

# HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE

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Los Angeles, CA 90013  
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# The Way

Vol. 75 | No. 5  
July 2023

HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE | LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

## TEMPLE SCHEDULE

### JULY

|             |                                                             |
|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2           | No Service                                                  |
| 9 10:00 am  | Shotsuki Service                                            |
| 16 10:00 am | Family Service/Pet Memorial Service                         |
| 22          | LABCC Camp (to 7/29)                                        |
| 23 10:00 am | Obon/Hatsubon Service                                       |
| 29 12:30 PM | OBON at the Ranch<br>(tickets must be purchased in advance) |
| 30          | No Service                                                  |

### AUGUST

|            |                  |
|------------|------------------|
| 6 10:00 am | Shotsuki Service |
| 13         | No Service       |
| 20         | No Service       |
| 27         | No Service       |

### SEPTEMBER

|             |                        |
|-------------|------------------------|
| 3           | No Service - Labor Day |
| 10 10:00 am | Shotsuki Service       |
| 17 10:00 am | Autumn Ohigan Service  |
| 17 1:00 pm  | Autumn Seminar         |

### 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

higashi honganji  
**OBON**  
RANCH EDITION

SATURDAY, JULY 29 | TICKETS REQUIRED  
[HHBT-LA.SQUARE.SITE/OBON2023](https://www.hhbt-la.square.site/obon2023)

**OBON/HATSUBON  
SERVICE**

SUNDAY, JULY 23 | 10 AM | HHBT

SEE UPDATES ON PAGE 4!



# The Way



Volume 75 | Number 4 | June 2023

HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE • LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

## Charging Towards the Great Change

Rev. Frederick Brenion

It's amazing when you get it! Some get it early. Some get it late. There is a simple truth though, that it's better to get it late than never!

What's the "It"? The Dharma of course! Particularly the Dharma about change. Change, change, and more change.

The first change none of us remembers. The change from nothing to something. Conception. And massive change ensued as your body was formed, brain constructed, life systems putting into place. Your mind? We know some kind of awareness develops, very minimal at first, but sounds could be sensed – that's why one's mother's voice during pregnancy engenders reactions. Then... the Big Change. Birth! From 'oceanic bliss,' floating, nurturing, one is ripped out into a world of gravity, bright lights, and a rude slap on the rear. Eyes that never saw light before, are out of focus, searching for an image, conveyed by evolutionary selection, of a smiling face, then food arrives. And so the story of our lives begins.

Toddlerhood, childhood, learning a language, social skills, crawling, walking, lots of change going on and on. Then life gets really confusing and puberty hits, and you simply want to hit back. More changes, lots and lots more to learn. Then changes that lead to leading your own life – perhaps going to college, work, serious relationships. Maybe marriage and parenthood is in the mix. Really, are any of us really ready for any of this? But here we are, battered, bloodied, and bruised by life.

Some of us get through our life's work. I retired some years ago and just before that process I became a Buddhist minister! Didn't see that one coming! There are changes I had never thought of.

And now...other changes, my

parents are gone, brother gone. Friends I've treasured are gone or going. I once joked among my old circle that I would likely be the last one standing. That just might happen. I should be careful what I wish for....

But now a greater change of sorts, that may help me to approach what lies ahead. Last year June, my feet tangled together as I stepped up to a sidewalk. I toppled fast and faceplanted on the pavement with full force. Thankfully I did not break my nose, teeth, or glasses, but it was the hardest head blow I have ever experienced. Left me dazed, shocked, and bewildered. I now keep a cane nearby for treacherous steps and sidewalk cracks. I look for sidewalk ramps. I am at an age where it is so easy to fall. I know so many now who have had their hips and knees replaced! Then, in July, my wife got a call from our HMO that they were resuming physicals, as COVID was easing up. She signed me up and I then discovered I had now become full-scale type 2 diabetic. My blood sugar levels were in the high danger range. I studied, attended classes, and made immediate necessary changes in my diet and activities. What was surprising was that this was not hard to do! It was absurdly simple. My blood-sugar numbers plummeted immediately and now feeling better! This is now to be part of my life-routine. When reality hits, one should listen. On top of all this I turned 70 the following August.

