

**HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE**

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HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE | LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

**TEMPLE SCHEDULE**

**JANUARY**

- 21 10:00am Sunday Service  
Discussion Group
- 28 10:00am Eitaikyo Service  
NY Luncheon @ JACCC

**FEBRUARY**

- 4 10:00am Shotsuki Service
- 11 10:00am Sunday Service
- 18 10:00am Family Service
- 25 10:00am Sunday Service  
Discussion Group

**MARCH**

- 4 10:00am Shotsuki Service
- 5 9:00am Betsuin Golf  
Tournament
- 11 10:00am Sunday Service
- 18 10:00am Spring Ohigan Service  
1:00pm Spring Seminar
- 25 10:00am Sunday Service  
Discussion Group

**HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

*Best Wishes for 2018!*





# The Way



Volume 70 | Number 1 | January 2018

HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE • LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

## New Year Greetings

Chōyū Ōtani  
Overseas District Abbot,  
Shinshū Ōtani-ha  
(Higashi Honganji)



Best wishes for a Happy New Year to all of our fellow followers in the overseas districts. It is with great pleasure that I can share the joy of welcoming in the new year together with you.

Having completed the renovation project of the Founder's Hall and Amida Hall at our Honzan, our denomination has opened a new chapter in our history to work toward the 850th Anniversary of Shinran Shōnin's Birth and the 800th Anniversary of the Establishment of Jōdo Shinshū in 2023 together with our fellow followers.

Since last year, I have attended services held at all Betsuin temples in Japan. It will take four years to finish the visitation. After I was appointed as Overseas District Abbot in 2011, I visited all overseas districts and had the chance to meet many sangha members. Through such experiences, I realized the significance of the long history of nenbutsu followers and of our denomination, the preciousness of that history, and the importance of sharing the experiences of listening to the teaching with each other. For the next few years, I look forward to sharing my understanding of the Dharma with sangha members in Japan.

I conclude my message by expressing my wish that each of us will be awakened to the vow of the Tathāgata. Thank you.

Bishop Hiroshi Tajima  
Chief Administrator,  
Shinshū Ōtani-ha  
(Higashi Honganji)



I wish to extend my warmest New Year's greetings to all of you in our overseas districts.

As you know, Rev. Shin'ya Yasutomi, professor emeritus of Ōtani University,

passed away on March 31 last year. He had been taking on a number of heavy responsibilities for our denomination such as in serving as the head of the Institute of Research on Shin Buddhist Studies. His proficiency in English made him such an important person for the religious and philosophical communities across the world.

I remember that he used to describe the modern world as "the world of intolerance." What is expressed as "intolerance" here is the problem that each of us has to face. It is our innate tendency to blindly justify ourselves and blame others. Shinran Shōnin deeply lamented this reality, saying that it is the cause which creates the "Five Defilements" in this world. On many occasions, Rev. Yasutomi talked about how important it is for us to have "dialogue" with people who have different perspectives. Once again, I am reminded of the importance of achieving harmony with people worldwide beyond differences of ethnicity, nationality, and religion.

Our denomination has started to work on the new projects which are to commemorate the 850th Anniversary of Shinran Shōnin's Birth and the 800th Anniversary of the Establishment of Jōdo

(Please see *TAJIMA*, page 4)

Rinban Noriaki Ito

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Our very best New Year's greetings to you all. On behalf of our temple staff and leadership, I thank you for the support you extended to us during the previous year, and ask for your continued cooperation and guidance in 2018 as well.

In comparison to 2016 when we hosted the World Dobo Gathering here in Los Angeles, 2017 was a more normal year for our Betsuin. With education as part of our core emphasis, both the Betsuin and the North America District hosted many such events throughout the year.

We are extremely appreciative of the core leadership here at our Betsuin. The Board of Directors continues to be proactive in making sure that our temple is in good shape both physically and spiritually. However, as we age, we realize the importance of continuing the process of handing over the reins to the

(Please see *RINBAN*, page 4)

Ron Sato, President  
Board of Directors

*Shinnen Omedeto Gozaimasu!*

On behalf of the Betsuin I would like to thank you for all of your support this past year. 2017 was a very successful year for our temple and it could not have been accomplished without the extraordinary efforts of our ministers, Board of Directors, office staff, temple organizations, volunteer gardeners, and temple members and friends. Although our temple is over 40 years old, your monetary support has helped us to maintain the temple and the gardens as a legacy for future generations. Thank you!

