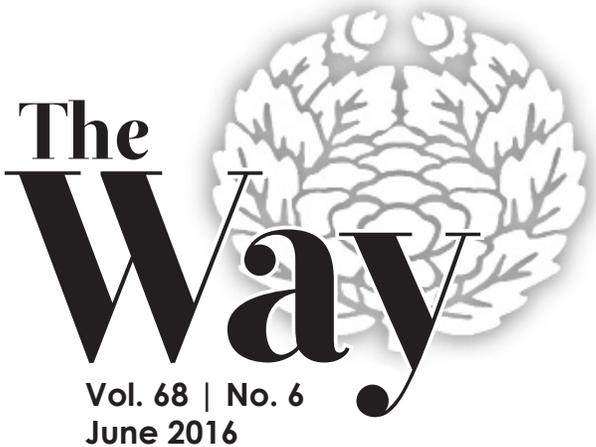


HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE

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Los Angeles, CA 90013
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HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE | LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

**TEMPLE
SCHEDULE**

JULY

- 10 10:00am Shotsuki Service
- 17 10:00am **Obon Family Service & Pet Memorial Service**
- 24 10:00am Sunday Service
Discussion Group
- 30 1:00pm **OBON FESTIVAL**
LABCC Camp to 8/6
- 31 1:00pm **OBON FESTIVAL**
- 31 11:00am Obon/Hatsubon Service

AUGUST

- 7 10:00am Shotsuki Service
- 14 10:00am Sunday Service
- 21 10:00am Sunday Service
- 27~28 **12TH WORLD DOBO GATHERING**

SEPTEMBER

- 4 No Service - Labor Day Holiday

**OBON
2016**

WILL BE HERE BEFORE YOU KNOW IT!

SAVE THE DATE
saturday & sunday
july 30th & 31st



The Way

Volume 68 | Number 6 | June 2016



HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE • LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

Takagi Kenmyo and the Nenbutsu of Peace His Mission for our Future - Part I

Rev. Frederick

Throughout the world, there have been commemorations of the Great War, World War I. It began in August 1914. Then people believed it would only last a few weeks. It continued until November 11, 1918. The repercussions of that war would lead to the Second World War, the Cold War, Korea, Vietnam, and the ever-ongoing fiascos of the Middle East. It was supposed to be the war to end all wars. Almost two months before the world was to launch itself into the ongoing nightmare that has been much of the twentieth century, a quiet voice for peace ended his life in a prison cell in Japan. He was our voice, from our tradition, silenced by his state and a compliant Honzan. His death was the first fruits of what comes when the Dharma is put second, and political expediency is put first. His name was Takagi Kenmyo.

Kenmyo challenged his society, government, and Honzan to think and act clearly in living out Shinran's teachings in terms of societal issues and for opposition to war. He was framed by his government for a crime in order to silence him, sentenced to death, which was then commuted to a life sentence, and continuously denied parole. Our Honzan defrocked and excommunicated him, warning others to avoid his example. Three years later, he found out that his wife had been thrown out of his temple into poverty, and his daughter sold into sexual slavery. His life shattered beyond all hope, on June 24, 1914, he took "the matter of his life into his own hands," the only matter that was allowed him; all because he strove to follow our Shonin, Shinran. Only in our own time has his reputation been cleared and his priesthood posthumously restored. His life and teachings are now held up as an exemplar to everyone in our tradition.

In our first talk together (The Way -

Aug. '14) on Takagi Kenmyo, we looked to the past, commemorating the 100th anniversary of his passing, and of his ministry which was dedicated to living out the implications of the Primal Vow. His life, though it ended in catastrophe, is a call for us to build on his life and teachings. The second talk (The Way - Dec. '15) brought us to the present as the message of Takagi Kenmyo points to our need for an engaged Shinshu approach to our world, building on a Buddhism that incorporates a full social dimension in order to come to its full stature. Now we conclude this trilogy by looking at what underlies Kenmyo's deepest aspirations, which he received from our Shinshu teachings and strove to implement. Aspirations that called for a true society founded on the Primal Vow, calling for a future that he was denied to see, but which calls us to embrace, live, and implement today. There are many possible futures for us all, but Kenmyo points to a future whose origins lies in the Beginningless Beginning underlying all possibilities with the Primal Vow.

How did this aspiration take birth in Kenmyo Sensei? I believe that it happened in 1880 when, receiving tokudo ordination, he was given the priestly name of "Kenmyo." The two kanji characters for his name appear at the start of two consecutive lines in the Shonshinge: "Ken daisho kose shoi, Myo nyorai honzei o ki - Reveal the true purpose of the Buddha's appearance. Clarify that Amida's Primal Vow responds to our need." This was our Honzan's gift to him, the aspiration that he would reveal and clarify that Amida's Primal Vow responds to our deepest needs. It was in this spirit that as his ministry progressed he had to face issues within himself and his society.