I never thought I would reach 70. Not sure what I thought. With all that happened in such a short time my sense of mortality, which has been with me since late childhood is now ever more present. In short, what we call "The Great Change," which is death, is no longer below the horizon. I have a sense of being at a great dance and my new partner

has entered and we are slowly circling around the floor till we shall meet at the center. A nice imagery. It's from a beautiful story I read called "Come, Lady Death!" by Peter Beagle. An elderly matron, famous for her parties decides to hold the greatest one possible and invites Death to it And Death appears as a lovely young lady, and everyone is filled with wonder and fear. For me I thought this must surely be the right face. Perhaps that one's end should not be feared but embraced. Not that I am in any hurry! But perhaps one can learn to appreciate the inevitable as it may be this that puts everything into perspective.

Most would be depressed by this. I ought to be, and maybe I'm lying to myself. But in the midst of all this I find now, more than ever that the teachings of the Dharma are really, really, really true, and that they are really for me! I'm finding more a delight with life and with living, but above all not to cling. I find that the Dharma, which has often been more intellectual for me is becoming more real, and intimate. That it's fitting me, and fitting me for whatever my conclusion might be. In short I'm becoming somewhat more aware. That's a good thing. I'm realizing that all my life has been a preparation just for this. To be all right with myself as I am. Mortal, fallible, extra-silly, enough to be truly called a bombu.

Of course, I might feel quite differently tomorrow, or next year. Who knows, I might make it into my 80s. I'll be more surprised if I make it to the 90s.

(Please see *CHANGE*, page 7)

**PLEASE CONSIDER DONATING  
TO HIGASHI HONGANJI  
BUDDHIST TEMPLE AT  
[HHBT-LA.ORG](http://HHBT-LA.ORG)**



# Betsuin News



## LITTLE TOKYO SPARKLE

On May 20, 2023 Higashi members and friends joined members of local non-profits, businesses, temples and churches to conduct the 5<sup>th</sup> annual "Sparkle" community clean-up of Little Tokyo. Organizers Steve Nagano and Brian Kito projected that over 360+ volunteers tuned out, the largest group ever! Steve said they did not anticipate the 200 unregistered volunteer walk-ups that day.

(Please see **SPARKLE**, page 7)

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

Mr. Norito Hasegawa (82)  
May 7, 2023

Mrs. Shigeko Joann Fujitani (79)  
May 27, 2023

Mrs. Alice Yasuye Ibaraki (99)  
June 2, 2023

Namu Amida Butsu



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



facebook.com/hhbt.la



@higashihonganjila

## What it Means to be a Human Being: Our Trip to Kyoto for the 850th/800th Celebration Part 2

Jason Wong

*This article is a continuation from an article by the same title in the June issue of The Way. Please refer to that issue for the first half of this article.*

*Sunday, April 23*

At this point, we sadly said goodbye to several participants who left to return to the United States or to visit different areas of Japan.

Around 25 remaining members of the group boarded the bus to travel along the West Coast of Japan. Following lunch at the seaside resort area of the Tojinbo Cliffs, we arrived at the Yoshizaki Betsuin. On the day we arrived, a Renny scroll carried by a contingent of ministers and followers escorting the scroll on foot all the way from the Honzan in Kyoto was scheduled to arrive that afternoon. Over one hundred miles from Kyoto to Yoshizaki, we learned that Rev. Goto once participated in walking on this pilgrimage. Unfortunately, we were not able to stay to see the occasion of the scroll's arrival.

The rest of the afternoon was spent at the Kanazawa Betsuin visiting with Rev. Kigoshi. At 93, he was still happy to say a few words and entertain us with a story about learning English and he even sang us the first song he learned upon coming to America. Leslie had an old photo which we showed to him and his daughter and it was a joy to see his eyes light up seeing himself with the LA Betsuin Jr. YBA in 1958. He was a young man of 38 in the picture!