In gassho,  
Ron Sato

# New Year Greetings

## Rev. Peter Hata

As we begin 2018, I'd like to express my appreciation for the dedicated support we received from our hard-working Sangha throughout 2017. Whether it was the Golf Tournament in March, the Obon in July, or the Big Bargain Sale in August, these events were all successful due to the help of so many people. Thank you very much.

Another highlight was the inauguration in 2017 of a second generation of Dharma Seeds, our intensive lay leader education program. Meanwhile, we continue to receive support from our first generation and so I'd like to thank both generations for their enthusiastic participation in the program, which included the "Dharma Seeds Month" in August. Thanks also go to the participants of the Wednesday Night Study Class for their continued enthusiasm; later in 2018 we hope to complete our study of the Shoshing.

A personal highlight for me was the opportunity to be a guest speaker at seven BCA temples in 2017. Not only is one of greatest joys in Buddhism the opportunity to make new dharma friends, at the same time, speaking at outside temples clarifies that, going forward, the ongoing challenges this temple faces are not unique. These include the challenge of generational change, and the increasing ethnic and cultural diversity of our members. However, I sincerely hope that, with the guidance of the dharma, we can all work together to creatively meet these challenges.

It is the dharma itself which encourages us to transcend our perceived differences, and which ultimately, not only helps ensure the future of our temple; it enables us to live the most fulfilling and enjoyable life.

## Rev. Masashi Fujii

Higashi Honganji USA Headquarters

Happy New Year! I am grateful to all of you for the assistance you gave to me last year. Thanks to you, I was able to spend a nice second year in the United States. In 2017, the many events I participated in were opportunities to work together and to study together as well. For me, it was a memorable year which was full of accomplishments. As I look forward to the new year, I realize that there is much work to do this year as well. I look forward to working with all of you together for the Los Angeles Betsuin and the North America District. I'd like to express my gratitude for your kindness and look forward to your continued guidance and support.

## 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. I greatly enjoyed all the activities held at the temple last year. The communities surrounding Buddhist temples have been changing in recent years. In Japan, especially in rural areas, the maintenance of Buddhist temples is reaching a deadlock mainly due to the aging and declining population. Our denomination has tried to find a way to break the deadlock. I think now is the time for us to go back to the

*(Please see HASEGAWA, page 5)*

## Rev. Frederick Brenion

I heard that the Zen Master Ryokan wrote: "Last year a foolish monk. This year, no change." That seems so much my own condition in life. I'd like to be more than I am. Yet at the end of the day and the end of the year I am still the same. Now it is the start of a new day and a new year, will I be any different? Hope spring eternal, but so does reality. I sometimes think that where hope and reality meet is where the Pure Land is. The land of accepting myself as I am,

*(Please see BRENIION, page 5)*

## North America District

### 2018 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.

After hosting the World Dobo Gathering in 2016 here in Los Angeles, 2017 was a more normal year for the North America District.

With the first Dharma Seeds program ending in 2016, last year saw the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Dharma Seeds series of events in which representatives from our temples participated in retreats and seminars for the next 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 this past year on September 17.

We also had some changes in our district. Rev. Ken Yamada, who had been the resident minister of our Berkeley Higashi Honganji resigned at the end of July. He was replaced by Rev. Ryoko Osa who had been a staff member of our district office. Rev. Yamada is now working for the Shinshu Center of America as a writer and editor, and Rev. Osa continues to help with the district and Shinshu Center work while taking on the full-time responsibility as Berkeley's resident minister.

