

# HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE

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# The Way

Vol. 77 | No. 8  
December 2025

HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE | LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

## TEMPLE SCHEDULE

### DECEMBER

- 2 7:00 pm Tuesday Discussion
- 7 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
- 14 10:00 am **Bodhi Day/Year-end Family Service**
- 16 7:00 pm Tuesday Discussion
- 21 9:00 am **Temple Clean-up**
- 28 No Service
- 29 9:00 am **Mochitsuki (Monday)**
- 31 5:00 pm **Year-end Service (Joya-e)**

### JANUARY

- 1 10:00 am **New Years Day Service (Shusho-e)**
- 4 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
- 6 7:00 pm Tuesday Discussion
- 11 10:00 am Sunday Service Discussion Group
- 18 10:00 am Family Service
- 20 7:00 pm Tuesday Discussion
- 25 10:00 am **Eitaikyo Service**
- 25 12:00 pm **New Year Luncheon & General Meeting**

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2025

**New Years Eve Service (Joya-e) & Toshikoshi Soba**  
5:00 PM

THURSDAY, JANUARY 1, 2026

**New Years Day Service (Shusho-e)**  
10:00 AM

SUNDAY, JANUARY 25, 2025

**Eitaikyo Service & New Year Luncheon/General Meeting**  
10:00 AM

### VISITING THE TEMPLE

The temple is currently open for private services and visitations by appointment. Please call us to schedule an appointment. 213-626-4200

Though we are open for Sunday Services in person, we will continue to

**STREAM LIVE ON FACEBOOK**  
[FACEBOOK.COM/HHBT.LA](https://www.facebook.com/HHBT.LA)  
**SUNDAYS | 10 AM**



# The Way



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## Finding Joy in the Ordinary

Rev. Mayuki Nagamine

I can't believe we're already in the very last month of the year! December has always been my favorite month as it is filled with so many festive events. In Japan, year-end and new year are both a pretty big deal, and I used to get excited to go grocery shopping with my father and siblings to get stuff for the year-end feast and *Osechi* (Traditional Japanese New Year food).

On December 31st, in the evening, we have services in our *Hondō* (main hall) and *Onaibutsu* (our home altar). Then, we visit our family's niche in the *Nokotsudō* to hold a short service there as well. After that, we enjoy a delicious dinner while watching year-end special TV programs like *Kōhaku Uta Gassen*. Around 10 pm, my father goes outside to start a fire, as we have many visitors coming for *Joya no Kane*; the traditional ringing of the bell 108 times to welcome

the new year. We serve sake and greet the visitors.

On New Year's Day, we have the *Shushō-e* (New Year's Service) in the morning, and then enjoy *Osechi* while waiting for the New Year's greeting cards to be delivered.

(*Nengajō*: New Year's cards are a huge part of Japanese New Year culture!)

This is my third December since I moved to Los Angeles, and while there aren't many things I particularly miss from Japan, our family's year-end and New Year traditions are among the few. Yet, I feel grateful to be able to share both the Year-End and New Year's Services with our temple members here in Los Angeles. It's a different setting, but the feeling of gathering together in gratitude as we close one year and welcome another is the same.

When the new year comes around,

we tend to see it as a fresh start. Every year, many people, including myself, make New Year's resolutions and try to become "better" than we were the year before. But looking back, there aren't that many resolutions I've actually managed to keep. I once heard that January is the month when the most people sign up for gym memberships, but how many of us actually stick with it?

I think we can all agree that we love newness in our lives. New shoes, a new car, a new job...many new things can make us feel excited and motivated for what's ahead. But as time passes, that excitement fades, and what once felt "new" soon becomes part of the ordinary routine. It's a reminder that the feeling of freshness isn't found only in new things, but in how we see them. When we add mindfulness to each moment, even something familiar can feel new again.

For example, when we go on a vacation, it's exciting to plan and go, but by the time we return home, the feeling of "home sweet home" sets in. At least for me, just being able to sleep in my own bed or having more outfit options instead of living out of a suitcase makes me feel comfortable and at ease. But I wouldn't notice these little things if I hadn't been away from them.

We often chase after something new, thinking that newness will bring excitement and happiness. But the teachings remind us that true peace isn't found in something new, but rather it's found in awakening to the life we already have. In *Jōdo Shinshū*, mindfulness isn't about trying to control or perfect our minds, but about recognizing how we are already being continuously supported by Amida's compassion in this very moment. Shinran reminds us that awakening is not something we achieve through our own effort, but

(Please see *JOY*, page 3)

## In Gratitude

LOOKING BACK AT 2025

As 2025 comes to a close, we wish to take this time to share our appreciation for your participation in temple events throughout the year.

