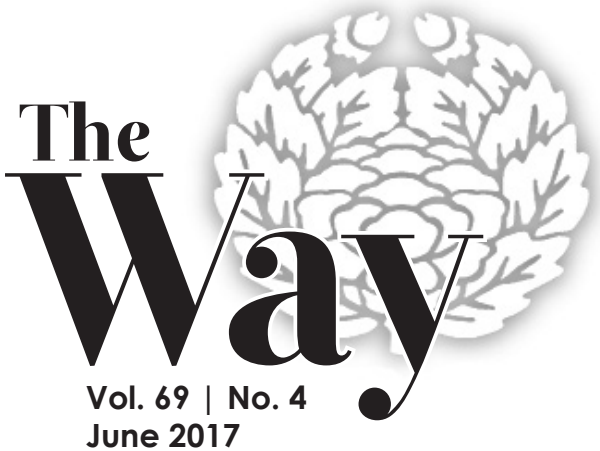


HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE

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

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June 2017

HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE | LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

TEMPLE SCHEDULE

JUNE

- 18 10:00am Father's Day/
Graduation Family
Service & Luncheon
- 25 10:00am Sunday Service
(Discussion Group)
- 25 1:00pm Lumbini Graduation

JULY

- 2 10:00am Shotsuki Service
- 8 1:00pm Lumbini 40th Reunion
- 9 10:00am Sunday Service
- 16 10:00am Obon Family Service
Pet Memorial Service
- 23 10:00am Sunday Service
(Discussion Group)
- 29 (to 8/5) LABCC Summer Camp
- 29 1:00pm OBON FESTIVAL
- 30 11:00am Obon/Hatsubon Service
- 30 1:00pm OBON FESTIVAL

AUGUST

- 6 10:00am Shotsuki Service
- 13 10:00am Sunday Service

COMING SOON!

**OBON
2017**

**SATURDAY & SUNDAY
JULY 29TH & 30TH**



The Way



Volume 69 | Number 4 | June 2017

HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE • LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

Human, All Too Human?

Rev. Frederick Brenion

One of my favorite philosophers, Friedrich Nietzsche, wrote a book called "Human, All Too Human." It's a good read, and I rather like the title. But now I wonder if I am human enough? Or rather, when am I ever really human? In the Vandana Ti-sarana there is a line, "Difficult is it to receive life in human form, now we are living it." What on earth does this mean? It wasn't that hard to get conceived. It happens all the time. Of course if we're talking about "me" me, then yes, the odds of "me" are astronomically small. A slight change of events, a different conception resulting in a different person could easily have happened. But then I wouldn't be here to complain about it. Just a different possibility that didn't. But I am here, and that's all the difference I need worry about. I have developed a human form, and I am now living it. Or am I? That's a very fundamental question.

Maybe I need a bit more focus on this. Buddhism is good for that. Really good! It is not that I simply have a "human form" - though that does help quite a bit - it is the human condition that is being expressed through that form. But with the help of Buddhism I can see that maybe it's not so human a condition much of the time.

You've probably heard of the "Six Realms of Samsara"? If you look on the web at a picture of the Bhavacakra - the Wheel of Life or the Wheel of Becoming - a portrayal of our progress or a regress towards Awakening, you will see six portions detailing in startling action what is happening within. These "Realms" are very much mental or psychological states, a portrait of our inner self.

These realms are:

1. *The Deva or Heavenly* - What is sometimes call the God or Gods realm.

It is a life of pleasure, contentment, distraction. It is the realm many of us would love to be in. I might call it the Vacation Realm. It is a realm where you lose yourself, oblivious to what's really going on.

2. *The Asuras* - The Fighting Spirits - This is one step lower, but what a difference. Jealousy, anger that you're missing out on the Deva realm. We talk about how awful the 1% is, without thinking that most of us are in the 2 or 3%. We want that little bit more, and we'll fight for it.
3. *The Animal Realm* - A realm of fear, eat or be eaten. Have you ever known an animal to sleep easy? Only our pets because they have been brought into our realm to be cared for.
4. *The Hungry Ghosts* - Unlike the Asuras who can fight, the Hungry Ghosts can't. They are miserable, knowing that they want, but never can have.
5. *The Hell Realms* - Life of suffering and misery, Above all, life filled with Anger, Guilt, Shame, and Blame.

I look at these realms and it shocks and shames me to see myself in all of them. Oh I so much want to be a god! To be honored, acknowledged, given all that I think I rightfully deserve. I am filled with anger for not having what I think I should have. I also know fear, feeling unsafe, that disquietude that is always in the background. And when I see myself a little clearer, I see the ghost of myself wanting and craving what I can never have. And it all reduces down to anger at myself, shame and guilt, with no one to blame but myself. These realms are part and parcel of me and I seem to spend most of my time within them.

