

HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE

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The Way

Vol. 78 | No. 2
February/March 2026

HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE | LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

TEMPLE SCHEDULE

MARCH

- 1 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
- 2 9:00 am Golf Tournament
- 8 10:00 am Sunday Service
Discussion Group
- 15 10:00 am Spring Ohigan Service
1:00 pm Spring Seminar
- 22 10:00 am Sunday Service
- 29 10:00 am Sunday Service

APRIL

- 4 6:00 pm Lumbini Dance Benefit
- 5 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
- 5 1:00 pm LABTF Hanamatsuri
@ Nishi Hongwanji
- 12 10:00 am Sunday Service
Discussion Group
- 19 10:00 am Hanamatsuri Family
Service
- 26 10:00 am Sunday Service

SUNDAY, MARCH 15, 2026

Spring Ohigan Service

10:00AM

Spring Seminar

1:00PM

GUEST SPEAKER: REV. DR. NOBUO HANEDA

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

SUNDAYS | 10 AM

LUMBINI DANCE BENEFIT & REUNION PARTY

SUNDAY, APRIL 4

6:00 PM

NISHI HONGWANJI KAIKAN





The Way



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Want to Be a Cat

Rinban Kenjun Kawawata

This morning, a hawk was perched and resting on the lamppost in front of my house. At the temple, cats are leisurely taking naps on the roof of the storage shed almost every day.

In the city, protests against ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) are taking place.

Animals may have territories, but they don't seem to have boundaries or borders like humans do, and they can move freely whenever they want. I think humans were like that in the past too. Problems arise when humans start owning land and creating ownership rights and boundaries. The indigenous people of North America and Hawaii didn't have the concept of humans owning land; they considered the land as a place that nurtured their lives. Therefore, they lived their lives gratefully, receiving many blessings from the earth and nature. There were no problems related to land ownership. The earth is the foundation of human life and existence. It is said that when Buddha attained enlightenment, he touched the earth with his right finger.

The problems of immigration and racial discrimination are not new.

We must not forget that the prosperous life in this country has always been supported by foreign labor.

There is always a structure where those who came first and are wealthy use newcomers to increase production and profits. Capitalism has such an aspect. This country of immigrants is a country built by people of various races, so it must overcome racial problems.

America is also a land of hope. From the perspective of traditional countries, America is a free country.

The writer Ryotaro Shiba said that without America, this world would be a much more suffocating place.

America is a country of liberalism, democracy, and capitalism. Democracy and capitalism have given humans freedom and individuality.

These are said to have originated in the Netherlands, a country that didn't have much land. The Netherlands was a country with many wetlands. They piled up soil, built canals, and transported stones from other countries to create land and their country. The Netherlands is a country that built itself through trade and is said to be the birthplace of capitalism. In business, numbers and prices determine things. Also, each business owner is independent. Therefore, a system of mutual investment was born to conduct business on a large scale, leading to capitalism. And when running those businesses or governing a country, decisions came to be made by majority rule. This is how democracy was born.

However, when implementing national and social policies through this democracy and capitalism, one prerequisite is a sincere heart and honesty. Business is a world of numbers; that is a fact. Living faithfully to the facts is what constitutes true democracy and capitalism.

Therefore, people become fixated on numbers. However, numbers do not represent the whole truth. Therefore, the ability to see the truth and the right mindset are necessary. Neglecting this leads to economic turmoil, and consequently, political turmoil. The reverse is also true.

Democracy and capitalism are systems created by humans and are not perfect. We cannot entrust everything to them. Therefore, it is important not to forget a sincere heart towards the truth and facts, and to constantly strive to see the truth.

This ability to see the truth is the
(Please see CAT, page 4)

Greetings from the President of the Board

Greetings and Happy New Year. I hope 2026 is off to a good start for everyone. I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the new President of Higashi Honganji Buddhist Temple. My name is Jason Wong and I've previously served as treasurer and vice president on the board of directors over the past three years. I'm excited to work with the new Vice President, Kelly Komatsu and all of the members of the board of directors.

I moved to Los Angeles in 1995 and worked in the video game industry testing games at both Activision and EA for twenty years before retiring from software development.

With my wife, Leslie and our daughter, Emiko, we became active at the temple in 2019. As a child I occasionally attended the Tri-State Buddhist temple in Denver, Colorado. My first experience volunteering at the temple was when Rinban Ito announced that anyone wishing to help set up for Obon should talk to a man named Steve in the parking lot. During the pandemic, I began helping to stream Sunday services, a practice which continues with the dedicated help of Gary Kanemoto and Brad Sasaki.