The issues Kenmyo faced, and

which we still face today, were those of discrimination and war. The Josenji Temple that he was assigned to was filled with burakumin - people who were discriminated against because they did the work that no one else would touch. They were outcasts, the lowest rungs of society. In serving them he had to face his own bigotries and realized they were in conflict with the teachings of the Dharma. Kenmyo came to realize the seriousness of what it meant that all are fellow travelers on the path. The import of the Primal Vow took hold of him. For Kenmyo, it was now revealed and clarified that the meaning of Shinran's life and teachings is for all without discrimination. He began to find ways to reach out to his people. However, his society had different plans for Kenmyo.

The Russo-Japanese war was in process. The government ordered all sects to pray for victory and to support the war effort with contributions. As part of the war effort, prostitution was legalized as a means to meet the needs of the armed services and of the government. It was obvious that burakumin women would be expected to serve in that respect. It was becoming obvious to Kenmyo that the issues of war and justice were tied together. In our own time, the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. made the same connection the year before he was martyred and suffered revilement for doing so. King was walking the path that Kenmyo trod.

In order to meet the needs of his people, Kenmyo studied, thought, met with others who were seeing what he saw, and wanted to do something as he did. He began to work out his mind on paper. A paper he did not publish, as fate soon overtook him, but which condemned him in the eyes of church and state when it was discovered. Kept

(Please see TAKAGI KENMYO, page 3)



Betsuin News



Hanamatsuri Craft Fair

The temple hosted a Hanamatsuri Craft Fair on Sunday April 24th and raised money for youth programs and temple maintenance. We are grateful to our many temple friends and volunteers who helped out at the event by setting up on Saturday, working our various tables on Sunday, and cleaning up after the event. Several of our members hosted vendor tables at the Craft Fair. Among them were Shari Sato with Origami Owl jewelry, Janet & Kisa Ito with kisanoreen jewelry. Hisako Koga from West Covina also joined us as a vendor with HSK Creations. We were happy to support our many creative members and appreciate them all coming out with their crafts and other items.

This year, the youth groups also brought back their Bake Sale! Jr. YBA, Sangha Teens, and Dharma School members donated baked goodies to sell and helped work the table as well.

Special thanks to Steve Murata for his donation of avocados and lemons and Glen Hasegawa for his donation of raspberries. Special thanks also to Kisanoreen, Kazuo Ota, Susielaine Sweets and HSK Creations for generously donating a portion of their proceeds to the temple.

Thank you to everyone who helped make the fair possible and came out and supported the event! We look forward to seeing you at our next temple fundraiser!

Mother's Day Breakfast & Family Service

We had a very fun Mother's Day Breakfast on Sunday, May 8th. Many members came early in the morning to cook breakfast for all of the mothers and their families. We enjoyed a delicious selection of waffles, fried rice, hash browns, sausage, eggs, strawberries, yogurt, orange juice, and coffee. All the meals were served warm and fresh and the social hall was full of smiles and happy bellies.

During the service, Sylvia Ena shared a very special Mother's Day message. She talked about her experiences as a mother.

Thank you to everyone who helped cook and serve Mother's Day breakfast! We received support from several of our organizations, including ABA and YABA. Special thanks to Elaine Harada and David Ikeda for making sure everything was ready for Sunday! Thank you to the Murata Family for their donation of fresh berries and avocados. We appreciate everyone's support!





HANAMATSURI CRAFT FAIR

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

Mr. Takao Furumoto (95)
April 16, 2016

Mrs. Shigeko Kishimoto (101)
April 25, 2016

Mr. Takeo Nishihara (89)
June 2, 2016

Namu Amida Butsu

SUBMISSION DEADLINE!

Submissions for *The Way* are due the 10th of each month for the following month's issue. Articles and announcements for our August Issue are due July 10th, 2016. Submissions may be subject to printing restrictions and staff approval. Thank you and we look forward to hearing from you!

visit our website at
www.hhbt-la.org

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

(TAKAGI KENMYO, con't. from page 1)

hidden by the powers that be, perhaps so as not to tempt other ministers to follow too closely the path of Shinran, it was only rediscovered in recent times, and led to his posthumous restoration. He called it "Yo ga shakaishugi" or "My Socialism." It was, to my knowledge, the first work in modern Buddhist history laying out a vision of Buddhist Socialism. Within its heart, Kenmyo Sensei enshrined the Nenbutsu of Peace, his understanding of what is the import of the Pure Land.