As you may have noticed, I left out one realm, the Human realm. We're in the middle, with the animal realm right

behind us, between the highs and lows. Highs that aren't so worth it, and lows that I want to avoid at all costs. For us, we see the problems above and below, and we suffer the effects. But yet there is hope, because being here we're open to the Dharma, more than any other realm.

Buddhism then introduces four more realms, the Four Noble Realms. And if we're lucky, or rather if causes, conditions, and effects should bring it about we can encounter the following.

1. *Learning* - Coming to see the truth of things, experiencing, and seeking wisdom.
2. *Realisation* - Growth! Spiritual Life! Reality as it is meant to be, becomes focused.
3. *Bodhisattvahood* - As we grow, we realize that we are part of a larger community and we wish, we need, to share it for that life to grow even more.
4. *Buddhahood* - Awakening. True happiness. Not losing yourself in yourself, but being open to all. A life that shares and does not hoard. No fighting, True equanimity. Balance.

When you look at these Four Noble Realms you can see that this is the life of the Sangha. This is the life of a Buddha. This IS what humanity is all about. If I want to know what true humanity is then I must look at the Buddha. If I want to live the life of humanity I must look at the Sangha. This is the encounter of

(Please see *HUMAN*, page 3)

visit our website at
www.hhbt-la.org

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



Betsuin News



Mother's Day Breakfast & Family Service

We had a very fun Mother's Day Breakfast on Sunday, May 14th. 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, Dr. Jessica Main from the University of British Columbia shared a very special Mother's Day message. She spoke about her own mother's struggles and also gave a thoughtful Dharma Talk.

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!

YABA LAS VEGAS TRIP

YABA is organizing another trip to Las Vegas this year and invites you to join them! The trip is from Sunday, July 2nd through Tuesday, July 4th and the group will be staying at Sam's Town. Transportation to and from Higashi will be provided by bus. The fees are \$135 per person for double occupancy and \$220 per person for single occupancy. The bus fee is an additional \$50 per person. Please submit your RSVP no later than June 4th. More information is available on the temple website at www.hhbt-la.org.

hanamatsuri craft fair

The temple hosted a Hanamatsuri Craft Fair on Sunday April 23rd 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 Friday night, 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, Trish Nicholson with amigurumi creations, Susan Kashiwabara with SusiElaine Sweets, Namiko Ishii with skincare and essential oil items, Mika Ito with handmade cards and baby items, and plants from Mrs. Kazuko Higashi at Fujiyama Nursery. 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. Special thanks also to Kisanoreen, Trish Nicholson, Susielaine Sweets, Pat Kasahara, and Lorraine Shimizu 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!



Come & Celebrate! Lumbini is turning 40!

Forty years ago, Lumbini opened its doors for the first time. Since that day we have had many students join our Lumbini family.

It is always nice to hear stories about how some of you have reconnected or I am often asked, have you heard and do you know about so and so. Well, this is your chance to catch up with old preschool friends.

On July 8th from 1:00pm to 3:00pm, we are going to host a 40th Anniversary Reunion for all past and present students. Please join us back at the school and take a journey back to your preschool days. For more information, please check our facebook page or call me at the school at 213-680-2976.

Miss Leslie
[facebook.com/lumbinicdc](https://www.facebook.com/lumbinicdc)

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

Mrs. Setsumi Uehara (74)
April 5, 2017

Mrs. Kazuko Oda (81)
March 31, 2017

Mr. James Mitsuru Tanaka (90)
May 7, 2017

Mrs. Mary Michiko Harada (93)
May 4, 2017

Mr. Joey Ryoyei Kitayama (86)
May 17, 2017

Namu Amida Butsu

BIG BARGAIN SALE DONATIONS NEEDED!

Watch out! It's coming!!! The **HIGASHI BIG BARGAIN SALE** will be held on **SUNDAY, AUGUST 27TH from 8am to 3pm** in the Social Hall. This day coincides with the closing weekend of the Nisei Week festival. Bargain hunters are in for a treat as we have an exciting day planned. It will be the best one yet! 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.

