

HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE

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

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The Way

Vol. 71 | No. 5
July 2019

HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE | LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

TEMPLE SCHEDULE

JULY

- 14 10:00am Obon Family Service
Pet Memorial Service
- 21 9:00am Coffee & Dharma
10:00am Sunday Service
- 27 1:00pm OBON FESTIVAL
- 28 11:00am Obon/Hatsubon Service
1:00pm OBON FESTIVAL

AUGUST

- 4 10:00am Shotsuki Service
- 11 10:00am Sunday Service
- 18 10:00am Sunday Service
- 18 8:00am Taiko Big Bargain Sale
- 25 10:00am Sunday Service

SEPTEMBER

- 1 No Service - Labor Day
- 7 6:00pm HOONKO Gathering
- 8 10:00am HOONKO Service
- 15 10:00am Shotsuki Service
- 22 10:00am Family Service
- 22 10:00am Temple Fun Day
- 29 10:00am Sunday Service

HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE

OBON

60 YEARS OF OBON FESTIVALS

SATURDAY & SUNDAY
JULY 27TH & 28TH, 2019



OBON HATSUBON SERVICE | SUNDAY | 11:00AM
MANTO-E SERVICES | SATURDAY & SUNDAY | 5:30PM
BON ODORI | SATURDAY & SUNDAY | 6:30PM



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Wednesday Night Study Class Our Memorial for Rick Surwillo

Rev. Peter Hata

Recently, instead of the usual chanting and mindfulness practice that precedes our discussion, Higashi Honganji's Wednesday Night Study Class began with a traditional Buddhist memorial service in memory of one of our members, Mr. Rick Surwillo, who had suddenly passed away. The service itself acknowledged that our friend had been enthusiastically studying the dharma alongside us and yet now, because of the impermanence and unpredictability of life, was no longer with us.



Rick Surwillo, 1955-2019

All of us in the WNSC agreed that it seemed like only yesterday that we were studying and sharing together. I've officiated many funerals and memorial services for our temple members. Usually they are the age of our parents or grandparents. I never imagined I'd be officiating a service for a study class participant.

In the service, as in all funerals in our Shin Buddhist tradition, I began by reading the famous letter called "On White Ashes," which was written by the Buddhist priest Rennyo Shonin. This is a letter that very simply and directly conveys the impermanent nature of life by comparing human life to a morning dew drop. In his letter, Rennyo begins by saying: *In silently contemplating the transient*

nature of human existence nothing is more fragile and fleeting in this world than the life of a human being... Whether I go before others, or whether others go before me, whether it be today or whether it be tomorrow, who is to know? Those who depart before us are as countless as the drops of dew.

However, it's also important to know that Rennyo's Letter states that, although impermanence is of course a difficult truth, it is actually because life is impermanent that we can fully appreciate it. In a sense, this is the positive aspect of impermanence. Later in his letter he says: *The fragile nature of human existence underlies both the young and old, and therefore, we must, one and all, turn to the teachings of the Buddha and awaken to the ultimate essence of life. By so understanding the meaning of death, we come to appreciate the meaning of this life which is to be treasured because it is unrepeatable.*

In thinking about Rick's own life, I wonder if he himself did not also experience these two aspects of impermanence, one negative and one positive. For example, we know that Rick had struggled with alcoholism. I also think it's clear from reading some entries in his online blog, that though he wasn't homeless, he often had great difficulties dealing with LA County's Department of Public Social Services, and with making ends meet.

But then the positive aspect of these struggles, which in Buddhism we could

call "encounters with impermanence," things not going the way we want them to, was that—not just "in spite of," but perhaps even "because of" his difficulties—Rick also lived life fully and compassionately.

For example, we know that he was an enthusiastic participant at many of this temple's events. In fact, he attended this very study class regularly and received his certificate of completion in December of last year when we completed our two-year, in-depth study of the *Shoshinge*. Also, I think it could



be said that the positive aspect of impermanence expressed itself both in his own ongoing efforts to educate himself, and in his generosity to others. As his personal history states, not only did he volunteer to read for elementary school kids, for many years up until his passing, and despite his not having much money himself, he had been financially sponsoring a young child from Ecuador through Children International.