*Monday, April 24*

Continuing to visit historical Jodo Shinshu sites, we visited Oyashirazu Cliff and Kota-ga-hama, the landing point of Shinran Shonin following his exile from Kyoto, as well as the sites of the Takenouchi hut and Takegahana hut, where Shinran lived during his

exile in the area.

During each of our bus trips between locations, Rev. Hasegawa and Rev. Yamada would entertain us with stories and lectures on the various sites of our tour.

We ended the day at the Eshin-no-sato museum. A relatively new museum focused on the wife of Shinran, it housed a small gallery of scrolls outlining the history of her and her impact on her husband and Jodo Shinshu followers. The minister who gave us a tour had recently been assigned to this location and was working hard to promote the new museum and hoped news would spread of its existence.

*Tuesday, April 25*

After a short bus ride to the outskirts of Niigata, where we had stayed the previous night, we arrived at Gonen-ji. A small family temple presided over by Rev. Hosokawa. To many of you readers, you would know him as Rev. Mishima. He charmed the group with his many stories of his time in America and later Australia and New Zealand. Since the temple was undergoing restoration work, he had set aside a small pile of the new roof tiles and invited each of us to inscribe the underside of a tile with a personal message that would then form part of the new temple rooftop. He then treated all of the group to tea and snacks and gifted us nail trimmers from the Seki region of Japan, known for its superior bladework.

Following lunch, we stopped in the town of Obuse. A quiet little mountain village famous for its chestnuts and a Katsushika Hokusai museum. While taking a quick walking tour of the area, our guide pointed out that the town has a unique program called "My Garden" where visitors are free to explore some of the residents and restaurants private

(Please see **KYOTO**, page 3)



## CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES!



**AKEMI NAGASHIKI**

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA,  
BERKELEY

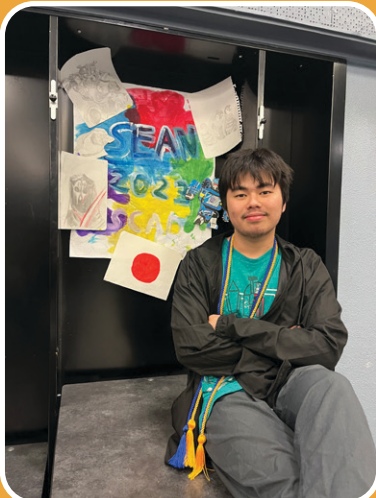
*Bachelor of Arts, Art Practice  
Minors in Electrical Engineering  
& Computer Science  
Interning for Pixar Animation Studios*



**SYDNEY SASAKI**

LA SALLE COLLEGE PREPARATORY

*Magna Cum Laude  
Attending Occidental College &  
Committed to play women's tennis*



**SEAN KEITARO TAMURA**

EL CAMINO REAL CHARTER  
HIGH SCHOOL

*Attending Savannah College of  
Art and Design*

(KYOTO, cont. from page 2)

gardens. Having been cultivated in the region for over 600 years, chestnuts were featured heavily in the shops. Most of the group, by this point well versed in how delicious Japanese soft serve ice cream is, enjoyed a chestnut ice cream following our tour of the Hokusai museum. Hokusai is famous for his woodblock print "The Great Wave off Kanagawa". In addition to an outstanding display on how he created this historic picture, the museum also housed his famous dragon on the ceiling of the Higashimachi festival float. Although our stay was brief in Obuse, it made an outsized impression on the two of us.

Already in the Nagano prefecture, we arrived in Nagano city that afternoon with a little time to shop and relax before dinner.

Wednesday, April 26

While a travel day for the most part, the morning visit at Zenkoji was a tremendous finish to our temple visits of the tour. While we had mainly focused on temples and sites associated with Shinran and Jodo Shinshu, Zenkoji temple

(Please see KYOTO, page 7)

## LUMBINI CORNER

Each year, Lumbini has adapted to new routines for the school year. Many of the covid-19 protocols that were put into place in 2020 have now been changed and the students and teachers have been doing well. We are grateful to be able to have a graduation ceremony to celebrate our students this year. This July, 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!

