

HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE

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HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE | LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

**TEMPLE
SCHEDULE**

JANUARY

- 15 10:00am Family Service
- 22 10:00am Sunday Service
- 29 10:00am Eitaikyo Service
New Year Luncheon &
General Meeting

FEBRUARY

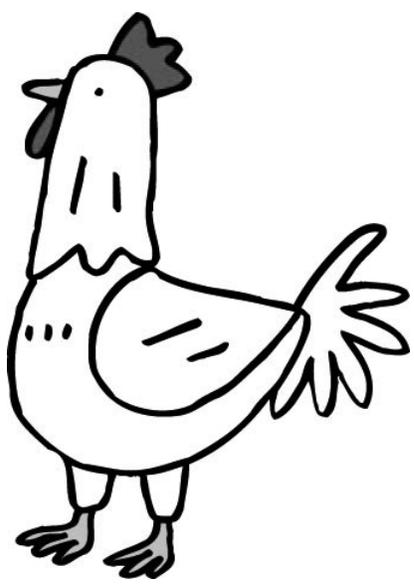
- 5 10:00am Shotsuki Service
- 12 10:00am Sunday Service
- 19 10:00am Family Service
- 26 10:00am Sunday Service
Discussion Group

MARCH

- 5 10:00am Shotsuki Service
- 6 Betsuin Golf
Tournament
- 12 10:00am Sunday Service

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

BEST WISHES FOR 2017!





The Way



Volume 69 | Number 1 | January 2017

HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE • LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

New Year Greetings

Rinban Noriaki Ito

First of all, I wish to take this opportunity to extend our very best New Year's greetings to all of you. And, on behalf of our temple staff, I thank you for the support you extended to us during the previous year, and ask for your continued cooperation and guidance in 2017 as well.

The special event that our Betsuin was involved in last year was the 12th World Dōbō Gathering that was held in late August. The success of the event was due to the tremendous support we received from our members and I take this opportunity to once again thank you for your volunteering efforts and for participating in this historic event. We heard only compliments from our guests from Japan, Hawaii, and South America.

This year will, in comparison, should be a more normal year. As part of our core emphasis, both the Betsuin and the North America District will be hosting and participating in many educational events throughout the year.

We are extremely appreciative of the core leadership here at our Betsuin. The Board of Directors is extremely pro-active in making sure that our temple is in good shape both physically and spiritually. However, we are getting older and we need to begin the process of handing over the reins to the next generation. In order to do that, we need to make the temple more accessible and meaningful to the youth. We must keep in mind the ideas that were presented at the Dōbō Gathering regarding what each of us needs to do to establish a bright future for our Higashi Honganji.

I sincerely hope that 2017 will be a year filled with learning experiences and happiness for all of us. I look forward to continuing to listen to the Buddhadharmā with you.

Best wishes, Noriaki Ito

David Ikeda, President
Board of Directors

On behalf of the Board of Directors I wish you all a very Happy New Year!

As I reflect back on an event-filled 2016, I recognize that the underlying focus for the past two years has been the World Dōbō Gathering (WDG). While the Board was going about our usual business... the NAD office was operating at optimum effort for many days and nights. I would like to recognize the tireless efforts of Bishop Ito, Rev. Osa, Rev. Hasegawa, and Rev. Fujii for their hard work in organizing the gathering and managing the program. Rev. Hata, thank you for your support of temple operations during this challenging time.

Representatives from the other districts said they were surprised that we had so many North America District Sangha members engaged in all aspects of the program. To all of you who were involved as moderators, speakers, entertainers, marketplace workers, interpreters, and transporters thank you for your time and efforts not only in preparation but also during the weekend of the gathering. We are so fortunate to have our dedicated landscape team and volunteers who helped prepare the Betsuin and the beautiful temple grounds for our visitors.

As I look back just a few years ago, I recognize that as a result of your generous donations for the 110th Anniversary, our WDG visitors were greeted to a freshly painted Betsuin and new flooring in the social hall. Our new AV system ensured there were no audio interruptions in our program.

Meanwhile, as they do every year, our administrative staff, Sangha members, and friends work so hard at our Obon, golf tournament, and other special events and on various projects.

