

HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE

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The Way

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HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE | LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

TEMPLE SCHEDULE

JANUARY

- 13 10:00am Sunday Service
Discussion Group
- 20 10:00am Family Service
- 27 10:00am Eitaikyo Service
New Year Luncheon

FEBRUARY

- 3 10:00am Shotsuki Service
- 10 10:00am Sunday Service
Discussion Group
- 17 10:00am Family Service
- 24 10:00am Sunday Service

MARCH

- 3 10:00am Shotsuki Service
- 4 8:00am Betsuin Golf
Tournament
- 10 10:00am Sunday Service
Discussion Group
- 17 10:00am Sunday Service
- 24 10:00am Spring Ohigan Service
- 24 1:00pm Spring Seminar
- 31 10:00am Sunday Service





The Way



Volume 71 | Number 1 | January 2019

HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE • LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

New Year Greetings

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



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

with you as a member of the sangha.

It has already been seven years since I was appointed as Overseas District Abbot. I have been given precious opportunities to listen to the teaching together with you at the Hōonkō services of the temples in your districts. Recently, I also have had the chance to welcome you at the Honzan during your visit to Kyoto for Hōshidan tours or other activities. When I see those of you who came all the way from Brazil, North America, and Hawaii at our spiritual home, the Shinshū Honbyō, and pay our respects in front of Shinran Shōnin's image together, I always find myself embraced by the spirit of the Shōnin's teaching that "throughout the world, we are all brothers and sisters" with a renewed feeling of deep appreciation.

In the spring of 2020, the 13th World Dōbō Gathering will be held in Kyoto. I sincerely look forward to sharing the joy of listening to the teaching with as many of you as possible at that event.

I wish to 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 the overseas districts. I would also like to thank you from the bottom of my heart for the

support and understanding you continue to give to our Sangha.

As you may know, our denomination has already begun preparations for the 850th Celebration of Shinran Shōnin's Birth and the 800th Anniversary of the Establishment of Jōdo Shinshū in 2023. I have come to realize that the purpose of celebrating the birth of the Shōnin and the establishment of the teaching is that I, myself, must become one who can truly appreciate the meaning of my life and share that appreciation with other people. I believe this is the only way I can live up to the wishes of the Shōnin who expressed his gratitude for Amida Buddha's Original Vow of liberating all sentient beings through the words, "I am convinced that it was for me, Shinran, alone!"

In other words, for us who have been so fortunate to encounter the Shōnin's teaching, the celebration of those anniversaries is none other than the act of repaying our debt of gratitude to him. I sincerely wish that this auspicious occasion will become the opportunity for all of us to deepen our appreciation for the Shōnin's birth and his establishment

(Please see **TAJIMA**, page 4)

Rinban Noriaki Ito

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Happy New Year to everyone! I hope you enjoyed a wonderful year-end holiday season and were able to welcome 2019 in good health and spirits. On behalf of our temple staff and leadership, I thank you for the support you extended to us during the previous year.

This year will mark the 115th year since our first temple was established in 1904, and the 42nd year since the current temple was built. We enjoyed the old Mott Street temple basically for 50 years from 1925 when it was built to 1976 when we moved back to Little Tokyo. After four decades here, because of the tremendous work of our gardening staff of Mr. Tad Kawahira and Mr. Hirokichi Maehara, the newly formed garden beautification group, our property committee led by Steve Murata and Ted Oyama, and our long-serving maintenance manager, Benard, the temple continues to be an architectural jewel

(Please see **ITO**, page 4)

Ron Sato, President
Board of Directors

Happy New Year. I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season.

On behalf of the betsuin I would like to thank everyone for your support this past year. My thanks to our temple and NAD ministers for their inspiring dharma messages and assistance throughout the year, to our Board of Directors for their advice and support. Special thanks to the office staff Susan Kashiwabara, Mika Ito, and Nancy Kurihara-Johnson for planning and executing the many temple events. I especially want to thank the many volunteers that assisted in our many fundraisers and those that maintained our temple and gardens.