If you are interested in enrolling a child between the ages of 2½ to 5 years of age in Lumbini's program, please contact the Lumbini office at 213-680-2976.

## LUMBINI CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

### Class of 2023

### KINDERGARTEN

Mathilda Dubko

Sophie Seay

Sophia Woods

Nolan Le

### PRESCHOOL

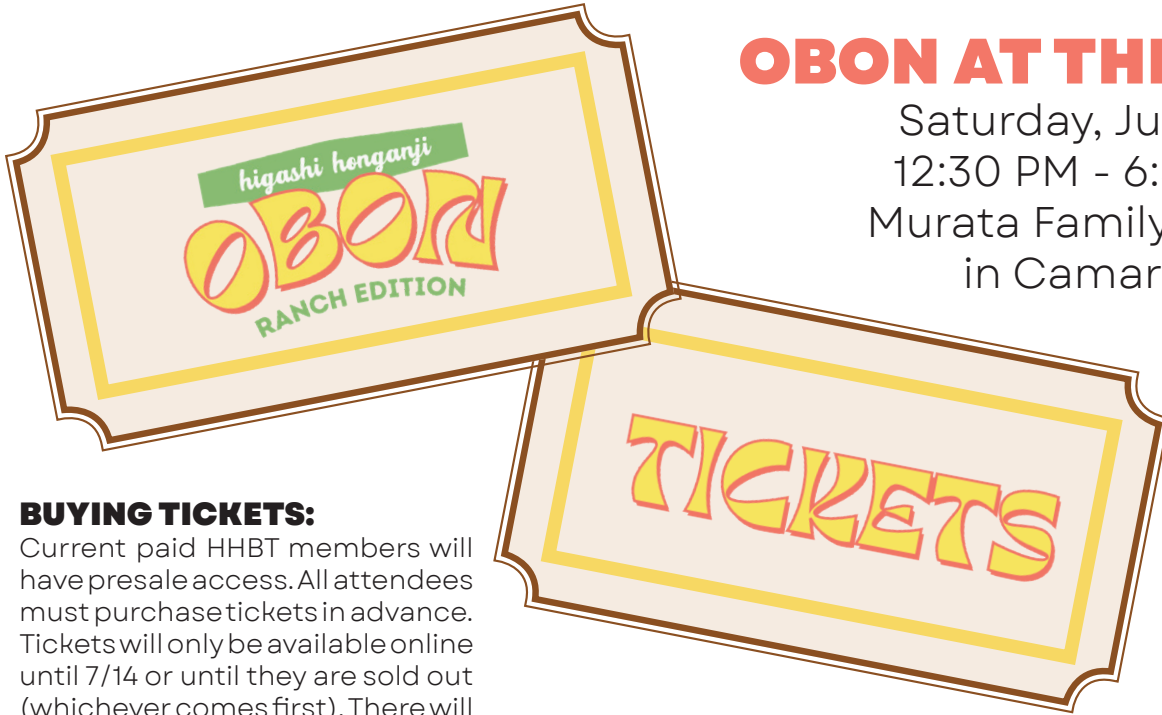
Yoshia Hamada

*Congratulations  
Lumbini CDC  
Class of 2023!*



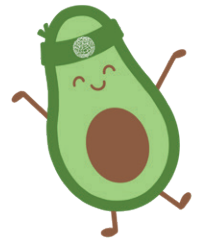
## OBON AT THE RANCH

Saturday, July 29<sup>th</sup>  
12:30 PM - 6:30 PM  
Murata Family Ranch  
in Camarillo



### BUYING TICKETS:

Current paid HHBT members will have presale access. All attendees must purchase tickets in advance. Tickets will only be available online until 7/14 or until they are sold out (whichever comes first). There will be no tickets sold at the door.