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 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

*(Please see NAD page 5)*

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

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



# Betsuin News



## New Year Greetings

### Fujinkai

Happy New Year greetings 2018, Year of the Dog, to all from the Fujinkai! We wish to thank temple members and friends for supporting Fujinkai activities in 2017, through your participation and generous donations. We held our annual memorial service in February where we remembered past members, followed by the general meeting and luncheon. In May, Fujinkai and toban members prepared the chirashi otoki for the Tanjoe service. Our biggest temple fundraiser is the Obon held in July. As always, Fujinkai, with the help of many temple members and friends, prepared the popular kurimanju and osushi. A month later, we hosted our biggest, most successful, Big Bargain Sale ever, meeting and exceeding our goal of \$10,000! A huge thank you to all who devoted many, many volunteer hours to pricing,

setting up, and manning the sale, as well as to those who donated the many items that we sold. This year's Big Bargain Sale is set for August 19 – it's not too early to begin sorting through your "treasures" for donations to the BBS. Fujinkai supported the temple and toban with a delicious vegetarian oden for the Hoonko service otoki in September. Then in November, Rev. Miyoshi, Rev. Hata, and Rev. Imahara, along with Fujinkai, made the annual visit to long time members residing at Sakura Gardens, ICF, Kei-Ai, and Hollenbeck Palms, renewing ties with these friends. As always, we welcome new members of all ages to join returning members to help support our temple in the long tradition of our Issei and Nisei Fujinkai ladies.

### Youth Groups

Happy New Year from Dharma School, Sangha Teens, & Jr. YBA!

In November, the three Higashi youth groups went bowling together at X Lanes across the street! We ate pizza and had a great time together!

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. We love making mochi in many different colors! Yum!

2017 was a great year for Jr. YBA. This year we attended many fun events to help us grow closer together. We are looking forward to another amazing year with many more exciting events, such as leadership, mochitsuki, and the new years luncheon.

We are all looking forward to learning more new things in 2018 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 2017. As in past years the ABA was involved in our annual Mochitsuki on December 29 and sponsored the Hoonko Gathering in September. We were pleased that the Overseas District Abbott and his wife were able to join us again for the Hoonko service and Gathering. Thank you to Rev. Nobuko Miyoshi for her dharma talk.

In anticipation of Obon 2017, ABA members were heavily involved in the planning, preparation, set-up and take-down for a very warm and successful Obon festival 2017. As we reflect back on this past year's Obon, ABA and Sangha members began our Obon set-up months earlier by trimming trees, fixing tables, repairing electrical outlets, applying for the many city permits and special

parking, scheduling performance, arranging for LAPD and LTPSA security, and setting up the taiko stand and shade for the festival goers.

Just weeks before the Obon, members set up the taiko stand (yagura) and the shade for the patios. From 6:30 a.m. Friday morning through 6:00 p.m. Monday evening, members were responsible for setting up the electrical system, sound system, booths and stage. They moved tables, chairs, produce, plants and supplies. They worked the booths as did all of our Sangha members and then took it all down and stored all of the above for Obon 2018.

In early July, ABA members sponsored the ring toss booth at the West Covina Obon Festival. In May we hosted the annual Mother's Day breakfast. Also in May we joined almost 250 members of Little Tokyo organizations, businesses and volunteers to clean up the sidewalks and windows of Little Tokyo.

During the year members sup-

ported most all of the temple events including funerals and toban (work groups). Finally, members were involved in many property repair and temple renovation projects throughout the year. These projects helped to save our generous temple donations for other budgetary issues, projects and improvements. Please contact the temple if you are interested in participating in any of the above temple sponsored projects.

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

In gassho,  
ABA

# The Way

## LUMBINI CORNER

Happy 2018! 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, we had our annual Holiday program in the hondo. All of the classes sang holiday songs for their family and friends and we celebrated downstairs with refreshments and a visit from Santa!

Later in the month, 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,  
Leslie Nicho, LCDC Director



(TAJIMA, cont. from page 1)

Shinshū, both of which will be combined as one celebration to be held in 2023. In preparation for this event which will be a major focal point for our denomination's future, we have renewed our commitment to contribute to society as a Buddhist sangha and propagate the teaching for our future generations, while appreciating the importance of dialogue in building deep and lasting relationships with others.

In closing, I wish to ask for your continued support and cooperation.

Thank you.