In Buddhism, we say the positive aspect of impermanence manifests in us as an appreciative spirit. Rick himself once expressed this spirit in one of his blogs.

(Please see WEDNESDAY, page 4)



Betsuin News



Tanjo-e • Hatsumairi Service

Our Tanjo-e and Hatsumairi Service was held on Sunday, May 19th. Tanjo-e is a special service that celebrates the birth of Shinan Shōnin, the founder of our Jodo Shinshu Buddhist tradition. Shinran was born around this time near Kyoto, Japan in the year 1173.

At our Tanjo-e Service, we also observed Hatsumairi by welcoming Ren Fujii and Amie Yuki'i Ono into our Sangha. Congratulations to Ren, Amie, and their families.

Toban 2 provided a delicious chirashi lunch for all of the members to enjoy. Thank to you everyone who joined us for this special service.



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

Mrs. Mutsuko Morodomi (104)
May 19, 2019

Mrs. Fumiko Enoki (85)
May 20, 2019

Mr. George Masatoshi Tamayose (102)
May 22, 2019

Mr. Albert Toshio Ibaraki (89)
June 8, 2019

Namu Amida Butsu

Congratulations Class of 2019!

HIGH SCHOOL

RYAN MASARU HARADA
Arcadia High School
Pasadena City College

AKEMI NAGASHIKI
John Burroughs High School
University of California, Berkeley

MIDDLE SCHOOL

SEAN TAMURA
Hale Charter Academy
El Camino Real Charter High School

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

COLIN TAMURA
Pomelo Community Charter
Hale Charter Academy

PRESCHOOL

ERI KANAMARU
Koguma Youchien
Seaside Elementary School

ANDREW WEBB
Calvary Preschool
Arroyo Vista Elementary School



There will be no
DHARMA SCHOOL
in August! We will resume
classes in September!

Hoonko Service
Sunday, September 9th
10:00am

SAVE THE DATE! higashi craft fair

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 24TH

Calling all craft vendors! We're having another craft fair! On Sunday, November 24th, we will have our Higashi Craft Fair at the Betsuin! We have decided to try a new date and invite past and new vendors who make and sell craft items to join us! For more information, please contact the temple office at 213-626-4200 or email info@hhbt-la.org. Vendor applications will be due in late October.

August Services

After Obon, we will resume services with our Shotsuki Service on Sunday, August 4th. The Betsuin will be conducting Sunday Services each weekend throughout the month of August, however, there will be no Dharma School. We welcome you to join us for Sunday Services. Dharma School will resume in September.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1976, our current temple opened. That year, people made an offering of a dollar as they approached the altar to burn incense. Most of us still do. But that dollar has been eroded by inflation. Now, in 2019, to match the dollar from 1976, the offering would need to be \$4.42.

Everything is more expensive these days: a cup of coffee, a movie ticket, a dinner out. This is also true for everything the staff much purchase to keep the temple operating.

Some habits are hard to break, but this one can be easy. When you approach to *oshoko*, remember the cost of your last cup of coffee or movie ticket, and keep in mind that the temple, too, must keep up with inflation.

Thank you.

60 YEARS OF HIGASHI HONGANJI OBON FESTIVALS



MESSAGE FROM OUR OBON CO-CHAIRS

OBON season is upon us and we look forward to seeing dear friends, bumping into old friends, meeting new ones... and dancing with the memories of loved ones who are no longer with us.

Our wonderful ministerial staff will provide a memorable Hatsubon service, in memory of those who passed away since our last Obon.

Our Higashi family and friends will all come together to provide a wondrous celebration! This includes delicious food/drinks, desserts, fresh produce/flowers, plants/succulents, lively entertainment, games, and much more!

We are Higashi and we hope to see you on 7/27-28 from 1pm-9pm!

