

HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE

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The Way

Vol. 77 | No. 2
February/March 2025

HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE | LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

TEMPLE SCHEDULE

MARCH

- 2 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
- 9 10:00 am Sunday Service
Discussion Group
- 10 9:00 am **Golf Tournament**
- 16 10:00 am Spring Ohigan Service
1:00 pm Spring Seminar
- 23 10:00 am Sunday Service
- 30 10:00 am Sunday Service

APRIL

- 6 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
1:00 pm **LABTF Hanamatsuri**
@ Nishi Hongwanji
- 13 10:00 am Sunday Service
Discussion Group
- 20 10:00 am **Hanamatsuri Family Service**
- 27 10:00 am Sunday Service

HIGASHI HONGANJI 23rd ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

CANDLEWOOD COUNTRY CLUB

MONDAY, MARCH 10, 2025

9:00AM

SIGNUP TO GOLF FOR BE A TEESPONSOR!

VISITING THE TEMPLE

The temple is currently open
for private services and visi-
tations 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

SUNDAYS | 10 AM

SUNDAY, MARCH 16

SPRING OHIGAN SERVICE

10:00 AM

SPRING SEMINAR

1:00 PM

GUEST SPEAKER:
REV. MASAO KODANI



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Love in Buddhism

Rev. Mayuki Nagamine

The month of January seemed to pass in the blink of an eye. At the very beginning of the new year, Los Angeles experienced what has been described as one of the worst wildfires in its history. Among our Sangha members, some were forced to evacuate, and others lost their cherished homes. I would like to extend my deepest sympathies to those affected and hope for a swift recovery.

Now, as we enter February, the world around us is filled with the spirit of Valentine's Day. As a side note, in Japan, it is a tradition for women to give gifts (mainly chocolates) to men on February 14th. Then, exactly one month later, on March 14th, there is a day called "White Day," when men give gifts in return to women. (However, in recent years, these traditions have been evolving, becoming more considerate of non-traditional relationships.) Both occasions serve as special opportunities to express love and gratitude toward one another.

It seems that in Japan, expressing feelings of love and appreciation whether toward family, friends, or partners can sometimes feel a bit embarrassing. On the other hand, in America, the word "LOVE" is commonly used in daily life, and emotional expressions tend to be more open. Personally, I find this to be a wonderful cultural trait.

However, in Buddhism, the word "love" doesn't always have a purely positive meaning. As many of you may know, Buddhism originated when Prince Siddhartha Gautama, born into the Shakya clan, faced the realities of life: birth, aging, illness, and death. The ultimate goal of Buddhism, enlightenment or awakening, is essentially to transcend suffering and see the world as it truly is. One of the main reasons we experience suffering is explained through the concept of "the four and eight kinds

of suffering" (Shiku Hakku). The Four Sufferings are birth, aging, illness, and death. The Eight Sufferings include these four, along with the following:

- Suffering of meeting with what we hate
- Suffering of separation from what we love
- Suffering of not obtaining what we seek
- Suffering arising from the five elements of self (the general suffering that arises from human existence)

The "suffering of separation from what we love" is the sadness we feel when we have to part from family, friends, or loved ones. This isn't just about losing someone to death—it can also happen in situations like when a person moves far away or goes through a breakup. The reason this hurts so much is because of our attachment, which is closely connected to love. Because of this, Buddhism sometimes sees love as something that can get in the way of reaching enlightenment. Some Buddhist traditions teach that monks should give up vulgar attachments, including marriage, so they can focus completely on spiritual practice.

However, love itself is not inherently bad. While love based on attachment can lead to suffering, the compassion of Amida Buddha goes beyond such attachments and embraces all beings without conditions. Amida Buddha's vow is to never abandon those who are lost in delusion and suffering, offering limitless compassion. This great compassion can be interpreted as a form of "universal love."

Shinran Shonin, the founder of Jodo Shinshu, initially became a monk in the Tendai tradition, but later became a pioneer in allowing married priests.

Even today, Jodo Shinshu ministers are allowed to marry and have families. Shinran Shonin referred to himself as standing in the position of "neither monk nor layperson" (hiso hizoku). This didn't mean he abandoned the life of a Buddhist practitioner; rather, it reflected his way of living the teachings alongside laypeople, valuing the shared human journey and practice. He worked to break down the barriers between priests and laypeople, encouraging open discussions about the meaning of life and what it means to be human.