(Please see **SATO**, page 4)

New Year Greetings

Rev. Peter Hata

As I look forward to 2019, one thing stands out: The sense of being in the midst of constant change, enmeshed, as it were, in the flow of impermanence. Whether it's issues in politics, the environment, or personal issues, one thing is certain—as the Buddha taught (and the Quincy Jones song expresses), “Everything Must Change.”

The Tibetan Buddhist teacher Pema Chodron has written extensively on the Buddha's teaching of impermanence. One of her best-selling books is, in fact, entitled, *When Things Fall Apart*. As she once put it, “Things falling apart is a kind of testing and also a kind of healing. We think that the point is to ‘pass the test’ or to ‘solve the problem,’ but the truth is that things don't really get ‘solved.’ They come together and they fall apart. Then they come together again and fall apart again. It's just like that. The healing comes from letting there be room for all of this to happen—room for grief, for relief, for misery, for joy.”

Interestingly, when I spoke recently at the Hawaii Betsuin's Hoonko, I was “asked” to play guitar and sing *that* song, “Everything Must Change,” with Bishop Kawawata during their Saturday night entertainment. We used to sing it at West Covina Buddhist Temple. But whereas this song appears to have a “negative” message, performing it with him again was actually quite fun.

I realized impermanence itself isn't necessarily a negative teaching; as Pema suggests, both misery and joy are impermanent. It all depends on how we look at it.

As we go forward, I hope we are able to appreciate this truth of constant change as the way things really are. In the words of a certain song's refrain, “Rain comes from the clouds, sun lights up the sky...and hummingbirds do fly.”

Higashi Honganji
North America District
2019 Report

Happy New Year everyone. I hope that the year 2019 got off to a wonderful beginning for you and your family. On behalf of our staff, Revs. Ryoko Osa, Masashi Fujii, Akiko Okada, and Tomoyuki Hasegawa, I wish to thank you for your guidance and support during the during the previous year.

During 2018, we continued our educational programs with local retreats in both Southern and Northern California, and had two retreats of our Dharma Seeds educational program in the Spring and Fall. We also had our Youth Hoshidan in June and our HOONKO Hoshidan study tours to Japan with representatives from all of our temples. All who participated came back with a renewed appreciation of our teaching and our tradition.

We wish to take this opportunity to thank you for your support and par-

(Please see NAD, page 5)

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 greatly in recent years. In Japan, especially in rural areas, the maintenance of small Buddhist temples has reached a deadlock mainly due to the aging and declining population. Our denomination has tried very hard to find a way to break the deadlock. I think now is the time for us to go back to the original spirit of Mahāyāna and study Shinran Shōnin's teaching from that standpoint from the ground up. Because I believe there is always 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.

Rev. Masashi Fujii
Higashi Honganji USA Headquarters

Happy New Year! I am very grateful to all of you for the assistance you gave to Mimū and I last year. I am pleased to announce that our first child, a son was born last October! We named him Ren which means “lotus flower” in Japanese. My son and wife are both healthy and doing well. Thanks to you, we were able to spend a nice third year in United States. I am looking forward to introducing my son to all of you in the near future! And I would like to express our gratitude for your kindness and look forward to your continued guidance and support in the new year.

Rev. Akiko Okada
Higashi Honganji USA Headquarters

Happy New Year! I really appreciated your help over the past year. It is just about a year since I came here and started learning everything from all of the members of the Los Angeles Betsuin. I celebrated the New Year in the United States for the first time in 2019. Last year, 2018, was a very “NEW” year for me. Thanks to you, I have had so many wonderful experiences. Everything was brand new to me last year. My goals this year are to study English harder and harder, and of course Buddhism with all of you. I look forward to having meaningful conversations in English with our members much more than I was able to do last year. I greatly appreciate your continued guidance and encouragement.

Rev. Frederick Brenion

My first New Year thought,
All my words fly out crazy.
Were I silent, Truth.