OBON RAFFLE

Please invite your family and friends to join us in participating in our Annual Obon Raffle drawing. We have many great prizes including our top six prizes and the Special Prize, which you need not be present to win. In addition to these great prizes, we have others donated by our members and friends in the community. We are requesting a donation of \$3.00 per raffle ticket or \$15.00 for a book of five tickets. Be sure to send in your raffle tickets so you can have a chance to win one of these great prizes. Extra raffle tickets are available in the temple office and throughout the weekend at the Obon Festival.

FIRST PRIZE

\$1,000 Cash

SECOND PRIZE

Disneyland Trip for 4

THIRD PRIZE

\$500 Cash

FOURTH PRIZE

Apple Watch

FIFTH PRIZE

\$200 Amazon Gift Card

SIXTH PRIZE

Apple iPad

(Courtesy of Tad Okumoto - Star Mazda)

SPECIAL PRIZE

\$500 Travel Certificate

(Courtesy of New Japan Travel Center)

AND MANY OTHER VALUABLE PRIZES!

**SATURDAY & SUNDAY
JULY 27TH & 28TH
1:00PM-9:00PM
HHBT-LA.ORG**

MANTO-E LANTERNS

Orders are now being accepted for Manto-e Lanterns for our Annual Obon Festival. If you would like an order form, they are available in the temple office. Please call to reserve your lantern at your earliest convenience. The cost is \$25 per lantern. Please let us know if you would like to pick up your lantern after the Obon Festival so that we can be sure to set yours aside. We will hold all reserved lanterns until September 1st.

OBON GIFT CERTIFICATES

Obon gift certificates can be purchased for \$5.00 each. They are great to give to friends and family to use over the weekend. Gift certificates can be used toward the purchase of food at our Obon only and are available through the temple office. If you would like your gift certificates mailed to you, please be sure that we receive your payment by Friday, July 19th.

HELP AT OBON!

we're looking for volunteers to fill various roles at our Obon Festival! If you would like to help out, please contact the office!

213-626-4200
info@hhbt-la.org

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!



YOUTH HOSHIDAN TOUR

Lauren Kashiwabara

Now that it has been an entire year since our Hoshidan trip to the Honzan, I've had quite a while to reflect. Outside of the obvious tons and tons of food that I got to eat on the trip and the touristy sightseeing necessities I had the opportunity to experience, I truly learned a lot. While at the Honzan, we participated in daily services (plural!), daily chores, and lectures, and I found all of these to be valuable.

The daily services were a lot different than what we experience weekly on Sundays in the Higashi Honganji Hondo in Los Angeles. The first clear difference is that sheer amount of services we attended. Since being in college, I have only really attended service a couple of times per year, and in Japan, we had at least two services per day. Next, the first thing I noticed when I walked in was the lack of chairs. Everyone sits on the ground and the entire service is done in Japanese with the resonant participation of the entire Sangha. None of these differences truly came as surprises. Through looking at our itinerary ahead of time and hearing stories, I expected this, but the stories could not possibly capture the actual experience of going to so many active services. I feel like I got to experience first-hand the togetherness and union of chanting as a part of a Sangha.

The daily chores included vacuuming, putting away our futons, and picking up any trash we could find. This was new to me in that I'm not one to vacuum or even make my bed on a daily basis. It wasn't difficult to get used to, and I somewhat enjoyed having dedicated

time to having a spotless room. This was only because everyone was involved in the cleaning. I, as an individual, did not have to do much at all. There were at least 15 people cleaning a relatively small area, so things got done quickly! This taught me that I can indeed clean with the help of other people.

The lectures were long and often. If we weren't in service or sightseeing, we were in lectures. They were difficult to sit through because of jetlag and the general exhaustion from fully packed days in a new country, but they were informative. The lessons taught me much more textbook things than I'm used to learning about Buddhism. For example, have you ever thought to breakdown and analyze the meaning of Namu Amida Butsu? Some of the material was quite dense, but I enjoyed being able to participate in active listening and discussion with people around my general age from different backgrounds and perspectives. That's something that everyone regardless of religion or political background can appreciate: the importance of genuine listening and conversation about topics regardless of differences in opinion. I found it valuable to have deep, respectful conversations with strangers, and being kind is the Buddhist lesson I think of most often in life outside of going to the temple.

