

HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE

505 East Third Street
Los Angeles, CA 90013
(213) 626-4200 - FAX (213) 626-6850

Address Service Requested

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Los Angeles, CA
Permit No. 24616

The Way

Vol. 77 | No. 1
January 2025

HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE | LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

TEMPLE SCHEDULE

JANUARY

- 1 10:00 am Shusho-e New Year Service
- 5 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
- 12 10:00 am Sunday Service Discussion Group
- 19 10:00 am Family Service
- 26 10:00 am Eitaikyo Service New Year Luncheon & General Meeting

FEBRUARY

- 2 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
- 9 10:00 am Sunday Service Discussion Group
- 16 10:00 am Family Service
- 23 10:00 am Sunday Service



VISITING THE TEMPLE

The temple is currently open for private services and visitations 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

Best wishes for a
happy & healthy 2025!



SUNDAY, JANUARY 26, 2025

Eitaikyo Service

10:00AM

New Year Luncheon & General Meeting

12:00PM | JANM | RSVP REQUIRED



The Way



Volume 77 | Number 1 | January 2025

HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE • LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

New Year Greetings

Yul Ōtani

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



To our fellow seekers in our overseas districts, I wish to offer my warmest greetings for the New Year. I would also like to express my deepest appreciation for your continued efforts in learning the Dharma, as well as in maintaining our teaching tradition and Sangha.

When we turn our eyes to the world, we see horrible scenes of armed conflict and civil war, as well as acts of terrorism and riots such as the ongoing Russian

invasion of Ukraine and the large-scale battles in Israel and Palestine. Some media have reported that the year 2023 saw the most armed conflicts around the world since the end of World War II. When we think about the fact that there are always people who are being tormented and overcome by suffering and grief in such situations, we cannot help but feel how powerless we are as individuals to help them. All we can do now is to wish that peace will be brought to all people around the globe as soon as possible.

In Japan, the Hokuriku region's Noto Peninsula was also struck by a major earthquake on January 1, 2024. So many people fell victim to the disaster and even today are still forced to live in difficult conditions. I had a chance to visit the affected areas and talk to many of our temple members who suffered

from the quake there. Despite the difficulties they are facing, they are trying to live their lives to the fullest based on the teaching of Jōdo Shinshū. Once again, they made me feel strongly that we must carry the torch of the nenbutsu in the stricken land of Noto. On behalf of our denomination, I ask for your continued support of the relief efforts for the earthquake victims.

Since my appointment as the Overseas District Abbot, I have attended all of the Hōonkō services held at the Betsuins of the North America, Hawaii, and South America districts. Last year I visited the North America District to attend the Hōonkō and the 120th Anniversary of the Los Angeles Betsuin, where I was able to see many of you again. Through the experience, I strongly felt that I would like to stay in the overseas

(Please see ŌTANI, page 5)

Bishop Wataru Kigoshi

Chief Administrator,
Shinshū Ōtani-ha
(Higashi Honganji)



To everyone in our overseas districts, I wish to extend my warmest New Year's greetings for the year 2025. I would also like to express my deepest appreciation for the support you continue to give to our district activities.

In 2023, the 850th Celebration of Shinran's Birth and the 800th Anniversary of the Establishment of Jōdo Shinshū were successfully held at our mother temple in Kyoto after the long lockdown period. We realized once

again how important it was to gather together to listen to the teaching. Our Celebration then began to be held in each district in Japan and overseas. On January 1, 2024, however, a massive earthquake devastated Hokuriku, the central-western region in Japan.

The region affected by the quake is a major stronghold of our tradition where so many Shinshū followers have been produced in history. The Noto Peninsula in the region has especially suffered from earthquakes repeatedly in recent years. To make matters worse, the peninsula was the epicenter of the massive earthquake in 2024. So many temples and followers' homes were destroyed and the victims of it are still trapped in a dire situation even though it has been almost one year since the devastation of the quake. I wish to extend my sincerest sympathies to all those who have been affected by the disaster.

We of the Shinshū Ōtani-ha will continue to give them as much support as we can to protect their precious lives and the tradition of the nenbutsu which has been handed down through generations of ardent followers.

