

**HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE**

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**HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE | LOS ANGELES BETSUIN**

*TEMPLE  
SCHEDULE*

**NOVEMBER**

- 20 10:00am Family Service
- 27 10:00am Sunday Service  
Discussion Group

**DECEMBER**

- 4 10:00am Shotsuki Service
- 11 10:00am Bodhi Day/Year-end  
Family Service
- 18 9:00am Temple Clean-up
- 27 9:00am Mochitsuki (Tuesday)
- 31 6:30pm Year-end Service  
(Joya-e)

**JANUARY**

- 1 10:00am New Year's Day Service  
(Shusho-e)
- 8 10:00am Shotsuki Service

**Bodhi Day • Year-end  
Family Service**

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11  
10:00AM

**Temple Cleanup**

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18  
9:00AM

**Mochitsuki**

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 27  
9:00AM



# The Way



Volume 68 | Number 10 | November 2016

HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE • LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

## The World of Shinran Shōnin

Bishop Bunshō Obata  
South America District

*The Dharma message for this issue is by Bishop Bunshō Obata of the South America District. It is the Dharma talk that he delivered at the closing ceremony of 12th Dōbō World Gathering on August 28.*

Good afternoon, everyone.

As kindly introduced, my name is Bunshō Obata and I am part of the South America District group participating in this Gathering. Today, the 28th, is the day of the month on which Shinran Shōnin passed away. Given the opportunity to reflect on his life, I'd like to talk this afternoon about "the world in which Shinran Shōnin lived."

I have been living in São Paulo, Brazil, for about a year-and-a-half. I always use the city's subway system called Metro wherever I go. One day, a poster hung on a wall of the train caught my eye; it said, "Você não está sozinho (You are not alone)."

This phrase is a campaign slogan of the city to prevent crimes in the subways. But when I was reading the words of the slogan, I was thinking about the teaching of dependent origination, a primary teaching of Shakyamuni Buddha.

The teaching of dependent origination tells us that there is nothing that can exist by itself. In other words, everything comes into existence as part of the relationships with other beings. This is the fundamental truth of our existence.

Therefore, the slogan, "Você não está sozinho (You are not alone)" embodies the truth shown by the teaching of dependent origination.

From the viewpoint of the Buddhist teaching, there is no single person or thing that exists in and of itself. Everything is interconnected with each other.

Right at this moment, somewhere

## The Wishes That Have Been Passed On —On the Occasion of the 12th World Dōbō Gathering—

Rev. Tatsuru Kigoshi  
Kosen-ji Temple - Kanazawa, Japan  
Former minister of the Berkeley Higashi Honganji

First of all, I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to the many young staff ministers and members who planned and organized the World Dōbō Gathering for their great efforts to make this event successful and meaningful. In the small group discussion session, many young participants had serious discussions about the daunting challenges of how to build a better future for our temples, the Buddhist teaching, and people's religious feelings. I didn't speak very much in the session. It was not because I didn't have any opinions about those issues. It was because I was so moved that I didn't know how to express my thoughts.

The future is not something that lies in the time ahead as generally thought. Actually it exists at this present moment. The future is all of you at this moment, the whole existence of all of you who are thinking seriously about the future.

or everywhere in this world, there are people who are feeling sad, happy, troubled, or resentful. Those people may seem to have no connection with my life; but that is not true. Furthermore, those connections between us are not limited to what I might call the "horizontal" relationships, the relationships with beings living in the present moment.

For example, we are participating in the World Dōbō Gathering in Los Angeles right now. What has made this possible is the voice of the nenbutsu that has been resonating in Hawaii and on the



This is what I wanted to say in the discussion session.

After the World Dōbō Gathering, Group D, our tour group from Japan, went on a tour of such places as the Manzanar National Historic Site and the Berkeley Higashi Honganji. Berkeley Higashi Honganji is the temple where I served as resident minister about 50 or 60 years ago and that experience gave me and my entire family many opportunities to grow as human beings.

When our group visited the temple, the temple members welcomed us with Hawaiian band music, which was one

*(Please see KIGOSHI page 5)*

North and South American continents for over 100 years. The sounds of the nenbutsu being recited in the present moment spring out from the hardships endured by the immigrants who struggled to survive in the harsh conditions they faced. Likewise, the present will bring forth the future.

Our past and future are connected with this present moment. In other words, in this present moment we are living, both the past and the future coexist. Let us refer to these connections over time as "vertical" connections.

