Covina Buddhist Temple? Well, I did in fact honor both requests, although at the time I really had *no idea* what Rev. Ken was asking of me. Somehow however, I suspect he did.

I still remember discussing with the members of the Bombu Class one of the most striking passages near the beginning of the sutra. This is where the bodhisattva Dharmakara, who is to become Amida, has himself just met a great Buddha, the Buddha Lokeshvararaja, and asks to be instructed by him. The sutra says: "At that time the Buddha Lokeshvararaja recognized the monk Dharmakara's noble and high aspirations, and taught him as follows: 'If, for example, one keeps on bailing water out of a great

ocean with a pint-measure, one will be able to reach the bottom after many kalpas [eons] and then obtain rare treasures. Likewise, if one sincerely, diligently, and unceasingly seeks the Way, one will be able to reach one's destination. What vow is there which cannot be fulfilled?'" At the time, I did not foresee the deeper meaning this passage would later have for me.

In 2014 I found myself transferred to the Betsuin and, even though I had already studied the *Larger Sutra* at West Covina for a year, perhaps because of my still-lingering questions about it, the WNSC was established in May of that year and we began studying this sutra again from the beginning. At the outset of the class, I acknowledged that all religions, and even secular wisdom traditions, offer a multitude of pathways to living the most fulfilling life. No one is saying Buddhism, and Jodo Shinshu as a unique Buddhist tradition, has the only answer. However, I expressed my hope that over the course of our study of the *Larger Sutra*, we might come to appreciate the unique pathway Jodo Shinshu offers. This is the relevance of the *Larger Sutra*.

Fast forward to today, at the June 22, 2016 meeting of the class, we officially completed our study of the *Larger Sutra*, Parts 1 and 2. Nine of the long-time participants, many of whom had hardly missed a single meeting, were honored at the class with a certificate expressing my sincere appreciation for their participation over our two-year study. One of



the recurrent themes in the sutra itself is interdependence, and in a very real sense, without the enthusiasm of the participants, the class could never have continued. In addition, the participants had been using a stapled-together copy of the sutra and needless to say, after two years of use, it had become worn. With that in mind, they each also received their own hardcover edition of Hisao Inagaki's English translation of the *Three Pure Land Sutras*. In the photo, I'm posing with WNSC members (seated) Nicole Shrieves, Yoko Oyakawa, Crystal Carrera, (standing) Yukiko Kovacs, Trish Nicholson, Nancy Kurihara-Johnson, Kathy Ikeda, Denis Oyakawa, and Tom Fukuman. Three other long-time participants who were unable to attend, but who later received their certificates and books, are Rosa Kawahira, and George and Ana Nakano-Sanchez.

Incidentally, though we've officially completed our *Larger Sutra* study, we will continue to meet on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays. In August we will move on to an examination of Shinran Shōnin's *Shōshinge*, which is chanted in our Sunday Services. If the *Larger Sutra* is the heart of Pure Land Buddhism, the *Shōshinge* reveals how its deepest wisdom came to be appreciated through the seven Pure Land masters.

Interestingly, in one of the last  
(Please see WEDNESDAY page 3)



# Betsuin News



## Autumn Ohigan Service & Seminar

The Autumn Ohigan Service will be held on Sunday, September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016 at 10:00am. Our Autumn Seminar will follow that afternoon at 1:00pm. Please invite your family and friends to join us for our Autumn Ohigan Service and Autumn Seminar.

## Kaikyo-ki Service

The Kaikyo-ki Memorial Service is a special service to honor the departed ministers of Higashi Honganji. It will take place in conjunction with the November Shotsuki Service held on November 6<sup>th</sup> at 10:00am.

Please join us in expressing our gratitude to all of the ministers who have served at our Betsuin over the years.

Please note that Daylight Savings ends on this day, so you will need to move your clocks back one hour.

## Obon Services

On July 31<sup>st</sup>, the Obon/Hatsubon Service was held to honor members and friends who have passed away since last year's Obon. Rinban Noriaki Ito delivered a Dharma Talk in English and Rev. Paul Imahara spoke in Japanese for the service.

Manto-e Services were held on the evenings of July 30<sup>th</sup> and July 31<sup>st</sup>. The services were held outdoors under over 400 lanterns hung in memory of our loved ones.

Thank you to our ministers for their special messages reminding us of the importance and significance of Obon.

## OBON VOYAGE to Higashi's Obon 2016!

We have set sail and already have our sights on 2017!?

However, before we disembark, I would like to thank our phenomenal temple and community organizations, our wondrous donors and everyone who set their GPS to our Obon! Without you, we are just a ghost ship in dry dock!

Thank you to the members of our bridge, Bishop Ito, Rev. Hata, Rev. Hasegawa, Rev. Osa, as well as, Rev. Fujii, who passed with flying colors!

We have always passed our onboard inspection. Thank you, Inspector Wayne Itoga!