Let me wish each of you a Happy New Year! I hope that you meet your deepest aspirations this coming year. This past year some have experienced great joy, some great sorrow. Yet each day is a reminder of the Dharma. We live in a world of impermanence and change. There is nothing new in this. Right now,

(Please see BRENION, page 6)



Betsuin News



New Year Greetings

Fujinkai

Fujinkai extends Happy New Year 2019 greetings to all! As we reflect on all of 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 February 2018, where we remembered past members, followed by the general meeting and luncheon. In May, Fujinkai and toban members prepared the chirashi otoki for the Tanjo-e service. We also supported the Little Tokyo Sparkle, volunteering to clean up the trash and graffiti in Little Tokyo, and participated in helping to weed and clean up our temple grounds as part of the garden maintenance crew. Our big temple fundraiser every year is the Obon in July. As always, Fujinkai, with the help of many members and friends, prepared the popular kurimanju and osushi. A month later, we hosted the Big Bargain Sale, generating almost \$10,000, which we earmarked toward the temple flood repairs. Thank you to

all who devoted many, many volunteer hours to pricing, setting up, and manning the sale, under difficult conditions caused by the displacement of Lumbini children and staff to the hondo and lobby while flood repairs were being made downstairs, as well as to those who donated the many items that we sold. This year's Big Bargain Sale, set for August 18, will be sponsored by Taiko Project, and supported by the temple. Please begin sorting through your "treasures" for donations to the BBS, which we will begin collecting in early August. In September, Fujinkai and toban supported the temple with a delicious vegetarian otoki for the Hoonko service. In November, Rinban Ito and Rev. Hata, along with Fujinkai, made the annual visit to long time members residing at Sakura Gardens, Sakura 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.

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 2018. As in past years the ABA was involved in our annual Mochitsuki on December 28. Also, thank you for those who supported the Hoonko Gathering in September. We were pleased that Associate Abbott Yul Otani and his wife were able to join us for the Hoonko service and gathering.

In 2018, ABA initiated the Garden Maintenance Toban Project. Thank you to all the members who came out to pull weeds, clean the walkways, trim

the bushes and collect the debris in the Temple gardens. The first Toban was held in May and the second was completed in October. Our members support the Toban because we are so appreciative of the continuing landscape garden work of Mr. Kawahira, Mr. Maehara and Mr. and Mrs. Tsuruda.

In anticipation of Obon, ABA members were heavily involved in the planning, preparation, set-up, and take-down for a very warm and successful 2018 Obon Festival. 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

YOUTH GROUP UPDATE

Happy New Year from Dharma School & Jr. YBA!

We have been participating in the various temple year-end and New Year activities. Our favorites are mochitsuki and toshikoshi soba! During mochitsuki, we helped pound, shape, and of course, eat lots of yummy mochi. We love making mochi in many different colors! Yum! We also love slurping soba noodles on New Years Eve!

We are all looking forward to learning more new things in 2019 and welcome you to join us for special talks from our ministers and activities on Shotsuki and Family Service Sundays!

2018 was a great year for Jr. YBA. This year, we doubled our members and we are now planning a seminar for Southern District Jr. YBL. We are looking forward to another year of great memories with everyone in Jr. YBA.

In gassho,
Dharma School
and
Jr. YBA



parking, scheduling performances, arranging for LAPD and LTPSA security.

From 6:30 a.m. Friday morning through 6:00 p.m. Monday evening, members and support groups were responsible for setting up the electrical

(Please see ABA, page 5)

The Way

LUMBINI CORNER

Happy 2019! 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

CALL FOR VENDORS! *hanamatsuri* *craft fair*

Calling all craft vendors! On Sunday, April 28th 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 2019 and due in March.

(TAJIMA, cont. from page 1)

of the teaching of Jōdo Shinshū as the broadest path to Buddhahood, together with our sangha members.