In our overseas districts, we will finally hold a World Dōbō Gathering in 2026 after an interval of ten years. We are preparing for this event and will begin advertising for participants this year. The Gathering will be held under the same theme for the 2024 Celebration, "Namu Amida Butsu: To Discover the Meaning of Being Born as Human Beings." We sincerely wish that, as stated in the theme, this Gathering will be an opportunity for us to appreciate the meaning of having been born as human beings and to share the profound joy of living with all of you in the overseas districts. It is also our wish that the Gathering will be a major step forward

(Please see KIGOSHI, page 5)



Betsuin News



New Year Greetings

Rinban Noriaki Ito

Happy New Year everyone. I hope that 2025 has gotten off to a wonderful beginning for you and your families. Last year we celebrated the 120th anniversary of the founding of our temple here in Los Angeles. The Rev. Junjo Izumida and his Dharma friends built what was originally called the Los Angeles Buddhist Mission, the first Buddhist temple in Los Angeles in 1904. From that humble beginning in a part of downtown Los Angeles which was the beginning of Little Tokyo, we eventually moved to Boyle Heights where we existed for over half a century.

Many of our members lived in that area and so the temple flourished in the mid-1950s in that Boyle Heights area where many families in the Japanese community lived. We enjoyed our presence there for many decades. In the 1960s many families moved out to the suburbs and so the leadership started to think about moving the temple. Eventually, there was an opportunity to purchase land in Little Tokyo and so it was decided to build a new temple there. In a year, we will celebrate our 50th anniversary since our current temple was built in 1976.

Most of our old-timers, the Issei and Nisei, have passed away and have handed over the reins to the Sansei generation. We continue to have a strong core group of members and are grateful for the support we received from everyone. We now have Rev. Mayuki Nagamine serving as our resident minister. Her fluency in both English and Japanese and her youth makes her an ideal minister for our Sangha.

I started as kaikyoshi, a resident minister actually at the old temple on Mott Street, but the year after I joined the staff after spending four years of study in Kyoto, Japan, we closed down the historic Mott Street temple and moved to the new Betsuin in Little Tokyo. That

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

Rev. Mayuki Nagamine

Happy New Year! I would like to express my deep gratitude for your unwavering support throughout the past year. It was truly wonderful to meet more people at the temple in person. Celebrating our 120th anniversary and hosting our first Obon at the temple in five years were especially significant moments for our community. Sadly, we continue to witness tragedies in our daily lives. Many in the Noto Peninsula lost their homes and temples in the devastating earthquake, and the recent election seemed to deepen divisions across America. My wish for the new year is that the teachings reach more people and serve as an anchor of comfort in their lives. It is an honor to be part of our Sangha and to have the opportunity to continue listening to and sharing the Dharma with all of you. I wish you all a happy and healthy year ahead.

Higashi Honganji
North America District
Greetings

Best wishes for a very Happy New Year. I hope that 2025 will be a wonderful year for all of you and your families. On behalf of our staff, Revs. Ryoko Osa, Tomoyuki Hasegawa, and Kensho Goto, I thank you for your heartfelt support and guidance during the previous year.

In March, we hosted a seminar at Berkeley Higashi Honganji with Rev. Patti Nakai as our speaker. In May, we had two seminars at the LA Betsuin led by Rev. Nobuko Miyoshi. The first in English and the second in Japanese.

In March we had a ministers' retreat and two-day joint retreat with speaker Professor Zhang Wei from Dōhō University in Nagoya, Japan.

Every year, thanks to the generous

(Please see **NAD**, page 6)

Irene Ota, President
Board of Directors

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

The Board of Directors and I extend our warmest wishes for a Happy New Year 2025 to you all!!!

As we reflect on all of the temple activities during the past year, we realize we could not have accomplished any of them without the tremendous efforts of the ministers and the enthusiastic support of the Sangha, so a huge thank you for your continuous participation and support. 2024 was a year filled with events commemorating the Betsuin's 120th Anniversary, establishing a capital campaign to raise funds to undertake needed upgrades to our aging temple building. The successful annual golf tournament and fun-filled dance benefit were well supported by the Sangha and temple friends with your participation and generous donations. Even as we enjoyed the Obon at the Murata Ranch safely in 2022 and 2023, we were happily able to bring back the Obon to the temple in 2024. It was a joyous occasion to again dance the bon odori to the beating of the taiko under the manto-e lanterns. The festive Obon was followed by the return of the Big Bargain Sale after a 5-year absence, organized by the Murata Family and supported by many temple members. We were also honored to have the presence of the Overseas District Abbot Yul Ōtani at a special 120th Anniversary service and luncheon. It was indeed a year of celebration!