It is my hope as President to help guide the temple and sangha through these challenging financial and social times. Our family is very grateful to be a part of this Sangha and we look forward to listening to and sharing the Dharma with all of you.



In Gassho,
Jason Wong
President,
Board of Directors



Betsuin News



Spring Ohigan Service & Spring Seminar

This year's Spring Ohigan Service will be held on Sunday, March 15th at 10:00 am. The Spring Seminar will be held on the same day as our Ohigan Service at 1:00 pm. The guest speaker for both Ohigan Service and Spring Seminar will be Rev. Dr. Nobuo Haneda.

In addition to the Spring Seminar, Rev. Dr. Haneda will be our guest speaker for a 5-part lecture series, building on his topic, *The Kyogyoshinsho, the Main Work of Shinran Shonin*. The lectures will be held exclusively on Zoom with a nominal fee of \$10 per participant per lecture. They will take place on Wednesdays from 7:00 to 8:30 pm from March 18 through April 15th. To sign up, please scan the QR code. (The Spring Seminar on March 15th is free and open to the public. No sign-up is required.)

We welcome you to invite your friends and family to attend these important events!



Hanamatsuri FAMILY SERVICE 花祭り家族礼拝

Sunday, April 19, 2026 | 10 am
2026年4月19日 (日) 午前10時



Year-End and New Year Events

We ended 2026 with our annual Temple Clean Up on Sunday, December 21st thanks to help of many dedicated members who came to prepare our temple for 2026. 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 29th. Members, family, and friends came out to help prepare mochi for Shusho-e service and to take home. Thank you to the Yamashiro Family for coordinating Mochitsuki. Our annual Joya-e Service was held on Wednesday, 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 2025 as well as their hopes for 2026. On January 1st, we held our Shusho-e New Year's Day service to welcome in 2026. 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.

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!

JOIN OUR NEW
ukulele group!

2ND & 4TH THURSDAYS | 3 PM
HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE
505 E. 3RD STREET, LOS ANGELES, CA 90013

Our Betsuin is excited to announce the launch of a new ukulele group, **Dharma Strings**. Everyone is welcome to join us. We will meet twice a month on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays at 3:00 pm in the conference room. Please join us and enjoy playing the ukulele and singing along with **Dharma Strings**!

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

visit our website at
hhbt-la.org

facebook.com/hhbt.la

@higashihonganjila

PLEASE CONSIDER DONATING
TO HIGASHI HONGANJI
BUDDHIST TEMPLE AT
HHBT-LA.ORG

Eitaikyo Service & General Meeting/ New Year Luncheon

Our 2026 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. Noriaki Ito was our guest speaker.

This year, we had our 122nd General Meeting and annual New Year Luncheon. The general meeting and luncheon were held in the Jim E. Shimozono Hall at the Little Tokyo Towers. Attendees enjoyed a delicious miso-marinated salmon 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 Rinban Kenjun Kawawata and, our Board President, Ron Sato, who opened the general meeting. A betsuin report, temple financial report, and the election of the 2026 Board of Directors were presented by Rev. Mayuki Nagamine, Shin Ito, and David Ikeda, respectively. We welcome Jason Wong as our new Board President. Kelly Komatsu is Vice President, Gary Kanemoto is CFO, Grace Yamashiro is Secretary, and Elaine Barbod, Irene Ota, Shin Ito, and David Ikeda are Treasurers. Gretchen Kasai is a new Board Member at large. Following the Election, we held the Installation of the 2026 Temple Board of Directors. Meditation was presented by Rev. Mayuki Nagamine to begin the luncheon.

Presentations were made by Rinban Kawawata and Rev. Noriaki Ito to Ron Sato to thank him for his years of service as President of the Board. Ron joined them in recognizing Leslie Nicho, who was honored for 40 years of service at the Lumbini Child Development Center, and Susan Kashiwabara, who was honored for 30 years of service to Higashi Honganji Buddhist Temple as a core staff member.

