

## HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE

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# The Way

Vol. 75 | No. 3  
April & May 2023

HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE | LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

## TEMPLE SCHEDULE

### MAY

- 7 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
- 14 10:00 am Mother's Day Family Service
- 21 10:00 am Tanjo-e/Hatsumairi Service
- 28 10:00 am Sunday Service
- 29 Memorial Day

### JUNE

- 4 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
- 11 10:00 am Sunday Service Discussion Group
- 18 10:00 am Father's Day/Graduation Family Service
- 25 10:00 am Sunday Service
- 25 1:00 pm Lumbini Graduation

### 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**

**SUNDAYS | 10 AM**

## TANJO-E HATSUMAIRI SERVICE

**SUNDAY, MAY 21  
10:00 AM**

REGISTRATION REQUIRED FOR  
HATSUMAIRI PARTICIPATION

## Mother's Day Family Service

**SUNDAY, MAY 14 • 10:00AM**

## Father's Day/Graduation Family Service

**SUNDAY, JUNE 18 • 10:00 AM**



# The Way



Volume 75 | Number 3 | April & May 2023

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## What Kind of Person was Shinran?

Rev. Kensho Goto

On March 25 at our mother temple in Kyoto Japan, “The 850th Celebration of Shinran Shōnin’s Birth and the 800th Anniversary of the Establishment of Jōdo Shinshū” has begun. This occasion makes us realize how fortunate we are that we have been able to receive those teachings today. I’d like to think about what kind of person Shinran was.

Shinran Shōnin was a person who strongly treasured the nenbutsu teaching as taught by his teacher Honen Shōnin. During his lifetime, he faced his own ideas many times that he will do everything by himself. And each time he looked back at himself and returned to Honen’s teaching to “simply do nenbutsu and take refuge in Amida Buddha.”

Here is an example of one such episode.

As you know, Shinran and his teacher Honen were both exiled by the imperial court. After residing in Echigo (present-day Niigata prefecture) for a while, Shinran took his family and set off for the Kantō region (the surrounding area of present-day Tokyo). On the way to Kanto, he stopped by Sanuki in Kōzuke province (present-day Gunma prefecture) where people were suffering from a disastrous crop failure due to insufficient rain that year. We do not know what motivated him to do so, but he chanted the three Pure Land sutras one thousand times in order to save the suffering people. But after several days, he asked himself, “Why am I chanting these sutras? Isn’t the nenbutsu enough?” and he gave up chanting altogether. It became an important event in his life. Shinran was forty-two years old at the time.

Shinran recalled this episode at age fifty-nine. In that year, due to adverse weather conditions, there was a great

famine that occurred again. Shinran was sick in bed with a fever. Even then he started to chant the Sutra on the Buddha of Eternal Life. At that time, he recalled how he had once chanted the three sutras over and over in Sanuki. It gave him an insight into how deep-rooted and persistent his own attachment to self-power could be. Once again, he stopped chanting the sutra.

These two episodes of sutra chanting showed that, even though he had entrusted himself to Honen’s words, “Simply do the nenbutsu and Amida will save you,” he lost sight of that teaching and became someone who looked for salvation outside the nenbutsu without realizing it.

Through these experiences at ages forty-two and fifty-nine, Shinran once again reflected on himself from the standpoint of the devoted practice of the nenbutsu as Hōnen taught him.

Now, let’s look at things a little differently.

I believe people who are gathered here today are very devout Shinshu followers. (Well, I hope so.) However, even if you believe in Amida Buddha and do nenbutsu every single day, you cannot do whatever you want to do; there is no guarantee that everything goes well.

Frankly speaking, in modern times, faith does not save injured or sick people.

Of course, as one of our Shinshu ministers, I believe in Shinran’s teaching, the existence of Amida Buddha and the Pure Land, but their existence in a tangible way is beyond my ability to verify.

And in this world, there are many religions and many types of objects of faith such as God or Buddha. And of course, there are atheists too who do not believe in any type of religion. And what if atheists came here and said, “why do you believe in such religion when you

cannot tell if it truly exists or not.”

How will you respond?

Although this is just my own opinion, as I said earlier, Shinran, our founder, was a person who lived a very strict lifestyle. And I think it is very difficult to try live in such a way. In our daily lives, we cannot avoid things that do not go as planned. Sometimes it’s very difficult to look after yourself and be honest with yourself at the same time.

I would like to share something that I actually experienced a few weeks ago at the supermarket. There were some self-checkout lines and 5 or 6 people were waiting in line. A woman came and seemed to be waiting for her turn. However, where she went was not at the end of the checkout line, she went to the front of the line. There was some space behind the self-checkout machine for people so that they could cross over. Also, the line was a little bit covered by a display cabinet. I think that’s why she stopped at the front of the line without realizing there was a line.

Then, when she tried to start checking out without lining up, she got into an argument with the person who was at the front. But she didn’t admit her mistake and kept complaining as she left.

If she knew of Shinran’s lifestyle and teaching, she might have admitted her mistake immediately, and smoothed things over. Also, I don’t think anyone who knows Shinran’s teachings would strongly blame someone who happened to make a simple mistake because we know that everyone makes mistakes.

(Please see *SHINRAN*, page 3)

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BUDDHIST TEMPLE AT  
[HHBT-LA.ORG](http://HHBT-LA.ORG)**



# Betsuin News



## Mother's Day Family Service

Please join us on Sunday, May 14<sup>th</sup> for our Mother's Day Family Service! A special message in honor of our mothers will be given by our guest speaker. We hope you will join us in celebrating our mothers. There will be no breakfast prior to service this year.