As always, we are very grateful to all of our dedicated ministers, our hard working and efficient office staff, the Otani Gakuen choir with their harmonious voices, the vital AV team, our meticulous landscapers, the always dependable property maintenance crew, and the ever-present group of volunteers who help with refreshments and otoki, mailings, polishing of altar pieces, weed-

(Please see **OTA**, page 6)

New Year Greetings

Rev. Kensho Goto
Higashi Honganji USA Headquarters

Happy New Year! I really appreciated your help over the past year. This year is my fourth time to celebrating the New Year in Los Angeles. I feel that I'm getting be a resident of the United States finally. Thanks to your support, I look forward to having meaningful conversations with our members much more than I was able to do last year, and I am happy to listen to Shinran Shōnin's teaching with all of you. I greatly appreciate your continued guidance and encouragement.

Rev. Tomoyuki Hasegawa
Higashi Honganji USA Headquarters

Happy New Year! I wish to express my deepest gratitude for the support you wholeheartedly extended to our temples and district activities in the past year. There are still mounting concerns in the world such as the armed conflicts in Ukraine and Middle East. In our own Shinshū communities, the people in the Noto Peninsula are still struggling to recover from the devastating earthquakes last year. Those difficulties have made us reflect on what is the most important in our lives. In other words, we have been given opportunities to think about what the innermost wish deep within our existence is. That is the focus of the essence of the Buddhist teachings, which Shinran Shōnin called Jōdo Shinshū with deep respect. Let's continue to walk the broad path of awakening guided by the everlasting truth in the teaching as well as by our innermost wish.

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

SAVE THE DATE



Rev. Frederick Brenion
New Day Wishes

Time really does fly and its going supersonic for me. I could have sworn that I did 2024's wishes just recently. Nevertheless I'm more than happy to see 2024 vanish away. Someone shared an inspiring line from a Nick Frederikson, a cool name I must say! "So, I close my eyes to old ends, and open my heart to new beginnings." In spite of all the sorrows and disappointments of the past there is still a hope of 'new beginnings.' I do hope that, and it does require opening up one's heart. And in that spirit I wish you all a very happy New Year. And I want that New Year spirit to be renewed for all of us each and every day of 2025!

As for myself, and my good wife, Antoinette, we'll be spending the day putting up our new calendars! We have calendars in just about every room like a regular art gallery! Each month will have a new beginning with a new picture and that will certainly keep the spirit of a New Year ongoing.



DHARMA SCHOOL & JR. YBA UPDATE

Happy New Year from Jr. YBA and Dharma School!

We've had a good first few months of the school year. Jr. YBA has attended various Southern District events and Dharma School has been meeting monthly. We are all looking forward to learning more new things in 2025 and welcome you to join us for special talks from our ministers and activities every month! Please email hhbtkids@gmail.com for a schedule of Dharma School weeks or info@hhbt-la.org for information about Jr. YBA!

In gassho,
HHBT Youth Groups

Fujinkai

Warmest wishes for a Happy New Year 2025. Somehow this past year finally has begun to feel closer to normal after 5 years of COVID-19 and its aftereffects. Our numbers still are down, but more people have begun to attend our services for which we are grateful.

The Fujinkai has participated in the Toban groups together with members and friends to help with services, refreshments, and otoki meals.

One last comment: Fujinkai does not translate as "old ladies"! Have a great new year. Hope to see you soon at the temple.

Otani Gakuen

The choir and our director/pianist Mrs. Kazue Funai extend our best wishes to all for a Happy New Year 2025.

Thanks to the extraordinary dedication of Mrs. Funai, the choir has been able to continue singing for our sangha. Though we may be as few as 3 or 4, we are deeply grateful for the sangha's encouragement.

Thank you very much for your support and donations.

LCDC LUMBINI CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

FOR CHILDREN AGES

2 1/2 TO 5 YEARS

OPEN YEAR ROUND:

MONDAY through FRIDAY

7:30am to 6:00pm

closed national holidays



 @lumbini_preschool

 facebook.com/lumbinidc



LUMBINI IS NOW OFFERING

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

LUMBINIDC.ORG

Call Ms. Leslie 213-680-2976!

lumbini.missleslie@gmail.com

LCDC NEWS

Happy 2025! 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. 2024 has come to an end and we have made every effort to continue to encourage our students to learn to their fullest abilities. With the support of a caring staff and caring families, the students succeed each year and grow into the next. We are continuing our Japanese class with Rev. Mayuki and Movement class with Mr. John. Mr. Danny and Mr. Jack continue to offer wonderful classroom activities for their students in Red Room and Yellow Room. Last month, we ended the year with our Holiday Program! The students did a wonderful job performing two holiday songs and one Japanese song! After the program, students had a chance to see Santa and received a special gift for a job well done. 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. We are looking forward to another successful year.