Thank you to our Cruise staff (Susan & Co.), Financial crew (Elaine B., Sato & Co.), Specialty Units (Irene, Emily & Co.), Safety Team (Ted & Co.), Floral Shop (Louise & Co.), Bartender (Wayne & Co.), Casino staff (John & Co.), Bakery (Leslie & Co.), Bar B-Q specialists (Steve N., Gary K. & Co.), Maintenance (Benard & Co.) and our Land crew (our Sangha)!

A very special thank you to Chef Janet Ito, who not only orders EVERYTHING for EVERYONE, but organizes the galley, feeds the crew members and knows the ANSWER to all our questions!

Thank you to Mr. Kawahira, Mr. Maehara & Co. for our immaculate and inviting appearance!

Thank you to Yukiko Kovacs & Co. for their memorable tea ceremony, in memory and tribute to Mrs. Matsu-mura...

Thank you to all our family members, who travel from near AND FAR, just to help us out!! That is LOVE!

An appreciative thank you to all the Higashi members for keeping us afloat and in tip top condition! From starboard (right) to port (left), from bow (front) to stern (back)...Capt. Steve M. has our back!

Obon 2017 in 350 days...until then, OBON VOYAGE 2016!

Trojan Steve and Bruin Elaine  
"LAND AHOY!!"

## HALLOWEEN

Come dressed up in your best costume for our Sunday Service and Halloween Party on Sunday, October 16<sup>th</sup>. Save the date because our Halloween Party is earlier than usual (Family Service Sunday instead of the last Sunday!) Following our regular (except for some members in unusual costumes) Family Service, please join us for our annual Halloween Party in the social hall! We'll have plenty of games and crafts as well as prizes and lots of sweet treats! We encourage both children AND adults to dress up and join in on the fun! It's not every Sunday you can dress however you want and maybe even get a prize for it! Be sure to invite your family and friends along, too!

\$2 for members

\$5 for non-temple members

RSVP to 213-626-4200

or [info@hhbt-la.org](mailto:info@hhbt-la.org)

### PARKING & STREET CLOSURES

CiCLAVIA, a city-wide bicycling and pedestrian event will take place along the streets of Los Angeles on Sunday, October 16<sup>th</sup>--the same day as our October Family Service and Halloween Party. Among the streets that the event affects are 3rd Street between Alameda and Central Ave and Central Ave between 3rd Street and 2nd Street which includes our corner intersection at 3rd and Central. Our parking lot will still be open and most easily accessible from Crocker St by way of 4th Street. We apologize for the inconvenience and hope that you will still choose to join us for our Shotsuki Service. A map and further information about the closure are available by visiting [www.ciclavia.org](http://www.ciclavia.org). If you would like help deciding an alternate route, please call the temple office at 213-626-4200 or email us at [info@hhbt-la.org](mailto:info@hhbt-la.org).



visit our website at  
[www.hhbt-la.org](http://www.hhbt-la.org)

and "like" us on facebook at  
<http://www.facebook.com/hhbt.la>

## DHARMA SCHOOL UPDATE

In July, we spend time learning about Obon and doing Obon crafts. This year, we made origami kusudama pomander balls to decorate the yagura. We made ice cream one week with the help of Lauren from Jr. YBA. During Obon, we spent our busy weekend hosting the drink booth with our friends from Jr. YBA and Sangha Teens. And of course, we played games, ate lots of yummy food, and danced bon odori.

Thank you to Mr. Greg, Mr. Wayne, Ms. Diane, Ms. Bianca, and Ms. Susan for helping out with Dharma School this summer!

After a busy summer, Dharma School took a brief August break to prepare for the coming year. Some of us will participate in the World Dobo Gathering youth program at the end of August.

Now that summer is coming to an end, we are looking forward to a new school year and a new year of Dharma School activities. Please come join us for service and fun lessons on Sundays! Our first week back will be Sunday, September 11<sup>th</sup>! We always encourage new and returning faces to join us!

## NAD Scholarship Program Congratulations to Lauren Kashiwabara

Due to a generous donation made by Rev. and Mrs. Toshihisa Enoki, the Higashi Honganji North America District began a scholarship program for high school graduates and college students from our four temples. Every year, one or two deserving students will receive an award of \$1,000.00.

In our initial year, we received four applications. After careful examination of the applications by the committee, it was decided that one scholarship would be awarded this year. The recipient is our Betsuin member, Ms. Lauren Miki Kashiwabara. She recently graduated with honors from Diamond Bar High School and has enrolled at California State University, Monterey Bay. She eventually plans to enroll at Scripps Institute of Oceanography after college to earn a Master's degree in Marine Biology. Her dream is to go into the field of Marine Mammal Rescue and Rehabilitation. Lauren is the daughter of Susan and George Kashiwabara.

Congratulations Lauren!

(WEDNESDAY, con't. from page 1)

passages of Part II of the *Larger Sutra*, Shakyamuni discusses the Pure Land, which has just been observed by all those listening to his sermon, and notes that there are "two kinds of birth" in the Pure Land. Because of the presence of doubt, one is an "intermediate" or "temporary birth." But the other is the "true birth," a transformative experience that occurs when one deeply identifies with, or "becomes one with," the transcendent truth that the Pure Land represents.