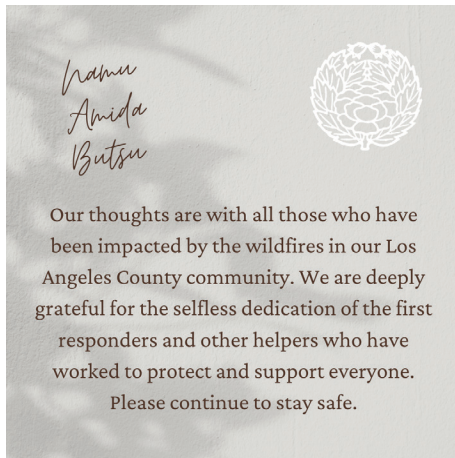
In addition, Shinran Shonin taught that enlightenment can't be achieved through our own efforts (self-power), but entirely through Amida Buddha's compassionate working (other-power). Even though we are beings filled with attachments and delusions, Amida Buddha's great compassion reaches out to all living beings, without exception. In other words, it's through our struggles, doubts, and hardships that we come to realize Amida's boundless compassion.

As we observe the Valentine's season, we are reminded of the love we have for our family, friends, and those dear to us. At the same time, I find myself reflecting on my role, standing in the tradition of "neither monk nor layperson" as established by Shinran Shonin. Living as an ordinary human being, coexisting with others, I feel thankful that I don't have to hide or suppress the love I feel for my family and friends. This season also offers me a chance to reflect on Amida Buddha's compassion and the importance of accepting myself as I am.





Betsuin News



Los Angeles Fire Disaster Support

Our thoughts are with all those who have been impacted by the fires in our Los Angeles County community. We are deeply grateful for the selfless dedication of the first responders and other helpers who have worked to protect and support everyone.

If you have been affected, please reach out to us to let us know if and how we can support you.

All monetary donations that we have collected for fire relief and recovery will be sent to various organizations working directly with the affected communities. If you would like to support, please consider donating to one of the many organizations doing positive work. We are including some suggestions, but there are many others too numerous to list.

<https://mutualaidla.org/>
<https://www.lafoodbank.org/>
<https://www.jewishla.org/>
<https://www.calfund.org/>

For recovery resources, Little Tokyo Service Center has compiled a list. Please visit: <https://www.ltsc.org/lafire2025/>



Spring Ohigan Service & Spring Seminar

This year's Spring Ohigan Service will be held on Sunday, March 16th at 10:00 am. The Spring Seminar will be held the same day as our Ohigan Service at 1:00 pm. The guest speaker for both Ohigan Service and Spring Seminar will be Rev. Masao Kodani, the former resident minister at Senshin Buddhist Temple. We welcome you to invite your friends and family to attend both of these important events!

Year-End and New Year Events

We ended 2025 with our annual Temple Clean Up on Sunday, December 15th thanks to help of many dedicated members who came to prepare our temple for 2025. Members worked hard to clean the kitchen, social hall, classrooms, hondo, foyer, and outside to prepare the temple to look its best. With the hard work of our many attentive and hard-working volunteers, we were able to brighten the temple and prepare it for the New Year. Thank you to everyone who helped at our Temple Clean up! Mochitsuki was held on Monday, December 30th. Members, family, and friends came out to help prepare mochi for temple Shusho-e service and to take home. Thank you to the Yamashiro Family for coordinating Mochitsuki. Our annual Joya-e Service was held on Tuesday, December 31st and afterward, we enjoyed Toshikoshi Soba together. The ministers gave reflective messages about the past year and shared their challenges and accomplishments from 2024 as well as their hopes for 2025. On January 1st, we held our Shusho-e New Year's Day service to welcome in 2025. Thank you to everyone who joined us for these special year-end and New Year events. We look forward to seeing everyone at services and events in 2025.



GOLF TOURNAMENT

The 23rd Annual Higashi Honganji Golf Tournament will be held on Monday, March 10th at our new venue, Candlewood Country Club.

The tournament will have a shotgun start at 9:00 am and the fee for this year is \$195, which includes green fee, cart, range balls, prizes, and a BBQ buffet. The Callaway System will determine the tournament's order of finish. In addition to what the fee covers, there will be special prizes announced during lunch.

This year's proceeds will go toward our youth programs and temple maintenance. You and others you know can support us by being a tee sponsor for the tournament. Tee sponsorships are \$150 per hole; Tournament sponsorships are \$1,800 and include a foursome of golfers, Gold level sponsorships are \$500, and Silver level sponsorships are \$300. If you would like any further information about the golf tournament or being a tee sponsor, please contact the temple office.

To register online, visit the link or scan the QR code:

<https://hhbt-la.square.site/golf>



Eitaikyo Service & General Meeting/ New Year Luncheon

Our 2025 Eitaikyo brought out many of our family and friends to join us in remembering our temple members who have passed away. At our Eitaikyo Service, Rev. Mayuki Nagamine spoke in English and Rev. Tomoyuki Hasegawa spoke in Japanese.