In Gassho,
Leslie Nicho,
LCDC Director



ABA

Wishing you a wonderful "New Year" from the Adult Buddhist Association!

During 2024 our ABA property group continued to handle temple maintenance issues which included restroom plumbing repairs. Additionally, during the year, tree debris and trash on Third and Central streets were cleaned and removed. Periodically, at the request of our gardeners we worked on weeding, trimming, and cleaning our beautiful garden. Graffiti on fencing was painted over and larger "tags" were cleaned by LA City's graffiti removal team.

We are continuing to insure that our Board of Directors is fully informed about Little Tokyo area crime issues. The safety of our daycare children, staff, members and visitors is paramount.

(Please see ABA, page 6)

Community Outreach Committee

New Year's greetings from the Community Outreach Group! Our group began in 2019 with sangha members who wanted to help those in need in our community. We connected with the Downtown Women's Center to make sack lunches for those women who were experiencing homelessness. The pandemic made it difficult to continue our project. But at the beginning of 2024, our sangha and friends have re-started the project making lunches once a month for the Center. We meet downstairs in the kitchen to make 100 sandwiches and then add fruit, carrots, snackbars and water to complete the sack lunch. Those who volunteer feel that this is a way of helping others as well as connecting with our neighborhood. And as we work to put these lunches together, it is so much fun that it hardly seems like work. Please consider joining us in this project of giving to others. Again, Happy New Year!

Trish Nicholson
Community Outreach
Co-coordinator

(*ŌTANI, cont. from page 1*)

districts for an extended period to share with you the life of revering the Buddha and listening to the teaching. With the firm support of many members, I have been staying in the Hawaii District since December last year. Although I will be able to stay in the district for only a few months, I will try to make the most of my stay here to reflect deeply upon what I should do to fulfill my role as the Overseas District Abbot through meeting as many members as I can. After finishing my stay in Hawaii, I plan to be in the South America and North America districts as well. I ask you for your support and understanding then.

In 2026, the World Dōbō Gathering will be held, for the first time in the last ten years, in South America District under the main theme, "Namu Amida Butsu: To Discover the Meaning of Being Born as Human Beings." It is my dearest wish that the event will be an opportunity for us to appreciate meeting with our fellow seekers from around the world and to share our appreciation with other participants. I ask you for your participation in the event together

with your family and friends.

In closing, I once again ask for your continued support as we begin the New Year.

(*KIGOSHI, cont. from page 1*)

toward holding a Celebration in each overseas district. Please participate in the event together with your family and friends.

In closing, I ask for your continued support and guidance as we begin the New Year.

(*RINBAN, cont. from page 2*)

was half a century ago.

Of course, in thinking about our mission, we realize that no matter how beautiful our temple is, what is most important is that it is a place where the teachings of the Buddha and the interpretations of our founder, Shinran Shōnin, are alive and being transmitted well.

We look forward to seeing you all at our services and events on a regular basis. We will continue to stream our

Sunday services using the internet, but also hope that you will be able to join us in person at the temple when you're able to come.

With deep appreciation for your support in the past, I look forward to continuing to listen to the Buddhaharma with you. Best wishes for a wonderful 2025.

In gassho,
Rinban Noriaki Ito

(*OTA, cont. from page 2*)

ing and cleaning the garden, and numerous other tasks. We invite you to attend services in person and visit with friends afterwards over tea. We have a security guard present from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm on Sundays monitoring the parking lot. Thank you to the entire Sangha for your continued generous contributions and support. We look forward to another exciting new year!

In gassho,
Irene Ota

2025 - THE YEAR OF THE SNAKE

2025 is the Year of the Snake according to the Asian zodiac. In both eastern and western cultures, the snake has long been associated with the sun. Because he sheds his skin, the snake also symbolizes death and rebirth, life perpetually renewed and everlasting. This is akin to the rising and setting of the sun.