*(Please see OBATA, page 4)*



# Betsuin News



## TEMPLE CLEANUP

Cleaning the temple is a huge task, but with everyone's efforts we can make it sparkle in no time. It is a tradition for all of us to help bring a clean temple into the New Year. Our annual Temple Clean-up will be on Sunday, December 18<sup>th</sup>. Without the efforts of all of our members and friends, we could not complete this big task. Please join us as we clean our temple with pride and make it shine into 2017. Thank you in advance for all of your hard work.

## MOCHITSUKI

Our annual Mochitsuki will be held on Tuesday, December 27<sup>th</sup> from 9:00am. This is one of the most exciting and enjoyable events of the year, but not without your help! Come out and help us make MOCHI for the altar and for our New Years Day ozoni. There will be plenty to eat here and take home. Be sure to invite your family and friends to enjoy this very special cultural year-end tradition. You never know what kind of fun and delicious mochi you'll be taking home this year!



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## TEMPLE FUN DAY

Hey there, Hi there, Ho there! You're as welcome as can be! In 2016, we had our 3<sup>rd</sup> Disney themed Temple Fun Day! Walls were decorated with a mix of our favorite characters: Mickey, Donald, Minnie, Goofy, and Pluto, characters from the Cars series, and Frozen princesses Anna and Elsa along with vintage movie and Disneyland posters. As members and invited friends entered the social hall, they were each greeted with Disney music and their own Disney Temple Fun Day name badge. Guests wore them throughout the afternoon and added to the fun atmosphere of the day. The kids were invited to enjoy various Disney-themed crafts including Chewbacca and Yoda puppets, Mickey ears, and other Disney hats. Lunch included a tasty selection of fried chicken, potato wedges, a corn on the cob bar with a variety of toppings, a variety of salads, and lots of desserts. After lunch, everyone enjoyed a fun game of Disney Bingo. After several Bingo players claimed their prizes, we played a Disney character family matching game and made as many words as possible with the letters in "DISNEYLAND." Afterward, we formed a couple teams to play a Hollywood Game Night inspired movie game. Players would have to put the movie posters in chronological order according to release date. There was a Pixar team and a Disney team. Both teams got second chances, but only the Pixar team was able to get all of the movies in the correct order! Members and friends took home photos of themselves taken in our photo booth to remember the fun day.

Thank you to everyone who came out early to set up, who helped in the kitchen and with games, crafts, registration, taking pictures, and more during the event, and to everyone who helped clean up after the event! Thanks to everyone who came out and enjoyed the event as well! We hope to have even more of you come out next time!

## Introducing Rev. Masashi Fujii



Hello. My name is Masashi Fujii.

I am the new staff member of the North America District Office. I am 29 years old and I am from Akita, Japan.

Since I arrived here in July, I was able to join you for the Obon Festival and also for the 12<sup>th</sup> World Dōbō Gathering.

I have had a lot of precious experiences here during these 3 months.

My wife, Mimu, arrived in Los Angeles in August.

We are really happy to start our lives here in L.A. with all of you wonderful members.

I look forward to seeing you soon, and ask for your guidance and support.

Thank you

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

Mrs. Carol Yukiko Lau (72)  
September 24, 2016

Mrs. Kazuko Kodani (89)  
October 8, 2016

Namu Amida Butsu

## 12<sup>th</sup> WORLD DŌBŌ GATHERING Thank you from the Higashi NAD Office

The 12<sup>th</sup> World Dōbō Gathering sponsored by the Shinshū Ōtani-ha denomination and hosted by our North America District was held on the weekend of August 27/28 here in Los Angeles. All told, 309 participants gathered from Japan, South America, Hawaii, and from our own district temples to listen to the teaching of the Nenbutsu and to meet and interact with those gathered from the various locales.

This gathering could not have been as successful as it was if it wasn't for the tremendous support we received from our members who graciously volunteered their time and energy even though they paid the registration fee to participate. On behalf of all of us and of all of our guests, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your hard work in ensuring the success of the event.

In this issue, we wish to share some of the great contributions that were made by many of our Betsuin members.

**David Ikeda**, President – Betsuin Board of Directors

David graciously took on the role of serving as the Co-chair of the WDG Committee. He was also in charge of the Audio-visual committee, and also took care of the escorting and transportation needs primarily of our Overseas District Abbot Chōyū Ōtani and his wife, Satika both before and after the event. He also took care of the arrangements with the LAPD to close off two lanes on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street so that we could take the group commemorative photo on Sunday (Our apologies: our photographer had to use a wide-angle lens and so you need a magnifying glass to see the faces of the people in the back). He and his crew ensured that the audio and visual needs for all of the events were taken care of. In addition, the A-V crew took care of all of the loading and unloading needs for all of the equipment and other necessities to and from the hotel.