This year, we had our 120th General Meeting and annual New Year Luncheon. The general meeting and luncheon were held in the Aratani Hall at the Japanese American National Museum. Attendees enjoyed a delicious miso marinated sea bass and teriyaki chicken bento lunch by Nijiya Market. There was a bar serving beverages of choice. Board members and other generous temple members provided a delicious selection of desserts.

We opened the luncheon with greetings from our Board President, Irene Ota and Rinban Noriaki Ito. Irene Ota opened the general meeting. A betsuin report, temple financial report, and the election of 2025 Board of Directors were presented by Rev. Mayuki Nagamine, Gary Kanemoto, and David Ikeda, respectively. We welcome Ron Sato as our returning Board President. Vice Presidents are Jason Wong and David Ikeda, Secretary is Grace Yamashiro, CFO is Gary Kanemoto, and Treasurers are Irene Ota, Elaine Barbod, Gary Nishimura, and Shin Ito. Steven Murata has returned to the Board of Directors as well.

Presentations were made by Rinban Ito, Irene Ota, and Ron Sato to temple volunteers to honor their hard work over the course of the past year. A special presentation was made to Irene Ota and Penny Murata to honor their service as

Board Presidents.

After the presentations, an announcement was made about Rinban Noriaki Ito's upcoming retirement. Please save the date for September 28, 2025 for an event honoring his service.

The Otani Gakuen presented a musical selection and a slideshow by Lindsay Kashiwabara was shown reflecting on the past year. Door prizes were given out during the program.

We want to send a special thank you to Mr. Shin Ito for acting as Master of Ceremonies during the luncheon and the Board of Directors for hosting the luncheon. Thank you to Elaine Harada and Sharilynn Jung for coordinating the gifts for members over age 80. Thank you to Lisa Shimamoto for the beautiful floral centerpieces, the Murata Family for the avocados, the Little Tokyo Community Council for the salad dressing, and Leslie Nicho for the snake fortune favors for the tables. Thank you to Janet Ito, Irene Ota, Nancy Kurihara-Johnson, Grace Yamashiro, Emily Matsumura, David & Kathy Ikeda, Gary Nishimura & Mika Yamamoto, Elaine Harada, Ron & Becky Sato, Susan Kashiwabara, and Mika Ito for donating door prizes. Thank you to Fugetsu-Do, Irene Ota, Craig & Haruko Harada, Ron & Becky Sato, Mika Ito, Susan Kashiwabara, Gary Nishimura & Mika Yamamoto, Jason

(Please see EITAIKYO, page 4)

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>



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

Donna Chiyomi
Kikuchi-Hernandez (61)
October 24, 2024

May Yachiyo Kikuchi (87)
November 27, 2024

Georgia Tsutaye
Nakagawa-Blevins (84)
November 29, 2024

Seiichi Fujitani (83)
December 6, 2024

Ken Kenichi Kageyama (88)
December 25, 2024

Yumi Davis (64)
December 30, 2024

Yoko Yamada (95)
December 30, 2024

Michio Takata (90)
January 8, 2025

Namu Amida Butsu

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



Hanamatsuri FAMILY SERVICE 花祭り家族礼拝

Sunday, April 20, 2025 | 10 am
2025年4月20日(日) 午前10時



LABTF Hanamatsuri Celebration

Sunday, April 6th | 1 pm
at Nishi Hongwanji

The Los Angeles Buddhist Temple Federation's annual Hanamatsuri will take place on April 6, 2025, at 1 pm at LA Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple. Hanamatsuri is a service that commemorates the birth of Shakyamuni Buddha. Prof. Lon Kurashige, from the Van Hunnicks History Department at USC's Dornsife College, will deliver a lecture on the theme 'Hanamatsuri: One Hundred Years of the Buddha's Birthday in Los Angeles.' We encourage you to attend the service at Nishi that day following our April Shotsuki Service. We hope you will join us.

(EITAIKYO, cont. from page 3)

& Leslie Wong, Miyoko Okamoto, and Emily Matsumura for contributing to the dessert bar. Thank you to the Lumbini staff (Ms. Leslie, Mr. Jack, and Mr. Danny) and our many members and friends for volunteering to set up and clean up after the luncheon. Without the help of so many generous members and friends we could not have enjoyed such a delightful luncheon. The luncheon was a welcome respite from a long and emotional January in Los Angeles.

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closed national holidays



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

LUMBINICDC.ORG

Call Ms. Leslie 213-680-2976!
lumbini.missleslie@gmail.com



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!

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