Additional presentations were made to temple volunteers to honor their hard work over the course of the

past year. After the presentations, Rev. Kensho Goto offered Meditation to close the luncheon. The ministers and friends, including Rinban Kawawata on guitar, Rev. Goto on electric guitar, Rev. Ito and Rev. Nagamine on vocals, and Jeanne Kawawata, John Esaki, and Doug Aihara on ukulele played a selection of five songs plus an encore while guests sang along to the familiar songs. Mika Ito presented a slideshow reflecting on the events of the past year and acknowledging the 50th anniversary of our temple on Third Street. 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, and the Murata Family for the avocados. Thank you to Janet Ito, Irene Ota, David & Kathy Ikeda, Elaine Harada, Grace Yamashiro, Penny Murata, Jeanne Murata, Ron & Becky Sato, Jason & Leslie Wong, Trish Nicholson, Mika Ito, and Susan Kashiwabara for donating door prizes. Thank you to Craig Harada, Irene Ota, Penny Murata, Grace Yamashiro, Miyoko Okamoto, Leslie Nicho, Mika Ito, and Susan Kashiwabara for contributing to the dessert bar. Thank you to the past and present Lumbini staff (Ms. Leslie, Mr. Jack, Mr. Danny, Ms. Jodi, and Ms. Catalina) 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.

BECOME A 2026 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 ...

Yoshihiko Takahashi (78)
December 16, 2025

Setsuko Kawamoto (83)
December 29, 2025

Saki Nagai (99)
January 5, 2026

Dan Masaru Kishi (106)
January 18, 2026

Janice Doi (75)
January 25, 2026

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!

LABTF Hanamatsuri Celebration

Sunday, April 5th | 1 pm
at Nishi Hongwanji

The Los Angeles Buddhist Temple Federation's annual Hanamatsuri will take place on April 5, 2026, at 1 pm at LA Hompa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple. Hanamatsuri is a service that commemorates the birth of Shakyamuni Buddha. Rev. Masao Kodani, former minister at Senshin Buddhist Temple, will deliver a lecture on the theme "From Past to Future: The Evolving Role of Japanese American Temples in Los Angeles." We encourage you to attend the service at Nishi that day following our April Shot-suki Service. We hope you will join us.

(CAT, cont. from page 1)

ability to see the world through Buddhist teachings. When I see myself illuminated by the light of Buddhist teachings and wisdom, my small, foolish self, trapped by ego, is revealed.

And I realize that all problems stem from the ego and pride we possess. Discrimination and conflict arise from the "me, me, me" mentality. The sense of superiority towards oneself, race, society, and country begins with this "me, me, me" spirit. To minimize discrimination and conflict, it is important to first understand one's own essence and the essence of humanity. The Buddhist path teaches us that knowing oneself is knowing the world and the truth. The chanting of the Buddha's name is a call from the truth, a wish to be born into a larger world. It is also a voice urging us to follow the Buddhist teachings and the truth.



Viva Las Vegas!

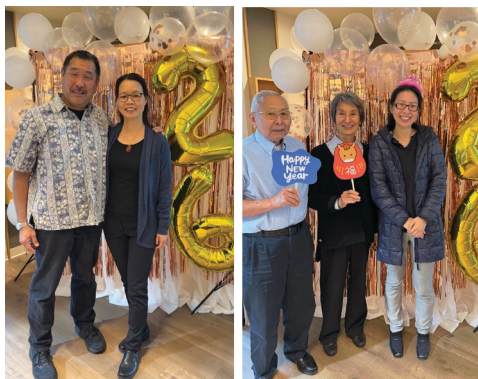
Betsuin Family Trip

3 DAYS • 2 NIGHTS • JUNE 20-22

*Hurry!
Space is limited!*

*Come join the fun!
Quick summer getaway with
family and friends!*

Scan QR code to register or get more info!



L C D C 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



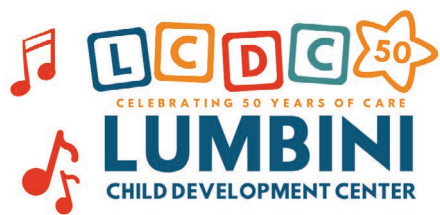
**LUMBINI IS
NOW OFFERING**

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

LUMBINICDC.ORG

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

@lumbini_preschool
 facebook.com/lumbinidc



DANCE BENEFIT & REUNION PARTY

FOR LUMBINI'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

SATURDAY, APRIL 4, 2026

NISHI HONGWANJI KAIKAN
815 E. FIRST STREET, LA 90012

DOORS OPEN | 6 PM

DANCE | 7:30 - 11 PM



SCAN TO REGISTER

