

**HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE**

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**HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE | LOS ANGELES BETSUIN**

**TEMPLE SCHEDULE**

**AUGUST**

- 27 10:00am Sunday Service
- 27 8:00am Big Bargain Sale

**SEPTEMBER**

- 3 No Service (Labor Day)
- 10 10:00am Shotsuki Service
- 16 6:00pm HOONKO Gathering
- 17 10:00am HOONKO Service
- 24 10:00am Sunday Service  
Discussion Group
- 24 11:30am Temple Fun Day

**OCTOBER**

- 1 10:00am Shotsuki Service
- 8 10:00am Sunday Service
- 15 10:00am Autumn Ohigan Service  
1:00pm Autumn Seminar
- 22 10:00am Sunday Service
- 29 10:00am Sunday Service  
(Disc Group)
- 29 11:30am Dharma School  
Halloween

**HŌONKŌ**

**Hōonkō Gathering**

Saturday, September 16, 2017  
6:00pm

**Hōonkō Service**

Sunday, September 17, 2017  
10:00am

*Thank you for supporting our*  
**2017**

**O B O N**  
**FESTIVAL**



# The Way



Volume 69 | Number 6 | Aug/Sept 2017

HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE • LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

## Walking the Path to Buddhadharma

Rev. Tomoyuki Hasegawa

My starting point as a Buddhist is my experience at a school named Ōtani Senshū Gakuin, a school in Kyoto, which is run by the headquarters of the Higashi Honganji (Shinshū Ōtani-ha). I still recall my experience at the school from time to time, especially when I encounter difficulties or feel lost in my direction in life. My experience has been the basis I can always go back to, and will be for the rest of my life.

The school's name "Ōtani Senshū Gakuin" is often translated as "Ōtani Seminary" probably because of its unique system. The basic curriculum of the school is a one-year program that might be called "regular course" (and there is another one-year program, "advanced course," for students who have finished the regular course or have a similar background). The curriculum of the regular course is designed for students to acquire a minimum knowledge of the teachings of Jōdo Shinshū and to obtain a qualification as a minister in one year, so many students regard the school as a crash course for becoming a Higashi Honganji minister as substitute for completing a four-year college such as Ōtani University. However, the real objective of the school is to master "the spirit of Jōdo Shinshū through experience" and getting the ministerial qualification is a secondary matter, although I hadn't given much thought to it before actually entering the school.

As I mentioned before, the system of Senshū Gakuin is quite unique in that all students and teachers are required to live in the school's dormitories. All dormitories even have living quarters for teachers' families. They share their learning not only at school but also in the dormitories, where they spend a significant amount of time in discussion sessions. In addition to that, there was no air conditioning or showers at

the facilities (at least when I was at the school), and such "basic commodities" as internet, cell phones, computers, and TVs were off limits. It may sound like some kind of a monastery and is not an attractive environment for young people. But it was designed in such an old-fashioned way so that all students and teachers can spend all of their energy achieving their mutual goal, "mastering the spirit of Jōdo Shinshū through experience." Again, I hadn't seriously thought about the design concept of the system before entering the school.

When I decided to become a minister by causes and conditions (though I had avoided the decision all of my life), I had two choices for studying the teaching and obtaining the ministerial qualification: entering the "DIY" course (studying all by myself to pass examinations) or entering the Senshū Gakuin school, which was the least expensive course (I couldn't afford to go to Ōtani U or other one-year courses). First, I only thought about doing DIY since I was quite confident that I would be able to study the teaching by myself. Also, there was a more serious reason for it, which was that I really hated the idea of entering life with no privacy at the Senshū Gakuin. When I even thought about it, I felt like I was going to throw up. However, my gut instinct told me that I needed to attend the school if I really wanted to learn.

Before I decided to become a minister, I had a few chances to interact with members of my home temple in Hokkaidō while I was helping with its activities the for the first time in my life. The experience told me that there was something profound in the tradition, which couldn't be grasped just by reading books. I had no idea what it was but vaguely felt that it was much bigger than my existence. Anyway, I decided

to go to the school and started reading books on the teaching.

By the time I entered the school in April 2002, I had finished reading most of the Buddhist scriptures in the Jōdo Shinshū tradition and some textbooks on it. I thought I had already understood the general outline of the teaching and all I needed to do was just deepen and organize my knowledge, and to get the qualification. I even thought that there would be not much to learn from the teachers at the school. But I have to admit that I was completely wrong and understood NOTHING about the Buddhist teaching or even about myself, either.

What surprised me the most after entering the school was the teachers' sincere attitude toward the teaching. On the first day at the school, I took a glimpse of one of the teachers' book titled *Shinshū seiten* ("the Sacred Texts of Jōdo Shinshū"), which contained most of the works written by Shinran Shōnin and other important texts in the tradition. It completely blew my mind. The margins of every page were filled with notes in careful but very firm handwriting. I was able to see from the notes that the teacher paid careful attention to each word of the texts, explored the deeper meaning of them, reflecting upon his life through the teaching over and over again, organized his thoughts, and wrote down his understanding on the pages with firm conviction. It made me think, "What was I doing?" I had to realize I hadn't even started yet.