As always, we appreciate your attention to the following guidelines. It truly makes our job of organizing your donations more efficient. The temple office will be accepting donations only during a 14-day period beginning **Sunday, August 6th to Sunday, August 20th.**

This year, we will again be accepting 2 categories of clothing. One category is **"Brand New Clothing with Tags Attached."** Another category is **"New or Gently used Coats, Jackets, and Sweaters."** Please put them in different bags as they will be sold in different areas. **WE WILL NOT BE ACCEPTING ANY OTHER CLOTHING EXCEPT FOR KIMONOS.**

Besides clothing, we will also be selling some food items, and the Maui Natural Ice Shave Ice Co. will join us again to serve refreshing, unique, and delicious treats to cool everyone off on a hot day!

WE ARE HAPPY TO ACCEPT THE FOLLOWING ITEMS

ONLY CLEAN AND GENTLY USED ITEMS THAT ARE READY TO SELL

- Chinaware, Glassware
- Polished Silver items (no tarnished items)
- Kitchen utensils and small clean appliances, general housewares
- Decorative items
- 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 etc. -PLEASE PROVIDE A NEW BATTERY WITH IT
- ONLY CLEAN** stuffed animals, dolls, and toys

Homemade craft items

WE HAVE DECIDED NOT TO ACCEPT THE FOLLOWING ITEMS

- Cosmetics, shoes, hats, etc.
- BOOKS
- Cassettes and VHS tapes
- Plastic ware - example: Tupperware that has turned yellow over time
- Torn, chipped, broken or faded items
- Personalized items - "Happy 25th Anniversary Susan and Tom," etc.
- Empty tin cans
- Food items
- Baby items - clothing, car seats, strollers, high chairs, mattresses, comforters, carriers, etc.
- Large items such as furniture - chairs, tables, large pictures or artwork etc.
- Large sport items - bicycles, skis, golf clubs, tennis rackets, etc.
- Electronic items-computers, printers, telephones, 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.

Please pack clothing separately from other items and by the 2 categories described above.

"BRAND NEW CLOTHING WITH TAGS ATTACHED" and **"NEW OR GENTLY USED COATS, SWEATERS AND JACKETS."**

The committee does not have the time or 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 14-day period from Sunday, August 6th to Sunday, August 20th. After August 20th, 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 during this 14-day donation window.

Because of very limited storage space, we are asking you to please bring your donations in a box with a top if possible so that it can be stacked. However, the clothing may be in a bag but please label either **"NEW CLOTHING WITH TAGS"** or **"COATS, JACKETS, & SWEATERS."** In addition, please label **"BIG BARGAIN SALE"** or **"BBS"** so we will find them when we go to price and organize your donations beginning on Monday, August 14th. Besides helping us with your donations for sale, we welcome you to help and assist us in pricing and organizing items for sale before the event, and setting up the room the day before (Saturday, August

TAIKO NEWS

Members of Bombu Taiko worked hard upstairs preparing for our Hanamatsuri Family Service. Under the floral expertise of Lisa Shimamoto, Bombu members decorated the temple's hanamido with an abundance of beautiful flowers. The temple is extremely grateful to Lisa and Bombu for their donation of many of the flowers along with the many hours of time and effort put into making our Hanamatsuri beautiful. Thank you, Lisa and Bombu Taiko!

.....
(HUMAN, cont. from page 1)
the Dharma.

Shinran grasped this when he said he was neither monk nor layperson. We often puzzle what he meant by that. I mean you're either one or the other, right? But there is no label for this. To give it a label would be to drag it back into the other five realms. It is beyond labels. What Shinran discovered was the heart of becoming a new being, a true being, by becoming truly human. As fellow travellers we enter with Shinran the realm that the Buddha trod for us, the Human Realm.



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/September Issue are due July 10th, 2017. Submissions may be subject to printing restrictions and staff approval. Thank you and we look forward to hearing from you!

.....
26th at 8:00am) and helping us at the event on Sunday, August 27th!!! If you have any questions, please call the temple office at (213) 626-4200 and leave your message. Your call will be returned. WE APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT AS THIS IS ONE OF THE OLDEST, TRADITIONAL, MAJOR FUNDRAISERS FOR HIGASHI HONGANJI. THANK YOU VERY MUCH!!!

Emily Matsumura
Big Bargain Sale Chair

58TH ANNUAL OBON FESTIVAL

SATURDAY & SUNDAY | JULY 29TH & 30TH

The Higashi Honganji Buddhist Temple and the 2017 Obon Festival Committee would like to invite all members and friends of our Betsuin to join in the 58th Annual Obon Festival. This year's celebration will be on Saturday and Sunday, July 29 and 30 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 30 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, tea ceremony, and much more. Again 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 58th 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

6/28 • 7/5 • 7/12 • 7/19

FRIDAYS

6/30 • 7/7 • 7/14 • 7/21

All lessons are taught in the social hall. Please bring your 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 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 21st.

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!

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 \$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.

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