(Please see IKEDA, page 5)

North America District
2017 Report

I wish to take this opportunity to wish all of the members of our North America District temples a Happy New Year. Also, on behalf of our staff, I wish to thank you for your guidance and support during the previous year. We hope that the New Year brings much happiness and meaning to you and your family.

Last year, on August 27 and 28, we were given the opportunity to host the 12th World Dōbō Gathering at the Hilton Los Angeles Universal City Hotel and at the Los Angeles Betsuin. We had over 300 participants from Japan, Hawaii, South America, and from our North America district temples. Although such a big undertaking requires a lot of planning and many people to succeed, through the support we received from our temples and our members, it turned out to be a resounding success. We thank you for your guidance, your support, and your participation.

2016 also marked the completion of the inaugural Dharma Seeds program in which representatives from our temples participated in retreats and seminars for over two years. In addition to participating in those events, the members worked with their ministers to serve their temples in various capacities. In addition, we were able to have our Overseas District Abbot Choyū Ōtani come again to officiate at the Los Angeles Betsuin HOONKO Service that was held on November 13.

We wish to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your support and participation in all of the district's activities. We ask for your continued support during 2017 as well.

At our office in Los Angeles, in addition to the North America District

(Please see NAD page 5)

New Year Greetings

Rev. Peter Hata

Happy New Year everyone! With the support of each and every one of our Sangha members, the Betsuin had a very good 2016. There were many highlights, but one especially significant to me personally was the hondo A/V upgrade, which is very cool. As those of you who attend our services know, I like to use multimedia resources in my dharma talks, and I hope to continue using them this year. Also, I want to thank the participants of the Wednesday Night Study Class for their continued enthusiasm; in 2016 we completed our study of the Larger Sutra and moved on to studying the Shoshinge.

Especially memorable was summer 2016. Normally, the summer is always a hectic time, but with the issues involved with hosting the Higashi World Dobo Gathering—which followed closely on the heels of the busy Obon—it was a “challenge for the ages.” Because of the summer, “Hōonkō season”—usually a most challenging time for ministers and Betsuin members who help with omigaki, osonae, flowers, service prep, kikyoshiki, and so on—actually seemed to go relatively smoothly.

Of course, the temple faces new challenges this year. For the most part, they are not unique to the Betsuin, but are shared by most Shin temples in America. These include meeting the challenge of generational change, and the increasing ethnic and cultural diversity of our members. There are also new challenges on the horizon, which are not only national but even global in nature. However, because of the Sangha’s willingness to come together, we can meet the challenges of 2017.

What is key is our continuing to listen to the Dharma and looking to it for guidance. It is the Dharma which encourages us to transcend our differences, embrace all life, and which ultimately ensures our future.



Rev. Ryoko Osa

Higashi Honganji USA Headquarters

I wish to take this opportunity to thank you for your support during the previous year.

Last year, our North America District hosted the 12th World Dōbō Gathering in Los Angeles. As members of the North America District, we welcomed members from South America, Hawaii, and Japan. I appreciated your wonderful work that made that gathering so successful. This year, 2017, I hope I can continue to listen to the Buddhadharma with you and make our temple more active. Thank you very much.

Rev. Tomoyuki Hasegawa

Higashi Honganji USA Headquarters

Happy New Year! I wish to express my deepest gratitude for your continued support of the activities of the North America District and Shinshu Center of America. Especially the 12th World Dōbō Gathering held last August was very successful thanks to your whole-hearted cooperation. I take this opportunity to thank you all. Also, I greatly enjoyed all the activities held at the temple last year. Let’s continue to seek the true meaning of life while listening to the teaching of the nenbutsu together with our sangha members.

Rev. Masashi Fujii

Higashi Honganji USA Headquarters

Happy New Year! Time flies so fast. It has been 6 months since I came to Los Angeles. It was a big challenge for me to start a new life in a foreign country with my wife. It is so exciting and we are very happy to be here. Of course, we had anxious feelings about a new life before we came here, but we have been able to move forward step by step thanks to everyone’s support. I’d like to express my gratitude for your kindness and look forward to your continued guidance and support.

Rev. Frederick Brenion

My good wife and I start each New Year by putting up our new calendars. Every room has at least one calendar. Some two, even three. It’s our own art gallery at home. With each new month, a new scene, a new possibility.