Consider these garlands of thoughts from Kenmyo Sensei:

"I do not feel that socialism is a theory, ... but I think socialism is the first step. ... I think we need to reform the social system rapidly and change the social structure completely from the ground up. ... I consider socialism to be related much more deeply to religion than to politics. In proceeding to

reform society, we have to, first of all, begin from our own spirituality. ... What, then, do I mean, ... It is Namu Amida Butsu. ... it is truly the saving voice of the Buddha, which shines like a light in a dark night, protecting us with absolute equality. Even though it is working to provide peace and comfort to intellectuals, scholars, government officials and the wealthy, Amida's main concern is with the common people. Namu Amida Butsu is the mighty voice that grants happiness and comfort to ignorant men and women. ... Namu Amida Butsu is the voice calling on us not to worry ... and to have no fear because he will protect us. Ah! It's Namu Amida Butsu that gives us strength and life!

"It is truly the absolute transcendental compassion. It is the Buddha's universal love. We can only be appalled by those who delight in hearing that Namu Amida Butsu is a command to

killing. ... In short, I think that Namu Amida Butsu refers to peace and comfort as well as salvation and happiness provided equally to all. How can we misunderstand this Namu Amida Butsu to be a command to subjugate the hated enemy?

"Sakyamuni. Each of his words and phrases reflects his theory of individualism. But what about his life? Casting away his royal rank, he became a mendicant monk, all for the purpose of removing suffering from and giving happiness to people. He spent his entire life with only three robes and a begging bowl, and died ... Wasn't he a great socialist of the spiritual realm? He thought little of social rank or status...



(To be continued in next issue of *The Way*)

57TH ANNUAL OBON FESTIVAL

The Higashi Honganji Buddhist Temple and the 2016 Obon Festival Committee would like to invite all members and friends of our Betsuin to join in the 57th Annual Obon Festival. This year's celebration will be on Saturday and Sunday, July 30 and 31 from 1:00 to 9:00pm.

This Buddhist Celebration is a traditional religious observance that honors our ancestors. Our temple grounds will be decorated with hundreds of Manto-e lanterns for the two-day festivities.

The Obon Hatsubon (First Obon) Service will be held on Sunday, July 31 at 11:00am. The traditional Manto-e Services will be held outside at 6:00pm on both Saturday and Sunday.

The festival will begin at 1:00pm. Come enjoy a variety of ethnic

foods such as sushi, udon, chicken and beef teriyaki, chili rice, tamales, kurimanju, and shave ice, as well as hamburgers, hot dogs, corn, and baked desserts. There will be plenty of food for everyone to enjoy during all of the festivities.

Festival-goers of all ages can enjoy games, Bingo, and fresh fruits, vegetables, plants, and cut flowers at the Farmer's Market.

There will also be plenty of entertainment with cultural performances throughout the festival. The program will include taiko, Japanese dance, musical performances, and much more. The Ogasawara Ryu Sencha Do Tea Ceremony demonstrations will take place downstairs on Sunday at 1:00pm, 2:00pm, and 3:00pm. This year, we welcome

back HappyFunSmile to liven up our evening festivities and provide some live music for our Bon Odori.

In the evening, the festival grounds will be full of dancers to join in Bon Odori. Everyone is encouraged to join in and dance whether you're experienced or not! Bon Odori will be both days from 6:30pm to 8:30pm.

Wrapping up the event on Sunday at 8:30pm will be the raffle drawing. There will be valuable and exciting prizes to win.

We are all very excited about the 57th Annual Obon Festival and hope you will accept our invitation to join us for this very special celebration.

Obon Festival Committee

BON ODORI

Please join us for our upcoming Bon Odori practices! Everyone is welcome, whether you want a bit of aerobic exercise or just want to dance!

At the end of June, we will begin evening practices in preparation for Obon. Practices will be held on the following days from 7:30 to 9:00pm.

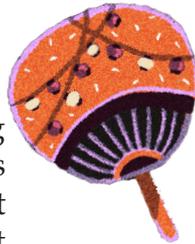
Wednesdays :

6/29 • 7/6 • 7/13 • 7/20

Fridays :

7/1 • 7/8 • 7/15 • 7/22

All lessons are taught in the social hall. Please bring your tenugui, uchiwa and kachi-kachi to practice if you have them. If not, please come and we'll share!



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 only at our Obon 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 22nd.



MANTO-E LANTERNS

Orders are now being accepted for Manto-e Lanterns for our Annual Obon Festival. If you have not received an order form, they are available in the temple office. Please call to reserve your lantern at your earliest convenience. The cost is \$20 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.

LUMBINI CORNER

We celebrated Children's Day and Cinco de Mayo in the month of May. We also made some very special gifts for our moms. To showcase our hard work, we invited our family and friends to our Open House. It was a fun-filled month!

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 temple office at 213-680-2976 or visit the temple website for a brochure.

OPEN HOUSE @ LUMBINI

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: missleslie_lumbini@yahoo.com

WEBPAGE: <http://LumbiniCDC.org>

open year round:

MONDAY through FRIDAY

7:30am to 6:00pm

closed national holidays