(Please see *WALKING*, page 5)

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



# Betsuin News



## HŌONKŌ

September 16-17, 2017

HŌONKŌ is the memorial service for Shinran Shōnin, the founder of our Jodo Shinshu denomination. The literal meaning of HŌONKŌ is "a gathering to repay a debt of gratitude." It is, therefore, an occasion to express our appreciation for having been given this opportunity to encounter the Buddha's teaching. According to Higashi Honganji tradition, the memorial date of Shinran Shōnin is November 28, 1262.

However, for this year and the two following, the service will be held in September to allow for our officiant, the Overseas District Abbot Choyū Ōtani, to come to Los Angeles. Subsequently, our HŌONKŌ services will be on the weekend of September 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. As a result, our Autumn Ohigan Service, normally held around this time, will be held on October 15.

This year, we will have our HŌONKŌ Gathering, an English-speaking discussion on Saturday, September 16<sup>th</sup> at 6:00pm with guest speaker Rev. Nobuko Miyoshi from West Covina Higashi Honganji. For our HŌONKŌ Service on Sunday morning at 10:00am, Rev. Nobuko Miyoshi will join us again as the guest speaker in English and Rev. Toshihisa Enoki will be our Japanese guest speaker. We hope that you can join us for this special annual observance.

## Kaikyo-ki Memorial 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 5<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.

## TEMPLE FUN DAY

HIYA PALS! We're welcoming everyone back Disney style! Come join the fun for the Temple Fun Day on Sunday, September 24<sup>th</sup> following Sunday Service.

Bring your Disney character gear for a fun festive afternoon with all of our temple friends! There will be a delicious lunch, fun music, games, and crafts for all ages.

The cost is only \$5 per person, so please RSVP with the flyer you receive in the mail. Bring the whole family and invite friends, too! Don't miss it!

## Autumn Ohigan Service & Seminar

October 15, 2017

The Autumn Ohigan Service will be held a month later than usual on Sunday, October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at 10:00am. The change in schedule is due to HŌONKŌ Service move to September. 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.

## HALLOWEEN PARTY

Come dressed up in your best costume for our Sunday Service and Halloween Party on Sunday, October 29<sup>th</sup>. Following our (except for some members in unusual costumes) Sunday 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! 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)

## DHARMA SCHOOL UPDATE

In July, we spend time learning about Obon and doing Obon crafts. This year, we decorated cut-out lanterns and wrote our favorite things about Obon on them. We wrote things like playing games, eating all of the food, dancing during bon odori, and seeing our friends. We used the lanterns to decorate our Youth Group display board along with photos from our ice cream outing, various Sunday activities, and photos of Jr. YBA. During Obon, we spent our busy weekend hosting the drink booth with our friends from Jr. YBA and Sangha Teens. Some of us worked in the game booths and helped with Obon set up also. And of course, we played games, ate lots of yummy food, got dressed up, and danced bon odori.

After a busy summer, Dharma School is taking a brief August break to prepare for the coming year.

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 10<sup>th</sup>! We always encourage new and returning faces to join us!

## Our deepest condolences

to the family and relatives of ...

*Mr. Masao Ogimachi (89)  
March 17, 2017*

*Mrs. Toshie Yanaga (96)  
June 24, 2017*

*Mr. Raymond Teruo Kurihara (90)  
July 9, 2017*

*Namu Amida Butsu*

Thank you for supporting our  
**2017 OBON**

**LOOK OUT, OBON 2018!**

Will our hours change?

Will we add/eliminate food items? Who knows?

All I know is that Obon 2017 is over! We are thankful for another successful celebration and we have all recuperated!

Our Obon Committee is made up of amazing individuals who make it happen every Obon season here at Higashi! I won't even attempt to name all these people, but you're ALL SUPERHEROES in my blue & gold book!

Thank you to our dedicated ministerial staff, ALL the men and women (of all ages) involved in the decorating; setting up; obtaining; permits/security/prizes; ordering raffle tickets/t-shirts/posters/supplies/gift certificates; preparing marinade/food/desserts; donating drinks/produce/flowers & plants/raffle prizes; **providing entertainment/games/traditional ceremonies and dance**; overseeing the financial aspect/safety/maintenance and last, but definitely not least... thank you to those who had the strength and will power for returning Monday for the clean-up and take-down and for providing a delicious lunch!

As I end this article, please keep in mind that we have a whopping 356 days left to plan, for yet, another memorable OBON 2018!

Please see Steve Murata for any questions!

With much gratitude and sincere heartfelt thank you from the Obon Bears, *Steve* (the nice one) and *Elaine* (the nicer one!)