We often talk about “impermanence” in Buddhism. Some take impermanence in a negative sense. Everything we have won’t last. Everything I am won’t last. That’s kind of depressing. It is true nevertheless. But I don’t think the Buddha meant us to be depressed. I do think he meant us to be realistic. And by showing us a life of equanimity to all, and to ourselves, we may come to a deeper understanding of impermanence.

I doubt though that I have deeper understanding. I have a small glimmer that the world of impermanence means that it is a world of possibilities, of creativity, and of novelty.

There is a childhood toy that I still enjoy. It is a kaleidoscope. A tube that takes “bits of rubble” and with light passing through, golden images spring to view. A turn of the tube changes the image over and over. A non-stop art museum on the go! I once saw an image that I really liked. I did not want it to go. I gently placed the kaleidoscope down to keep everything in place. The trouble was that to keep that image then I would never be able to play with that kaleidoscope again. I would be using it in a way it was not meant to be used. I picked it up, looked at the image one last time, then turned the tube. A new image, different, sprang into view. Then another and another. My image was a thing of the past, never to be repeated, but it made way for the future, for new images - all made from the same bits of rubble and the same light! There’s something of the Pure Land in all this. Something about ourselves as well.

So the calendars on my wall are something like a kaleidoscope. The pictures change each month, but it shows that ahead are days of

(Please see **BRENION**, page 5)



Betsuin News



New Year Greetings

Fujinkai

Happy New Year greetings 2017 to all from the Fujinkai! As we reflect on all the temple activities during the past year, we realize we could not have accomplished all without the tremendous work of the ministers and the enthusiastic support of the sangha, so a huge thank you for your continuous participation and generous donations. We held our annual memorial service in January 2016, where we remembered our past members, followed by the general meeting and luncheon. In May, Fujinkai and toban members prepared the chiraishi otoki for the Tanjo-e service. Our big event every year is the Obon, when we prepare the delicious kurimanju and osushi. Many temple members and friends helped support Fujinkai in this endeavor, leading to another successful Obon. The highlight of 2016 was the occasion of the 12th World Dōbō Gathering, hosted by the Betsuin, and highly praised due to the great efforts of our ministers and sangha. Our Big Bargain Sale will return on August 20

this year. Please begin sorting through your “treasures” for donations to the BBS which we will begin collecting in early August. In late October, Rinban Ito, Rev. Hata, Rev. Osa, and Rev. Imahara joined Fujinkai to visit long time members residing at Hollenbeck Palms and the former Keiro facilities (Sakura Gardens, ICF, and Kei-Ai). We always enjoy the reunion with these friends. Fujinkai supported the temple and toban with preparing the delicious oden otoki for the Hōonkō service in November. As always, we welcome new members of all ages to join returning members to help support our temple.



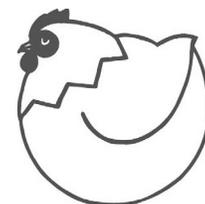
Youth Groups

Happy New Year from the Youth Groups!

We have been participating in the various temple year-end and New Year activities. Temple members made our temple sparkly and clean in time for the New Year. December is also mochitsuki month. We helped pound, shape, and of course, eat lots of yummy mochi during mochitsuki. Our favorites were the colorful mochi and the ones we were allowed to add chocolate and peanut butter to! Yum!

We’re looking forward to learning more new things in 2017 and welcome you to join us for special talks from our ministers and activities on Shotsuki and Family Service Sundays! Happy New Year!

In gassho,
Dharma School,
Sangha Teens,
and Jr. YBA



ABA

Happy New Year!!!

On behalf of the Adult Buddhist Association we would like to thank you for your continued support of the temple and ABA activities in 2016. As in past years the ABA was involved in our annual Mochitsuki on December 27 and sponsored the Hōonkō Gathering in November. We were pleased that the Overseas District Abbott and his wife were able to join us again for the dinner and discussion during their recent visit and participation in our Hōonkō services. Thank you to Rev. Ken Yamada for his Dharma talk.

Meanwhile on November 5, ABA members were involved in “Little Tokyo

Sparkle,” a Little Tokyo community clean-up effort and luncheon honoring the legacy of the late community volunteer, Nancy Kikuchi. Over 200 Little Tokyo volunteers joined us here at Higashi for a curry luncheon after the successful clean-up.