We began the year with our Eitaikyo Service and New Year luncheon and General Meeting in January followed by our Annual Golf Tournament in March. In July, we had our Obon Festival. Our members and many friends worked hard to plan a successful Obon Festival. We appreciate our neighbors, community members, and friends who came out and supported the event as well. In August, thanks to the Murata/Oyama Family and many members and friends, we held our Big Bargain Sale. In September, we were joined by Rev. Kenjun Kawawata and his wife, Jeanne,

who became our new Rinban during the Succession Service on September 28<sup>th</sup>. We celebrated Rinban Noriaki Ito's 50 years of service as a minister and retirement as Rinban and Bishop with a grand event that afternoon.

We continue to stream our weekly services thanks to a capable AV team, led by Jason Wong and Gary Kanemoto, who have been streaming our services every Sunday in addition to helping at various private services and events throughout the year.

Our garden has been beautifully maintained primarily by Mr. Tadahide (Tad) Kawahira who comes often to care for it. We also thank Mr. Hirokichi Mae-hara for his expert support as well. Much gratitude to the many volunteers who

(Please see *GRATITUDE*, page 3)



# Betsuin News



## TEMPLE CLEAN UP

Cleaning the temple is a huge task, but with everyone's efforts we can make it sparkle in no time. It is a tradition for all of us to help bring a clean temple into the New Year. Our annual Temple Clean-up will be on Sunday, December 21st at 9:00 am. Without the efforts of all of our members and friends, we could not complete this big task. Please join us as we work together to prepare our temple for 2026. Thank you in advance for all of your hard work.

## MOCHITSUKI

Our annual Mochitsuki will be held on Monday, December 29<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 am. This is one of the most exciting and enjoyable events of the year, but not without your help! Come out and help us make MOCHI for the altar and for our New Years Day ozoni. There will be plenty to eat here and take home. Be sure to invite your family and friends to enjoy this very special cultural year-end tradition.

### SUBMISSION DEADLINE!

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



facebook.com/hhbt.la



@higashihonganjila

visit our website at  
**hhbt-la.org**

## Joya-e New Years Eve Service

Come celebrate the end of 2025 at our Year-end Service to be held on Wednesday, December 31st at 5:00 pm. It is an opportunity to reflect on the past year and to prepare to welcome in the New Year, so please join us! The evening will also include Toshikoshi Soba, so come and join us.

## Shusho-e New Year Day Service

Shusho-e is the first service of the New Year. It is a tradition in Japan to visit nearby temples and shrines on New Year's Day. We welcome you to join us to greet the New Year on Thursday, January 1, 2026, at 10:00 am. Following service, stay for a sip of otoso (New Year's sake) to toast 2026 and enjoy ozoni (soup with fresh mochi from our temple mochitsuki) and exchange New Year's greetings. If you are unable or choose not to join us in person, please join us for the live stream on Facebook.

## Eitaikyo Service & General Meeting

The Eitaikyo Service will be held on Sunday, January 25th at 10:00 am at the temple. This service is held in memory of all temple members who have passed away. It is also held to remember those who have been placed into the Eitaikyo register. If you are unable or choose not to join us in person, please join us for the live stream on Facebook.

The 122nd Annual General Meeting and New Year Luncheon is planned to be held after the service. Further information will be mailed to you in January.

The temple will be closed  
December 25th - 26th  
and January 2nd - 3rd

### YEAR-END & NEW YEAR EVENTS

|           |                                                            |
|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sun 12/21 | Temple Clean up                                            |
| Sun 12/28 | No Service                                                 |
| Mon 12/29 | Mochitsuki                                                 |
| Wed 12/31 | Joya-e (New Years Eve Service)                             |
| Thurs 1/1 | Shusho-e (New Years Day Service)                           |
| Sun 1/25  | Eitaikyo Service<br>New Year Luncheon<br>& General Meeting |



(GRATITUDE, cont. from page 1)

come to help with whatever needs to be done to keep the temple functioning—whether that be mail outs, gardening, chairing service, or helping to prepare for special events. They lend office support as needed and come for “omigaki,” the polishing of the articles such as candle holders, vases, and so forth in the altar. Our dedicated members also coordinate Sunday otokis following services, (primarily a dedicated team of women) gather to prepare wonderful snacks and lunches for those who come in addition to making sure everything is cleaned up at the end.

We thank our resident minister, Rev. Mayuki Nagamine for her dedication to the temple and many hours of hard work. We appreciate our office staff, Susan Kashiwabara, Mika Ito, and Nancy Kurihara-Johnson with assistance from Lindsay Kashiwabara and occasional others. We continue to receive support for our religious activities from our North America District ministers, Rev. Tomoyuki Hasegawa and Rev. Kensho Goto who help us every Sunday and on other occasions as needed. We have also received support from other ministers, Revs. Brenion, Hata, Miyoshi, Osa, Toyoshima, and Yamada for presenting Dharma messages for our Sunday services in-person and recorded online.