Especially with regard to our two-year experience in the WNSC, one memorable clarification of the true birth that we studied is Dr. Nobuo Haneda's emphasis that this "birth" should not be understood as an ending, e.g., something attained upon "mastering" the teachings, or something only attained at death. Rather, it signals the *arising* of the Innermost Aspiration (*hongan* in Japanese). As Haneda sensei clarified, the true birth results in our engaging in a *bowing-listening* practice, the same practice that the bodhisattva Dharmakara performed to become Amida Buddha. In essence, this means joining together with others and learning from all sentient beings, regarding them all as Buddhas. As Haneda sensei had put it, "In this way, the *Larger Sutra* talks about 'true birth' as birth in Amida's Innermost Aspiration, in the spirit that endlessly goes out of the Pure Land to seek oneness with all sentient beings." Ultimately, when Dharmakara perfects his bowing-listening practice, his practice manifests in his very name. Amida's full name is Namu Amida Butsu ("Bow-ing Amida Buddha").

Because the Innermost Aspiration refers to an "ever-expanding spirit" that *endlessly* seeks oneness with all sentient beings, the true birth—and the "conclusion" of our *Larger Sutra* study—does not mark an "ending." Rather, the true birth in the Pure Land represents an ongoing student lifestyle, joining together with others to seek the deepest meaning of birth in the Pure Land. In other words, the true birth, the path of Jodo Shinshu, is a *true beginning*.

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

Mrs. Sharon Yoko Nomura (55)  
June 30, 2016

Mrs. Tsuya Nakamura (91)  
July 11, 2016

Mr. Russell Sumio Sakatani (55)  
July 19, 2016

Mr. Toshio Nakamura (61)  
July 31, 2016

Mr. Kunio Sekino (87)  
August 5, 2016

Namu Amida Butsu



## LUMBINI CORNER

We all had a great summer! We hate to see it come to an end, because we know we have to say goodbye to our friends who graduated and are moving on to new schools in August and September.

As usual, Obon was the highlight of our summer. We made lanterns and uchiwas to hang during the festival and enjoyed performing on stage in front of all of our family and friends.

Lumbini staff and parents made the delicious Bake Sale a huge hit at Obon. Thank you to everyone for making this year's Obon a big success. Lumbini was also in charge of a game booth called Ball Toss.

We look forward to a new school year of having fun, learning, playing, and making new friends.

Lumbini is now accepting new pre-school enrollment for children between the ages of 2 1/2 and 5 years. Please contact the Lumbini office at (213) 680-2976 for more information.



## TAIKO NEWS

Kitsune Taiko, Tanuki Taiko, Bombu Taiko, and TAIKOPROJECT all helped make our Obon festival an exciting one with their performances throughout the weekend.

We enjoyed watching TAIKOPROJECT'S Saturday performance as well as Kitsune, Bombu, and Tanuki's joint performances on both evenings. All of the members and their friends helped raise a lot of money for the temple! Kitsune and Bombu also did well, as always, selling their popular somen, cold tofu, and udon. Thanks for helping out with another successful Obon!



Sunday Service & Discussion Group  
Street Closures  
Sunday, October 30, 2016

Due to the Los Angeles Rock 'N' Roll 1/2 Marathon, parts of 3rd Street and Central Avenue will be closed on October 30th.

Among the streets that the event affects are 3rd Street between Alameda and Central Ave (including 4th Street beginning from Anderson Street east of the 5 freeway which turns into 3rd Street as you drive west toward the temple) and Central Ave between 3rd Street and 2nd Street, which includes our corner intersection at 3rd and Central. Our parking lot will still be open and most easily accessible from Crocker St by way of 4th Street. We apologize for the inconvenience. An updated map and further information about the closure will be available closer to the event by visiting <http://www.runrocknroll.com/los-angeles/the-races/road-closures/> Also, for those of you with smartphones, the most updated information regarding your route is available on the Waze app!

If you would like help deciding an alternate route, please call the temple office at 213-626-4200 or email us at [info@hhbt-la.org](mailto:info@hhbt-la.org).





Help us save paper and postage by requesting your newsletter delivery ONLINE! EMAIL US at [info@hhbt-la.org](mailto:info@hhbt-la.org) and specify EMAIL ONLY for future issues of "The Way." Thank you!

## LUMBINI CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

FOR CHILDREN AGES 2 1/2 TO 5 YEARS

**APPLICATIONS  
AVAILABLE!**

TEL: 213-680-2976

FAX: 213-626-6850

EMAIL: [lumbini.missleslie@gmail.com](mailto:lumbini.missleslie@gmail.com)

WEBPAGE: <http://LumbiniCDC.org>

**OPEN YEAR ROUND:**

MONDAY through FRIDAY

7:30am to 6:00pm

closed national holidays

Call today to set up a visit to the school!



### SUBMISSION DEADLINE!

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

### Have you heard?!

**We have weekly YOGA & ZUMBA classes at the temple!**

**YOGA | WED 6:15pm  
ZUMBA | TUES 7:30pm  
FRI 6:30pm**

**JOIN US!**