**2017 OBON  
RAFFLE WINNERS**

**FIRST PRIZE**

\$1,000 Cash

**Grace Iwasaki**

**SECOND PRIZE**

4 Disneyland Park Hopper Tickets

**Monica Makiyama**

**THIRD PRIZE**

\$500 Cash

**Wedel**

**FOURTH PRIZE**

Apple Watch

**Jonathan Tharp**

**FIFTH PRIZE**

Zojirushi Rice Cooker

**Sumi Takesako**

**SIXTH PRIZE**

Apple iPad mini

(courtesy of Tad Okumoto - Star Mazda)

**Dwight Ibaraki**

**SPECIAL PRIZE**

\$500 Travel Certificate

(Courtesy of New Japan Travel Center)

**Mrs. Irei**

**OBON SERVICES**

On July 30<sup>th</sup>, the Obon/Hatsubon Service was held to honor members and friends who have passed away since last year's Obon. Rev. Peter Hata delivered a Dharma Talk in English and Rev. Masashi Fujii spoke in Japanese for the service.

Manto-e Services were held on the evenings of July 29<sup>th</sup> and July 30<sup>th</sup>. Rinban Noriaki Ito spoke in English and Rev. Tomoyuki Hasegawa in Japanese on Saturday and Rev. Frederick Brenion spoke in English and Rev. Nobuko Miyoshi in Japanese on Sunday. The services were held outdoors under approximately 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.



# The Way



## 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 2½ and 5 years. Please contact the Lumbini office at (213) 680-2976 for more information.

*member spotlight* WEDDING ANNOUNCEMENTS  
 Heather Toyoshima & Tedman Cheung  
 July 8, 2017  
 CONGRATULATIONS!!

## TAIKO NEWS

Kitsune 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 and Bombu'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 did well, as always, selling their popular somen, cold tofu, and udon. This year, they also added on poke and cold udon! Thanks for helping out with another successful Obon!

(WALKING, cont. from page 1)

Another big surprise for me was that they accepted us students as we were, regardless of our backgrounds, and placed a full trust in us. More precisely, they had a total trust in our potential for becoming future buddhas and embraced us as their fellow travelers on the path to Buddhahood. Actually, many students were only interested in getting their qualification and were not very serious about learning the teaching. Some students even abused the trust placed in them. Even so, the teachers very patiently guided us onto the path of awakening and never abandoned any of us. Their trust was unwavering. You can imagine how difficult it would be. One night, right after the school started, some of our group gathered in a dormitory room and talked about how we were struck with awe by the teachers' unshakable commitment to guiding us. We said, "This place is crazy."

I wanted to find out more about the foundation of their commitment to listening to the teaching and walking the path together with us as fellow travelers. As I was working closely with the teachers, it began to dawn on me that there was a deep respect to our "buddha nature" at the very basis of the relationships between them and the students. And they always encouraged us to establish relationships with people surrounding us with a sense of deep respect. I thought it was overwhelmingly difficult. I still find it difficult today. But I also felt that it might be what I needed to learn.

The late Rev. Atsushi Nobukuni, a former principal of the school who is revered as "the founder of the school philosophy," once said that the education at the Ōtani Senshū Gakuin must be done only by the Buddhadharma, not through the personal capabilities or ideologies of the teachers. The teachers

and students, who were totally equal as disciples of the Buddha, must create the sangha by listening to the call of the Buddhadharma and by responding to the call, accepting it, and putting it into action. Shinran Shōnin called his followers with utmost respect as "*on-dōbō, on-dōgyō* (my most honorable fellow travelers)." I was able to see clearly that the spirit of the *on-dōbō on-dōgyō* was still living in the relationships with the teachers.

I also noticed that I myself had to set foot on the path of awakening in order to receive the teaching and to encounter people as fellow travelers. Otherwise, I would end up in reviewing and criticizing anything or anybody, which would bring me nowhere. More than ten years have passed since I graduated from the school, and I more than often find myself straying from the path to Buddhadharma and creating problems. But

the teachers at the school sometimes come to my mind and encourage me to walk the path again. I haven't met them for many years, but in my mind, they are still walking the broad path of Mahāyāna (Great Vehicle) and remind me of the starting point as a Buddhist that I can always go back to.



## 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!**

## MEMBERSHIP Update

Paid 2017 Temple Members will receive the following benefits *upon request* from the office

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

Membership dues for 2017 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.

## SUBMISSION DEADLINE!

Submissions for *The Way* are due the 10th of each month for the following month's issue. Articles and announcements for our December Issue are due October 10th, 2017. Submissions may be subject to printing restrictions and staff approval. Thank you and we look forward to hearing from you!

# LUMBINI

## CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

FOR CHILDREN AGES 2 1/2 TO 5 YEARS

TEL: 213-680-2976

FAX: 213-626-6850

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

WEBPAGE: <http://LumbiniCDC.org>

[facebook.com/lumbinidc](https://www.facebook.com/lumbinidc)

**OPEN YEAR ROUND:**

MONDAY through FRIDAY

7:30am to 6:00pm

closed national holidays

## APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE!

Call today to set up a visit to the school!