Overall, I'm incredibly grateful for the experience of getting to travel across the world and more deeply experience my culture and religion and getting to see the Honzan and recognize that we practice the same chantings and ideals in America was incredible.



SUBMISSION DEADLINE!

Submissions for *The Way* are due the 10th of each month for the following month's issue. Articles and announcements for our October/November 2019 Issue are due September 10th, 2019. Submissions may be subject to printing restrictions and staff approval. Thank you and we look forward to hearing from you!



visit our website at
hhbt-la.org



facebook.com/hhbt.la



[@higashihonganjila](https://instagram.com/higashihonganjila)

LUMBINI CORNER

June is an exciting and sad month for us at Lumbini. We are very proud of our new kindergarten and preschool graduates who have learned and accomplished so much during their time with us, but we are sad that they'll be moving on to new schools. We'll miss all of our friends!

Be sure to come see us at Obon! We'll be performing on stage with the help of our friends from here and now and hope you'll come join in on the fun! We will be hosting the Bake Sale and some game booths, so come visit us there also and support Lumbini! See you at Obon!



LUMBINI CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER Class of 2019

KINDERGARTEN

Grant Soichiro Hashimoto
Christopher Tan
James Woo

PRESCHOOL

Arden Astor Cross
Titus Eteuati-Edwards
Kensi Mari Fujino
Reagan Anh Goodman
Liam Tomas Hernandez
Reiko Madison Nagata
Rie Maison Nagata
Julian Thor Saucedo
Eric Tan



*Congratulations
Lumbini Class of 2019!*

TAIKO BIG BARGAIN SALE DONATIONS NEEDED!

This year, TAIKOPROJECT is partnering with the temple to coordinate the **HIGASHI BIG BARGAIN SALE** on **SUNDAY, AUGUST 18 from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm** in the Social Hall. We will close for a half-hour break from 12:30 pm - 1:00 pm to prepare for the 50% SALE from 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm. This day coincides with the closing weekend of the Nisei Week festival.

Thank you to all temple members and friends for your generous donations in the past! While you are doing your Spring cleaning, please set aside your special items to donate for this event. A simple rule is to ask yourself if you would be happy to buy something you're thinking of donating.

For this first year, we are following guidelines that have been set in past years. The temple office will accept donations only during a 11-day period from **Thursday, August 1 to Sunday, August 11**.

This year, we will only accept **brand new clothing with tags attached**.

WE ARE HAPPY TO ACCEPT THE FOLLOWING ITEMS

ONLY CLEAN AND GENTLY USED ITEMS THAT ARE READY TO SELL

- China ware, Glassware
- Polished Silver items (no tarnished items)
- Kitchen utensils and clean small appliances, general housewares
- Decorative items

Vintage Japanese ceramic ware, lacquer ware, etc.

Kimono, yukata, obi, geta, zori, etc.

Jewelry, hair accessories

Office and school supplies - file folders, stationery, scissors, desk accessories

LP Records, DVDs, and CDs (only commercially made, no homemade items)

Fabric, aprons, scarves, gloves, new socks, towels, linens

Purses, wallets, luggage

Clean and complete games and puzzles (no missing parts)

Battery-powered items - flashlights, toys (please provide a fresh battery)

Homemade craft items

WE HAVE DECIDED NOT TO ACCEPT THE FOLLOWING ITEMS

Torn, chipped, broken or faded items

No cushions, pillows

Cosmetics, shoes, hats, etc.

Books

Cassettes and VHS tapes

Personalized items - "Happy 25th Anniversary Susan and Tom," etc.

All Food items

Baby items (clothing, car seats, strollers, high chairs, mattresses, etc.)

Large items such as furniture - chairs, tables, large pictures or artwork etc.

Large sport items - bicycles, skis, golf clubs, etc.

Electronic items - computers, printers, tele-

phones, DVD players, etc.