Furthermore, our members were involved in supporting the World Dōbō Conference this past August. We hosted and toured our Overseas District Abbott, his wife Satika and his sister, Rumiko. Our members transported displays and goods for the Dōbō Marketplace to and from the temple. Additionally, ABA helped with the temple set-up and coordination for the “Special Service” and WDC photo.

In anticipation of Obon 2016, ABA

members were heavily involved in the planning, preparation, set-up and take-down for a very warm and successful Obon festival. In early July, ABA members sponsored a game booth at the West Covina Obon Festival. In May we hosted the annual Mother’s Day breakfast. Meanwhile, members were involved in many property repair and temple renovation and security projects throughout the year. Additionally, our members coordinated the temple audiovisual installation project which was completed this year.

Thank you and we hope you had a wonderful Holiday season!

In gassho,
ABA

LUMBINI CORNER

Happy 2017 !

We cannot believe how fast the year came to an end and another one has begun! We hope everyone enjoyed the winter holidays with family and friends.

In December, the children had a chance to participate in Mochitsuki alongside temple members. This event is a fun time for the kids to experience a cultural activity and for our members to get to know the children and teach them how to make mochi. The kids all had a good time shaping and molding mochi, and of course, eating lots of it, too.

Each year, Lumbini strives to encourage its students to learn to their fullest abilities. With the support of a caring staff and caring families, the students are able to succeed each year and grow into the next.

On behalf of the Lumbini Child Development Center Staff and Commissioners, we would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a happy and healthy new year. Thank you to everyone for your generous support and donations for our teachers and cooking staff. We are looking forward to another successful year.

In Gassho,
 LCDC Commissioners:
 Elaine Harada
 Kathy Ikeda
 Janet Ito
 Shin Ito
 Ryo Kasai
 Wayne Kasai
 Wendi Tamura
 Bianca Vite
 David Ikeda, President,
 Board of Directors
 Rinban Noriaki Ito
 Leslie Nicho,
 LCDC Director

visit our website at
www.hhbt-la.org

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

2017

THE YEAR OF THE
COCK-ROOSTER-HEN-CHICKEN?

According to the Asian zodiac, 2017 is the Year of the Cock. In this age of political correctness, however, somehow the first word seems unsuitable. The second excludes the female, the third excludes the male, and the fourth just sounds silly. Well, we'll leave it up to you to decide.

In Ainu mythology, the cock is said to be of celestial origin. It's said that the cock was sent down from heaven to earth to see what the world was like. He liked it so much that he didn't return right away, and it was for that reason that he was forbidden to ever return to the heavens.

The cock, it is said, embodies the element *yang* that represents universal warmth, strength, and life. The Chinese say that the crown of his head is said to be the mark of his literary spirit, the spurs on his feet symbolize his courage. At the same time, though, he is seen as benevolent always clucking to call the hen and to share when he scratches up grain. He is dependable because he never forgets the hour to crow.

People born in the Year of the Cock are considered to be deep thinkers and devoted to their work. They do have a tendency to take on more than they can accomplish, and then be disappointed and frustrated when they can't achieve their goals. Another negative trait is

that they are always sure they're right and want to be left alone to do things their way. Consequently, they tend to distrust others, which leads to rocky interpersonal relationships. They can exhibit selfish characteristics and are blunt and outspoken. When the occasion calls for courage, they have that in abundance. Others find them interesting, if a bit difficult.

People born in the Year of the Cock are happiest when married to ox, snake, or dragon-year mates. People from the hare, rat, cock, or dog years will make poor matches.

There are both positives and negatives attributed to the cock according to Asian mythology. Although we certainly don't regard such traditions as truth, it is fun to think about. Some of the negative qualities can be found in each of us regardless of when we were born. The challenge, therefore, for those of us born in this year and for all of us as well, is to work on correcting those negatives, and developing those positives.

Have a wonderful 2017.

Our deepest condolences

to the family and relatives of ...