### \$30 ADULT TICKET

- ADMISSION
- HHBT OBON SPECIALTY: CHICKEN TERIYAKI & TRI TIP BBQ MEAL
- RAFFLE TICKET (\$5)
- DESSERT

ADMISSION INCLUDES:  
1PM - FARM TOUR  
3 PM & 5:30 PM  
BON ODORI

FEATURING ENTERTAINMENT BY  
HAPPYFUNSMILE, HEREANDNOW,  
& HIGASHI TAIKO GROUPS

### \$15 CHILD TICKET

- FOR CHILDREN 10 & UNDER
- ADMISSION
  - CHILI RICE OR HOT DOG
  - SHAVED ICE
  - \$3 GAME TICKETS

### & MORE!

BEER, DRINKS, SHAVED ICE,  
FARMER'S MARKET, FLOWERS,  
BAKE SALE, GAMES, LIMITED  
HIGASHI CAFE MENU, &  
PLANT WORKSHOP



### SUGGESTIONS:

Please wear closed-toeshoes and ranch-appropriate attire, HHBT gear (Obon t-shirt, happi, hat!). We do NOT recommend wearing yukata (there will not be a place to change). Bring your sunscreen and a hat! And a portable folding chair if you'd like.

**order your OBON at the RANCH tickets!**

[hhbt-la.square.site/obon2023](http://hhbt-la.square.site/obon2023)

higashi honganji

# OBON

RANCH EDITION

## OBON/HATSUBON SERVICE

**Sunday, July 23<sup>rd</sup>**  
**10 AM | HHBT**

Our Obon/Hatsubon Service will be held in person at the temple on Sunday, July 23<sup>rd</sup> at 10 am to honor those who have passed away in the past year. The service will also be streamed online for anyone who is unable to attend in person.

## OBON DONOR LEVELS

**\$1,000** HAPPI donor



**\$500** TAIKO donor



**\$250** KURIMANJU donor



**\$100** SHAVED ICE donor



**\$50** LEMONADE donor



**\$25** AVOCADO donor



We appreciate your donations of any amount. Donations may be made on our Obon website ([hhbt-la.square.site/obon2023](http://hhbt-la.square.site/obon2023)) or directly to the temple. Thank you!

**become an obon sponsor!**

[hhbt-la.square.site/obon2023](http://hhbt-la.square.site/obon2023)



## OBON T-SHIRTS

We will be selling our Obon at the Ranch t-shirts for pickup. The price will be \$20 per shirt in adult sizes only. Shirts can be ordered online at [hhbt-la.square.site/obon2023](http://hhbt-la.square.site/obon2023) in July for pick up at the temple only.

Shirt appearance may differ slightly from images below.



## MANTO-E

We will not have manto-e lanterns available this year. Memory tags will be offered at Obon at the Ranch.

## STAY UPDATED!

More information about our 2023 Obon events is coming soon! Stay updated by signing up for our email list! If you are not already on our list, please contact us at [info@hhbt-la.org](mailto:info@hhbt-la.org) to be added or visit our website or Facebook page to sign up.

## OBON RAFFLE

Raffle tickets are coming soon! Our annual Obon raffle is returning! Tickets will be sent by mail or available in the temple office and at Obon at the Ranch. We gratefully appreciate your donation of \$5 per ticket. We appreciate your support!

### 1<sup>st</sup> Prize

\$1,000 Cash

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize

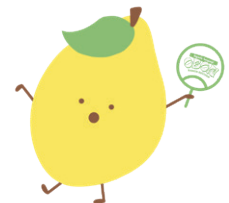
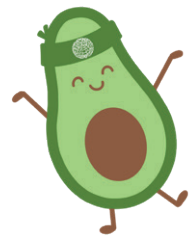
4 Tickets to Universal Studios

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize

\$500 Cash

### 4<sup>th</sup> Prize

Apple iPad



**Order your OBON at the RANCH t-shirts!**

[hhbt-la.square.site/obon2023](http://hhbt-la.square.site/obon2023)

(KYOTO, cont. from page 3)

is considered a major Buddhist destination and a very important pilgrimage destination in general. That said, there was still a small Shinran tie in that was explained to us by our guide. Shinran lived for a time in a house at the bottom of the main gate to the temple complex. With the third largest temple hall in all of Japan, Zenkoji is designated as a national treasure and a masterpiece of Buddhist architecture. I had never seen a temple with such huge thatched roofs. It also houses Japan's oldest Buddhist statue hidden from view. Only a replica is shown publicly, and then only every six years for a few weeks' time.