Please wrap breakable items and pack sets of cups, glasses, mugs, plates in the same box. Please pack small items (necklaces, bracelets, earrings, keychains) in separate bags or envelopes to prevent tangling or loss.

The committee does not have the time nor the manpower to wash or clean items for sale, so please bring in "ready to sell" condition.

Again, donations may be brought to the temple office during the 11-day period from Thursday, August 1 to Sunday, August 11. After August 11, we cannot accept any more items. Now is the perfect time to look through your homes and start packing items to set aside to bring to the temple.

Because of limited storage space, we are requesting that all donations be brought in a box with a top so that it can be stacked. Please label "BIG BARGAIN SALE" or "BBS" on the front of all donations so we will find them when we go to price and organize your donations. This will be from Thursday, August 8 to Thursday, August 15.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call TAIKOPROJECT's leader Bryan Yamami at (213)268-4011. And, wish us luck in our first year coordinating the Big Bargain Sale!

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!!!

LITTLE TOKYO SPARKLE

On May 18, 2019 Higashi Sangha members, friends and community volunteers joined members of local organizations, businesses, churches and Temples to clean-up the sidewalks/windows of Little Tokyo. Event organizers Steve and Patty Nagano projected that over 300 volunteered to clean the sidewalks and windows of Little Tokyo.



Our Higashi group was assigned to clean Little Tokyo "BLOCK G" whose borders were Second St. on the north, and Third St. on the south. Volunteers worked hard to clean the sidewalks, planters and scrape off years of "ground in" gum on the walkways. Poles and utility boxes required extra effort to scrape off layers of slap tags and stickers. City workers followed the volunteers and re-painted the utility poles.

Our group remarked how great it was to meet and work alongside other community members. In preparation for the event, Elaine Harada and Kathy Ikeda spent weeks soliciting donations from merchants, picking up donations and then helped to coordinate the community lunch held at JACCC.

As has been reported before, the genesis for this 4th Sparkle was to honor the community service legacy of the late Nancy Kikuchi. Nancy passed away in September 2014 and her funeral service was held at Higashi.

Nancy Kikuchi was the consum-



mate community volunteer. She led by example. Upon completion of the clean-up volunteers gathered at 1st and Central to honor Nancy's legacy and to re-dedicate the Little Tokyo Mural which was repaired after it was defaced by vandals last year.

On behalf of the committee, thank you all for your efforts!!!

In gassho,
Team Higashi
ABA

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>

OPEN YEAR ROUND:

MONDAY through FRIDAY

7:30am to 6:00pm

closed national holidays



(WEDNESDAY, cont. from page 1)

Here, in one of his posts, he discusses the help he is receiving from the Salvation Army while dealing with alcoholism: "When the average person thinks of the Salvation Army, Christmas kettles and temperance movements may come to mind. Any officer though, when asked, will say that the Army's real mission is expressed in their compassionate words and actions. This the Army accomplishes with much enthusiasm and vigor, participating in a wide variety of social programs ranging from disaster relief, to locating missing persons, providing care for the infirm, and maintaining drug and alcohol rehabilitation centers for indigent men and women in many urban and rural locations around the globe. "Here, within one of these drug and alcohol rehabilitation centers, I personally regard the Salvation Army itself with much affection and gratitude, for the real chance it provided to me, and those addicts who come to it seeking help, to find for themselves a new and wonderful way of life. I also feel nothing but love and respect for all the officers, staff, beneficiaries, and civilians alike, myself included, no matter what silly things we may do." -Rick Surwillo

In closing, I want to express my appreciation for the support from the WNSC for this memorial service, and especially the generous contributions of Ana Nakano-Sanchez for the beautiful flowers, and Tom Fukuman and Kathy Ikeda for the *osonae* (altar offerings). Also, I want to thank all the WNSC for participating in the engaging discussion that followed Rick's service.

This gathering itself arose from the impermanent flow of our collective causes and conditions as the WNSC. And as Rick himself seems to be teaching us, a key to our happiness is joining with others and listening to and sharing this dharma together.