(RINBAN, cont. from page 1)

next generation. In order to do that, we need to make the temple more accessible and meaningful to the youth. We must continue to think about what we need to do to establish a bright future for our Higashi Honganji.

On a personal note, I experienced my first major health setback in the fall. I wish to thank our ministers, our office staff, and our volunteers for their support during my recovery.

I sincerely hope that 2018 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



### CALL FOR VENDORS!

## hanamatsuri craft fair

Calling all craft vendors! On Sunday, April 29<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:info@hhbt-la.org). Vendor applications will be available early 2018 and due in March.

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

Mr. Hisashi Bob Hirasaki (82)  
November 26, 2017

Namu Amida Butsu



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Board of Directors, President  
Ron & Becky Sato  
50th Wedding Anniversary

December 2017

CONGRATULATIONS!!

2018



## THE YEAR OF THE DOG

Every year, we introduce the year of the Asian zodiac, and this year is the Year of the Dog. The Dog is the 11<sup>th</sup> of 12 animals of the zodiac which begins with the rat and ends with the boar. According to Reiko Chiba's **The Japanese Fortune Calendar**, *Dog-year people are said to have a deep sense of duty and loyalty, are extremely honest, and always do their best in their relationships with people. They inspire other people's confidence and know how to keep private secrets absolutely private. Other people hold dog-year people in high regard and consider them to be fine persons. They seem to have all of the best qualities, so I wondered if there are any negatives? Well, it goes on to say, yet, dog-year people are somewhat selfish, terribly stubborn, and exceedingly eccentric. They are not good at social gatherings, and emotionally they are cold. If there is any worst trait about these people, it is their ability to find fault with things and their caustic remarks criticizing what they think are wrong. So it all balances out – the good things with the bad, just as with the traits of all of the animals.*

Among all of the animals of the zodiac, however, the dog can be considered to be "man's best friend." This is true both in the West as well as the East. Dogs as pets are considered to be friendly and loyal to the extreme. One such dog was Hachiko whom I learned about when I was living in Tokyo. At the Shibuya train station in Tokyo, there is a large statue memorializing Hachiko. He was such a loyal dog that he accompanied his master to the sta-



tion everyday when he went to work and would be there every evening to greet him on his way home. One day, his master died and Hachiko not understanding that his master would never come, went everyday to wait for his master. This continued for years and people began to notice Hachiko. Eventually, whether it was from the grief of having lost his master or to old age, Hachiko died, and the people who knew of him had the statue built so that his story of undying loyalty would continue to be remembered.

The story of Hachiko reminds us of all the good things that dogs represent. Whether we are born in the year of the dog or not, we can learn from the lessons of the Asian zodiac, reflecting on both of our good and bad traits as we start the year anew.

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(BRENION, cont. from page 2)

of being accepted as I am, accepting others as they are because they're in the same boat as me. In short, we're all in this together. Shinran talks about us being fellow travelers. We walk, help each other up when we trip and fall, have good talks. Take in the view of what's around us, and take in the view of each other and ourselves. Sometimes we don't talk. Sometimes it's good to just listen. But we keep walking. So now we're walking together into 2018. I'm still a foolish priest, no change. You may feel the same. But when we see each other as we are. When we see ourselves as we really are, there's a bit of wisdom there. We're getting real about ourselves. And maybe when we wise up we find a bit of compassion for ourselves and each other too! I guess that's all I've got to say, and I guess even after this, I'm still foolish, no change. Walk anyway!

(NAD, con't. from page 2)  
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. A new Service Book for use at all of our temples will also be available soon.

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 2018.

Gassho

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

original spirit of Mahāyāna and study Shinran Shōnin's teaching from that standpoint from the ground up. Because I believe there is everlasting truth in the teaching and people always seek the truth even if the society has changed. Let's continue to walk the broad path of Mahāyāna together with our sangha members.

### SUBMISSION DEADLINE!

Submissions for *The Way* are due the 10th of each month for the following month's issue. Articles and announcements for our April/May Issue are due March 10th, 2018. Submissions may be subject to printing restrictions and staff approval. Thank you and we look forward to hearing from you!

**GO GREEN!**

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