Mrs. Tsuyoko Sue Ota (97)
 September 27, 2016

Mrs. Yayeko Yamamoto (92)
 November 22, 2016

Mr. Kinuya Takasaki (97)
 November 28, 2016

Namu Amida Butsu



Hanamatsuri Craft Fair

Calling all craft vendors! On Sunday, April 23rd from 10am to 3pm, we will have our Hanamatsuri Craft Fair at the Betsuin! We are looking for vendors who make and sell craft items and would like to be a part of our Craft Fair. For more information, please contact the temple office at 213-626-4200 or email info@hhbt-la.org. Vendor applications will be available early 2017 and due in March.

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(IKEDA, cont. from page 1)

I would also like to thank our Lumbini staff for their work this past year. I know it was a challenging year for all of you and you were asked to do so much.

As 2016 came to a close, fellow Sangha members and I had the opportunity to visit one of our long time Board members at a rehabilitation facility. Since he was unable to attend most temple events we talked about Hōonkō, the World Dōbō Gathering and Obon. While sitting there I realized that the Dharma brought us all together for that special visit.

This visit gave me cause to think of the importance of interdependence. When I was first appointed to the Cabinet and the Board over 20 years ago I had the opportunity to observe and listen to members whose decisions would impact the temple and the welfare of the Sangha for years to come. Although many of them are no longer with us, I have a deep and profound respect for their years of commitment and dedication to this temple.

Every year when Obon comes around I am naturally reminded of impermanence. This past year as I stood in the raffle booth as the Bon Odori came to a close, I looked up at all the Manto-e lanterns with the names of those who passed away...the name tags were fluttering in the evening breeze. That vision reinforced with me that without the contributions and hard work of all those members and their families for all those years we could not have enjoyed another successful Obon.

I have much gratitude for having the opportunity to witness so many

significant events in the past few years. In retrospect I still vividly recall the 75th Memorial for Shinran Shōnin and the Installation of the Overseas District Abbott; the World Dōbō Gathering in Kyoto in 2013, our 110th anniversary in 2014; in 2016 we celebrated the temple's 40th anniversary in its current location in Little Tokyo and Bishop Ito's 40 years of service as a minister for Higashi Honganji.

All of these temple events and milestones could not have been achieved without the whole-hearted support of the Sangha. This past November our Sangha members and friends joined with other community groups to help clean up our Little Tokyo community. My appreciation of the clean-up efforts was reported in the December issue of *The Way* as follows, "Thanks to all of you and your example of *dana* by working so hard for the community and giving so freely of your time."

Again, we have much gratitude for all of your generous contributions and support. To me it is not just the events but also the recognition of the important everyday tasks that our Board members, our personnel, our strong "core" group, and Sangha members do.... "every day" to help to ensure that the temple continues to function and flourish.

In conclusion, on behalf of the Board, thank you for continuing to work so hard for this temple.... "Every day."

In gassho,
David K. Ikeda

.....
(BRENION, cont. from page 2)

possibilities, days of creativity and variety. As long as I accept each day as it comes, then let it go, to accept the next day.

Before I know it, the next new year after will be here as well!

SUBMISSION DEADLINE!

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

(NAD, cont. from page 1)

office, we also have the Shinshu Center of America which is the educational arm of our English-speaking districts. It's role is to disseminate the Shin Buddhist teachings not only to our members but to anyone who is interested. A major part of that work is to publish books on our teaching in English primarily in the form of digital publishing or what are called eBooks. Currently we have books being sold on Kindle which is the bookshop on the Amazon website. The six presently available are *A Thinking Person's Guide to Shin Buddhism*, *The Art of Listening: A Buddhist Guide to Happiness*, *A Portrait of Shinran: As Presented in Kakunyo's Three Classics*, *The Life and Thought of Shinran Shōnin: He Who Walked the Path Before Us*, and also 3 books in paper format, *December Fan (Writings of Manshi Kiyozawa)*, and 2 of the 3 book graphic novel series, *The Seeker: The Life Story of Shinran Shōnin*, volumes 2 and 3 (vol. 1 will be reprinted in the near future). These can be ordered through our office. The Kindle books are all available for the very affordable price of \$2.99 each. We encourage you to purchase and read these books on our Shin Buddhist tradition.

The work of our temples, the North America District, and the Shinshu Center of America can only proceed and succeed with your support and encouragement. We ask, therefore, for your continued guidance and support of the important work of sharing the teaching of the Nenbutsu with your family and friends. Best wishes for a wonderful 2017.

Gassho

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!