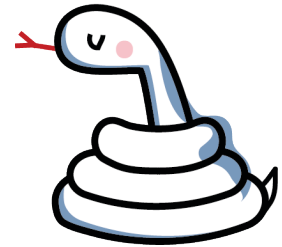
People born in the year of the snake, it is said, are deep. They speak little and possess tremendous wisdom. (Don't let this go to your head, snake people!) They are fortunate in money matters in that they never have to worry about them. They will always be able to obtain money whenever they need it. Snake-year people are quite vain and always dress up. They are selfish and just a bit stingy when approached for a loan. Yet people born in the snake year have tremendous sympathy for others and will try to help them, sometimes to the annoyance of those they say they are

helping, since snake-year people do habitually overdo anything they do. They are very determined in what they do and hate to fail at anything, and although they are calm by nature, they are most intense; if they shoot an arrow at a target, they must hit the target. People born in the snake year are quite passionate and handsome or beautiful.

(adapted from *The Japanese Fortune Calendar* by Reiko Chiba)

Although the descriptions of people born in the snake year are generalizations based on superstitions and folklore, and therefore should not be taken too seriously, it is interesting to ponder. The positive qualities described can serve as a goal for all of us, and the negative qualities (which we all have to a certain extent) are reminders of how insensitive, vain, and ignorant we can be.

Happy Snake Year to everyone!



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](https://www.instagram.com/higashihonganjila)

The Way

(NAD, cont. from page 2)

contribution received from Rev. Toshihisa Enoki and his late wife, Fumiko, we present scholarships to our active youth who are entering college. The 2023 recipient was Sean Tamura and this year's recipient was Stacey Kasai, both from the LA Betsuin. Our congratulations go to these two individuals who we hope will continue to be active at their temples.

In late June, six participants (including Galilea Marquez from the LA Betsuin), participated in the YBA Hoshidan Tour. They visited Hiroshima, the Dōbō Retreat Center and Honzan in Kyoto, as well as Tokyo.

In November, Overseas District Abbot Yul Ōtani accompanied by Jicho Rev. Sei Kamachi participated in the Hoonko of the Los Angeles Betsuin and West Covina temple. ODA Ōtani officiated the Kikyoshiki (Confirmation Ceremony). This year, there were five people who participated and received their Dharma names.

The efforts of our North America District, Shinshu Center of America, and of our temples depend on the encouragement we receive from all of you. We thank you for your continued support. Best wishes for a wonderful 2025.

Gassho,
Noriaki Ito

(ABA, cont. from page 4)

During the year, thanks to all who volunteered for streaming and reception duties and provided security from 2023 through September 2024 for our Sunday services. In March ABA was a Tee Sponsor for a very successful golf tournament, and supported our wonderful fundraising dance, the proceeds of both went to our 120th Anniversary Capital Campaign.

In May our Higashi Team joined community volunteers to clean-up the sidewalks and streets of Little Tokyo for the 6th Annual Little Tokyo Sparkle. Higashi members believe that our involvement in this event is particularly important because of the generous community support our Temple received after the 2021 vandalism incident. Thanks to Frank Edwards for providing security!

Later in May we honored our Temple mothers with a special "Mother's Day" breakfast. Thanks to all who picked up the Porto's delights, breakfast burrito's and prepared the fruit plate. We always appreciate Lisa Shimamoto for her donation of beautiful flowers and Fugetsudo for the special manju. In late June, at West Covina's request, ABA sponsored the ring toss booth at their annual Obon Festival.

This past July our Sangha members and friends celebrated Obon back at the Temple. Thanks to all who worked tire-

lessly during the weekends before Obon to set-up the Yagura, patio shade-cloth, chochin, etc. The pre-set up included fixing broken tables, chairs and checking equipment. The Friday morning set-up crew was large and gave the "old-timers" added relief. Steel Security and LAPD reported no incidents for a very successful Obon.

As summer turned to Fall we had the opportunity to attend the Hoonko special services and memorial in honor of Shinran Shōnin. We were honored that the Overseas District Abbott Yul Ōtani and Honzan representatives were able to join us for the special programs.

In December we closed out the year with the Temple clean-up and celebrated our annual Mochitsuki. Thanks again to the temple members who are always willing to work hard throughout the year! Your efforts help to defray maintenance costs so that our members' generous donations can be applied to the 120th Anniversary Fund for ongoing Temple renovations.

If you are interested in joining us for future events, please contact the temple office.

In gassho,
Adult Buddhist Association



Our deepest condolences

to the family and relatives of ...

Mitsuko Nakata (86)
November 17, 2024

John Akinobu Uomoto (82)
November 17, 2024

Ruby Akiko Kagawa (83)
November 21, 2024

Namu Amida Butsu



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!