It is no exaggeration to say that those events will play a crucial role in shaping the future of our denomination. Each of us, as one who has encountered the teaching, needs to take on the responsibility as a member of the denomination to truly realize a sangha of the nenbutsu where everyone can live together with mutual respect.

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

Thank you.

(ITO, cont. from page 1)

in downtown Los Angeles. Although now firmly into our 5th decade here, I haven't heard anyone even mention the possibility to having to rebuild anytime in the future.

As we mentioned in previous issues, we did experience a catastrophic flood right after our Obon Festival in late July. And there is some concern that such problems may occur in the near future. We will, however, do what we can to be proactive in preventive measures to ensure that our beautiful temple can continue to serve us for years to come.

On the program side, we are continually reevaluating our programs and services. We have been successful in including active younger members into our committees and even to our Board of Directors. Our Religious Committee is meeting regularly to shore up our present programs and to introduce new ideas as to how to increase our membership and attendance at services and educational activities.

I realize I am not young anymore. I have slowed down considerably. But our ministers, our office staff, our lay leadership, and our volunteers continue to work hard to maintain the energy necessary to keep our temple relevant and a place where the teachings of Buddhism can be accessed.

I sincerely hope that 2019 will be a year filled with happiness and meaning for all of us. I look forward as I always do to continue to listen to and learn from the Buddhadharma with all of you.

Gassho,
Noriaki Ito

MEMBER spotlight



BABY ANNOUNCEMENT
To Parents Rev. Masashi & Mimū
a New Baby Boy
Ren Fujii
Born on October 24, 2018

CONGRATULATIONS!

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

Mrs. Yukiko Igarashi (75)
October 24, 2018

Mrs. Nobuko Ann Saito (96)
November 12, 2018

Mr. Tomeharu Tom Yokoe (96)
November 13, 2018

Mrs. Nancy Masako Mitsuchi (96)
November 22, 2018

Mrs. Michiko Yanagisawa (71)
November 23, 2018

Mr. Mitsuo Uchizono (78)
December 12, 2018

Namu Amida Butsu



(SATO, cont. from page 1)

In 2019, we will be planning our attendance at the World Dobo Gathering in Kyoto, Japan. I hope that many of you will be able to attend.

Again, thanks to all of you for your support to me and the Betsuin.

Gassho,
Ron Sato, President
Board of Directors

THE YEAR OF THE BOAR

The year 2019 is the Year of the Boar according to the Asian Zodiac. About those born in the boar year, it is said that they are thought to be courageous and headstrong. They possess tremendous fortitude and great inner strength. It is difficult to deter or deflect them once they have set a course of action. Sometimes this attitude makes them reckless, and as a result, they come to grief, afterwards expressing deep regret for their action. So they must be warned to think before they act.

Because they are impulsive, boar year can be victimized by the unscrupulous. In general, however, they are honest, gallant, chivalrous, pure, and persistent. Although short-tempered, they really dislike quarreling, and try hard to avoid the necessity for it. Basically, they are kind and affectionate individuals who, once they make friends, usually retain them for life.

They are usually well-informed and rather studious though not necessarily profound thinkers. They tend not to say much as a rule; but if they do open up, they will talk things out frankly, even though they are basically shy. This shyness leads them to try to solve their own problems, rather than turning to outsiders for aid.

A favorite Japanese legend tells of a boar and monkey who are servants to a



rich farmer. One day, the boar overheard their master say: "I believe I shall kill that monkey. He is really a good-for-nothing fellow and only frightens the children with his antics." The boar relayed this information to his friend, and together they pondered what to do. Finally the boar came up with a plan. The boar would act as if he was kidnapping the child; the monkey would in turn run after him, snatch the child back from him and return him to the master. The plan worked and the monkey's life was spared. The farmer returned the favor with a totally pampered existence. What happened to the boar is not mentioned, but the boar according to legend was praised for sacrificing himself to help out a friend.

The former Rinban Horyu Ito was a boar and Rev. Paul Imahara is also a boar. We wonder how many of our members are also born in the year of the boar.