With our trip winding down, we returned to the train station to board our Shinkansen train to Tokyo. With the Shinkansen's reputation for timeliness, our guide, Jun and Rev. Ken worked to make sure our group was together and ready to disembark when we arrived in Tokyo as the train literally only stays in the station for a couple minutes. Arriving to our first real downpour of the trip, we were forced to skip Asakusa and a final group favorite activity of shopping, opting for a bit of rest before our final meal together.

Boarding the bus to a secret location, we arrived in what seemed like an ordinary warehouse district, but upon exiting the elevator, we were treated to a skyline view of Tokyo harbor. Over dinner, everyone exchanged their goodbyes, posed for final pictures, and reminisced over the fond memories we had developed during the trip.

So, what did we learn about being human beings while on this trip? Once home and somewhat recovered from our jetlag, we recalled the chanting of the Shoshinge and the Wasans as a unique and inspiring physical demonstration of a group acting in unity and faith. We reflected on the kindness of people in our group as well as the many strangers looking out for and helping us as we navigated our way through a foreign country. And deeper appreciation of our ministers and their patience and willingness to answer our questions and guide us. And finally in the friendships we made, who by the end of the trip felt like family.



(SPARKLE, cont. from page 2)

City employees assisted by repainting light poles and power washing the sidewalks. Apparently this was a City wide effort because other API communities in the Los Angeles core also conducted clean-ups. CD-14 also authorized "relaxed parking" enforcement for Sparkle.

Of course, many of us are always reminded of the community service legacy of Nancy Kikuchi, the consummate Little Tokyo volunteer. This was a day to honor Nancy! All agreed it was a very productive and rewarding day!

Thanks to HHBT and Frank Edwards, Steel Security, for providing "complimentary" secured parking. We would also like to acknowledge Elaine Harada, Kathy Ikeda, and Elaine Barbod for soliciting donations for Little Tokyo Public Safety and the raffle. Thanks to Janet Ito for her donation of lunch bags and Kamryn Ikeda for finalizing the donor page and the last minute acknowledgments.

Thanks to our Higashi Team members and friends who worked hard to clean the sidewalks and planters and scrape off years of "ground in" gum and sediment on the sidewalks.

We really appreciated the cleaning tools donated by Emily Matsumura and Elaine Harada.

All agreed it was a very productive and rewarding day!

TEAM HIGASHI



(Again... sorry, a number of our volunteers missed the photo. Not pictured: Grace, Jen, and Laura Yamashiro, Frank Edwards, Robert Rubalcava, Javey and Kamryn)

(CHANGE, cont. from page 1)

But right now, this is also a gift of really appreciating what it means to be accepted by Amida Buddha's compassion. It is one thing to realize that I have always been accepted. But I am seeing more now that I will be accepted not just in life but at death and in death as well. What that means I have no idea, but it feels true. Ought to be true. The Great Change is a Completion. That should be something to comfort and appreciate. In being accepted I must accept the acceptance, and through this to truly accept myself. I think that is the great mystery of Namu Amida Butsu – not that I am asking for refuge, and I do, but that I have always been given refuge, just didn't know it. Our true lives as Jodo Shinshu are lives lived in refuge. A refuge that embraces change, even the Great Change.

So I should not worry, though I will, because I am a bombu. I'm feeling all right that I can be, dare I say it, "old"? Elderly? Well, I would settle for being an Elder! That has panache to it. It is so odd, but I'm feeling feelings I had in my youth of simply just being, just marveling at the world around me.

And maybe, just maybe, there is something about aging that makes Buddhism, and makes Jodo Shinshu ever so much more meaningful, and more real. So all you Young'uns take note! Many of you may stand someday where I stand now. Listen to these lines from a poet, Robert Browning, who wrote,

"Come grow old along with me!  
The best is yet to be,  
The last of life,  
for which the first was made..."