We are so happy that we have been able to see so many of you at our various services and events this year, and at the Obon Festival, and weekly services. Congratulations to the Dodgers for winning the World Series for the second year in a row for our city.

Best wishes for a wonderful 2026.

Higashi Honganji Buddhist 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!**

(JOY, con't. from page 1)

something we receive when we truly accept things as they are and appreciate what is already here and now. So instead of “being mindful to become better,” we can simply be present and notice the working of Other Power that is already sustaining our lives.

Now that I don’t even know when I’ll next be able to enjoy our family’s New Year tradition, I feel grateful that I had the opportunity to experience it. At the same time, I wish I had cherished it a little more before I moved here. It’s a gentle reminder that the life we have now and the things we sometimes take for granted are precious. Even ordinary days and familiar traditions are so special when you shift your perspective.

When we gather for the *Joya-e* and *Shushō-e* services, we take a moment to reflect on the past year and welcome the new one. As this is a special time to do so, I think the most important reminder is to cherish the present moment and the life we already have. In the new year, we’ll of course have some good days and some bad days. But no matter what kind of day it is, we can remember that we are always embraced just as we are. When we live with that awareness, even ordinary days may feel new and filled with gratitude.



## LCDC NEWS

October was an exciting month for the Lumbini children because they got to celebrate one of their favorite holidays... HALLOWEEN! They dressed up as princesses, superheroes, their favorite cartoon characters, animals, and much more, and had a chance to show off to all of their friends, teachers, and families on Halloween. After lots of photos at school, they walked around Little Tokyo and trick-or-treated in the neighborhood. By the end of the afternoon, so much walking was definitely tiring for their little feet, so they were happy to return to school with their bags full and heavy with lots of sweets!

We're continuing to learn Japanese with Rev. Mayuki weekly. We learn new words and songs, and always have a worksheet or art project to take home. We look forward to continuing Movement classes with Mr. John, too!

With December here already, Lumbini is taking time to reflect on the past year and think about goals for 2026. Next year, we will continue to strive toward educating our children. Lumbini's goal is to give each child an opportunity to expand and grow to his or her fullest potential. We are grateful to have such a dedicated staff as well as very supportive parents and families. We want to thank the temple for its dedication and support to help make Lumbini such an enjoyable and educational center.

Our Year-End Holiday Program will be held on Friday, December 19<sup>th</sup>. The children have been working hard on their songs to present to all of their family and friends. They're also looking forward to a special visit from Santa!

The end of the year also means that it is time for Mochitsuki! This year's Mochitsuki will be held on Monday, December 29<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am. Each of the children will get to make their own mochi to take home and eat for a snack! Parents and family are welcome to join in and help out with all of the fun.

Lumbini will be closed for the holidays on December 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>, January 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>. We wish everyone a happy and healthy holiday season!

If you are interested in enrolling a child between the ages of 2 to 5 years of age in Lumbini's program, please contact the Lumbini office at 213-680-2976.



## YOUTH GROUP UPDATE

In October, we had our Dharma School Halloween Party. We had fun sharing our costumes with our friends, making crafts, and playing fun games. Mr. Danny coordinated the craft area for us and helped us with all of our projects! After a lunch of chili rice, nachos, salads, and lots of desserts, we played games! After the games, the kids gathered to trick-or-treat and get lots of candy and treats. We had a great time at our party and thank everyone for coming! Special thanks to everyone who helped with the games, setup, and cleanup! In December, we're looking forward to Mochitsuki and all of the other year-end activities! We hope that you will join us! Please join us for Dharma School on Shotsuki Service Sundays. For a complete Dharma School schedule, please email [hbbtkids@gmail.com](mailto:hbbtkids@gmail.com)



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**LCDC**  
**LUMBINI**  
CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

FOR CHILDREN AGES

2 TO 5 YEARS

OPEN YEAR ROUND:

MONDAY through FRIDAY

7:30am to 6:00pm

closed national holidays



**LUMBINI IS  
NOW OFFERING**

- \* LUNCH PROGRAM
- \* INTRO TO JAPANESE  
with Rev. Mayuki
- \* EXPRESSION THROUGH  
MOBILITY with Mr. John

**[LUMBINICDC.ORG](http://LUMBINICDC.ORG)**

Call Ms. Leslie 213-680-2976!  
[lumbini.missleslie@gmail.com](mailto:lumbini.missleslie@gmail.com)

[@lumbini\\_preschool](https://www.instagram.com/lumbini_preschool)

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## GO GREEN!

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 color pdf issues of "The Way." Thank you!



## BECOME A 2025 HIGASHI MEMBER!

Membership dues are \$400 for dual/family (includes children of the primary member under age 22) and \$200 for individual members. Paid Temple Members may receive 10% off coupons from Fugetsu-Do and Toyo Miyatake Studio upon request from the office.

To pay online, visit the link or scan the QR code:  
<https://hhbt-la.square.site/membership>