(ABA, con't. from page 3)

system, sound system, booths, and stage. Thanks also to the NAD ministers who assisted with moving tables, chairs, produce, plants, and supplies. On Monday during take-down, members and ministers were very happy that we survived another Obon with no major mishaps.

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, a large "Team Higashi" supported Little Tokyo Sparkle where approximately 250 members of Little Tokyo organizations, businesses and volunteers cleaned up the sidewalks, gardens and washed the store windows of Little Tokyo.

During the year, members were able to support most all of the temple events including funerals, tobans (work groups) and the BBS. 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 office if you are interested in participating in future ABA/temple sponsored projects or e-mail dkikeda@aol.com.

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

In gassho,
ABA

(NAD, cont. from page 2)

ticipation in our district's activities. We ask for your continued support during 2019 as well.

As you know, at our office in Los Angeles, we also have the Shinshu Center of America (SCA) which is the educational arm of our English-speaking districts. Its role is to introduce the Shin Buddhist teachings to members and to newcomers to our tradition. A major part of our work is to publish books on our teaching in English. Because of the cost savings, most of our books are currently in the form of digital publishing (eBooks). Currently we have books being sold on Kindle which is the popular bookstore on the Amazon website. The latest book we offer is called *The Thanksgiving Sermons of Soga Ryōjin*. Rev. Soga is one of the most revered teachers of the 20th Century and these are collections of talks he gave here in Los Angeles back in 1955.

Other books being offered in both eBook format and in paper format are listed in a separate flier. The books currently on Kindle are being sold at the affordable price of \$2.99 each. So they are easy to share with family and friends.

The other major work was the completion of the new Service Book now being used at all of our temples. It was produced in a larger format in comparison to the past. So now, our elder participants (including myself) have an easier time reading the print.

The important work of our temples, the North America District, and the Shinshu Center of America can only succeed with your support and encouragement. We ask 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 2019.

Gassho,
Noriaki Ito



The Way



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, 2019. Submissions may be subject to printing restrictions and staff approval. Thank you and we look forward to hearing from you!

LUMBINI CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE CONTACT US FOR A VISIT!

FOR CHILDREN AGES 2 1/2 TO 5 YEARS
TEL: 213-680-2976
FAX: 213-626-6850
EMAIL: lumbini.missleslie@gmail.com
WEBPAGE: <http://LumbiniCDC.org>

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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!

(BRENION, cont. from page 2)
the sun shines. We breathe. Flowers on our altar or at home smell wonderful. Seeing a New Year smile makes us smile. Life goes on. Always has, always will. There is a touch of wistfulness with the New Year.

There is something about New Year still that makes us celebrate, plan, and hope. It is a new start. Life's offer of a 'do-over.'

The message of Jodo Shinshu is the message of New Year's Day. Many of my Christian friends describe themselves as being Christmas Christians, or Easter Christians. They identify with certain holidays as being central to their self-meaning. I think I am a New Year's Day Shinshu follower. I make resolutions and fail to follow them. I am a self-power, jiriki person, and pretty bad at it. I fall on my face with the best of intentions and the worst results. That is why I always need a new start.

In our central story of the great Bodhisattva, Dharmakara, I hear of a person who sees reality clearly for the first time when he encounters the Dharma. He makes the deepest resolutions possible. We often call them aspirations, vows. He knows that everything is at stake for him and for everyone. So he commits himself completely. Unlike me, Dharmakara got the job done. His is the Primal Vow, the resolution made for everyone. My own resolutions are not deep enough. I am not making them on behalf of others, just myself. How selfish I am. It is always about me. That is why I fail.

But I can smile today because this Dharma, coming to me as Amida Buddha, has already succeeded for me. I am accepted as I am, right now, every now. Each now is a new now because of this. Each now is always a New Year's now, even at the last moment any year. And when the time comes, when the last moment of my life arrives, it will still be coming to me as new.

Happy New Year everyone!

visit our website at
www.hhbt-la.org

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