## Tanjo-e/Hatsumairi Service

On Sunday, May 21<sup>st</sup>, we will hold our Tanjo-e Service in person. Tanjo-e is a special service that celebrates the birth of Shinran Shōnin, the founder of our Jodo Shinshu Buddhist tradition. Shinran was born around this time near Kyoto, Japan in the year 1173. Special sermons will be delivered by our ministers for this occasion.

At our Tanjo-e service, we will also observe Hatsumairi, which is held to welcome all new children into our Sangha. The Hatsumairi presentation is traditionally for newborns, but we welcome all children up to six years of age to participate. If you are interested in having your child participate, please contact the temple office to register. There is a nominal fee of \$50 for children of paid 2023 members or \$75 for children of non-members to participate.

Please join us in person at the temple. The service will also be streamed on our Facebook page for those who cannot attend in person.

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



facebook.com/hhbt.la



@higashihonganjila

## Spring Ohigan & Seminar

The Spring Ohigan Service was held in person at the temple on March 19<sup>th</sup>, with a Dharma Talk by Rinban Noriaki Ito in English and Rev. Paul Imahara in Japanese. In the afternoon, Rinban Noriaki Ito was the speaker for our Spring Seminar. He presented on the theme, "Namu Amida Butsu: To Discover the Meaning of Being Born as Human Beings." Thank you to Rinban Ito for sharing his insight and to everyone who attended both in person and virtually.

## Father's Day & Graduation Family Service

Please join us for our Father's Day and Graduation Family Service on Sunday, June 18<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am. We will have a special guest speaker. This service will celebrate and honor both our Dads and 2023 Graduates. We welcome all graduates to attend and families to bring their fathers for this special service! We hope that you and your family will be able to join us!



## Our deepest condolences

to the family and relatives of ...

*Mrs. Ritsuko Nakashima (90)*  
February 3, 2023

*Ms. Emilie Harumi Hata (74)*  
February 9, 2023

*Mrs. Sachiko Murata (96)*  
February 27, 2023

*Mr. Brian Kaoru Murata (57)*  
March 5, 2023

*Mrs. Edith Toshie Miyuki (96)*  
March 20, 2023

*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!**



## higashi honganji OBORI RANCH EDITION

**SAVE THE DATE!**  
**SATURDAY, JULY 29<sup>TH</sup>**  
**at the Murata Family Ranch**  
**in Camarillo**

*Tickets will be limited and will go on sale in June.  
Please keep an eye out for updates.*

*Come join us for an afternoon of bon odori and a delicious meal!*



*(SHINRAN, cont. from page 1)*

There is no one who can always do everything perfectly.

So, Shinran's teaching is not simply that if you have faith you will go to the Pure Land when you die. It contains so many teachings to help us live in modern times. For example, it helps to calm the mind, provide emotional support, and to remind us to be kind to others.

What do you think about our religion? You might have inherited it from your parents. But I think that our teaching has so many wonderful and interesting stories and teachings that we can put to good use in our everyday lives.



### BECOME A HIGASHI MEMBER IN 2023!

Membership dues are \$350.00 for dual/family (includes children of the primary member under age 22) and \$175.00 for individual members. Paid Temple Members may receive 10% off coupons from Fugetsu-Do and Toyo Miyatake Studio upon request from the office.

### SUBMISSION DEADLINE!

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

# 2 1ST ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

For the first time since 2019, Higashi Honganji volunteers arrived at the Via Verde Country Club in the early morning of March 6th, 2023. Volunteers prepared for the arrival of almost 100 golfers early Monday morning. They unloaded trucks while the coffee brewed and backpacks, donuts, spam musubis, apples, oranges, and bananas crowded the check-in area. Our cheery volunteers registered golfers outside. The weather was nice for early March. It was cold in the morning, but warmed up during the day. Tee signs were displayed on the course at all the holes. Sponsorships raised funds for our youth programs and temple maintenance. Thank you to all our generous tee sponsors! After 18 holes out in the sun, golfers were eager to sit down for a Western-style barbecue buffet lunch! They made their way to the banquet room that overlooks the course where tables were overflowing with valuable prizes for our raffle and donations from generous members and merchants in the community. Everyone was treated to a well-deserved lunch with lots of meat, chicken, and sides of corn on the cob, baked beans, rolls, and salads. While stories of the narrow course were shared amongst the golfers, Shin Ito announced the tournament and raffle winners. Closest-to-the-pin winners were Ed Higashi, Jon Kitayama, Garrett Quon, and Miguel Espinoza. Longest drive winner was Teiji Kawana. The Low Gross winner was Kevin T. Yamamoto. Garrett Quon, Kevin Yamamoto, and Patrick Novak all got birdies. The Ladies 1st place winner was Pansy Shimoide. The top three tournament winners were Joe Nakasone in 3rd place, Victor Punsalan in 2nd place, and Keith Mitsuuchi in 1st place. Congratulations to all our golfers! The Higashi Honganji Golf Tournament continues to grow thanks to all the volunteers who do so much behind-the-scenes work before and during the tournament as well as our tee sponsors and donors. Thanks to the support of our golfers who continue to come out year after year, we were able to put on another fun and successful event.

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# The Way