### **The Ikeda (A-V) Team**

David's crew included Ron Sato, Shin Ito, Gary Kanemoto, James Matsu-

moto, Byron Yamada, Ted Oyama, Steve Murata, and Patrick Yoshizaki.

Most of the members are on the Betsuin maintenance group helping to take care of repairs and renovations on a weekly basis, and they are used to working hard together. A couple of them did not originally sign up to participate in the WDG, but registered just before so that they could help with the setup and so forth.

### **The Dōbō Marketplace Relief Fund Support Team**

Headed by the Matsumura sisters (Irene Ota and Emily Matsumura), Susan Kashiwabara, and Mika Ito, this group planned and coordinated the Dōbō Marketplace which included both the Bazaar and the Crafts Fair. They gathered all of the gifts brought by the participants and coordinated the sale of temple items with the other NAD temples. The original plan was to move the items inside the banquet hall after the cocktail hour. But there wasn't enough space and so all of the volunteers had to take turns sitting outside, sacrificing the opportunity to enjoy the banquet with everyone.

### **Youth Program**

Diane Hata, a retired schoolteacher, was the primary organizer of the first ever Youth Program for a World Dōbō Convention. The children who participated learned about the teachings of our tradition and had a lot of fun learning and playing together during the two days of the event.

### **Wayne Itoga – solo performance**

We wish to thank Wayne for his wonderful songs he sang together with Mrs. Kazue Funai's accompaniment. As hoped and expected, he was dressed to the T from head to toe.

### **Elaine Harada & Ron Sato (Transportation)**

Thanks to Elaine and Ron for their help in transporting many of our guests from and to the airport before and after the event. This was in addition to the

many other ways they helped. Elaine also got Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama, and Elvis Presley (well, life-size replicas) to be a presence at our event.

### **Greg Elliot**

Thank you for the extremely engaging and professional job of emceeding the Future Presentation. The questions you asked were of interest to all of the participants.

### **Trish Nicholson and Nancy Kurihara-Johnson**

Thanks for leading the Bon Odori Aerobics program throughout the year at the temple. They led the Bon Odori portion of the banquet entertainment and were able to get at least 80% of the people to get up and dance Tanko Bushi with us.

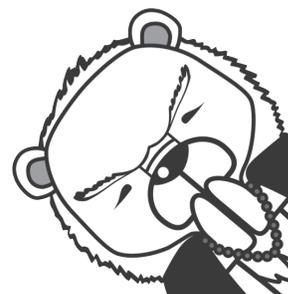
### **Shin Ito**

As part of the A-V team, he worked with Rev. Hasegawa to make sure that all of the video and audio worked well throughout the 2-day event. He also made up all of the Google Forms to keep in communication with the registrants from all of our temples and also made a video at the last minute for the banquet.

### **Bianca Vite**

Thanks to Bianca for making some 325 large size and delicious cookies with the logo of the gathering on it to pass out to all attendees of the banquet.

There were many others who deserve recognition. And we wish to thank each and everyone of you who helped and also to the 80+ Betsuin members who participated. We are so very grateful to all of you.



(OBATA, cont. from page 1)

From this point of view, we are not living here and now just as separate individuals. This moment we are living in the crossroads of the “horizontal” and “vertical” connections. Our existence is created from those connections. This is the truth of our lives.

However, our minds are filled with blind passions that make our viewpoint self-centered. Therefore, we are unable to truly understand the fundamental reality that we are the product of these connections.

The only connections we are usually aware of are the ones directly related to our advantages and disadvantages. Even if it is about the relationship between husband and wife or between parents and child, we can only judge those relationships from the viewpoint of our self-interests. The relationships between nations are based more obviously upon self-interest motives. Such attitudes can be summed up in the phrase, “Today’s enemy will be tomorrow’s friend, and today’s friend will be tomorrow’s enemy.”

In truth, the world in which we are living today is based on self-interests. There are even those who wage war as a business strategy to profit economically. In such a world, it is so difficult to build warm and peaceful interpersonal relationships.

The person who saw and lived in the “world” with the eyes of humanity and equality was Shakyamuni Buddha, the awakened one. He realized that greed causes the loss of humanity, and so his view was not from the point of self-interest.

His teachings have been compiled in thousands of scriptures called “sutras.” Among those sutras, Shinran Shōnin discovered the true essence of the Buddha’s teaching in the *Larger Sutra of Immeasurable Life*, the discourse on Amida Buddha’s Original Vow.

Shinran Shōnin has made clear for us that the essence of the sutra can be summarized in the Original Vow and the Buddha’s Name, “Namu Amida Butsu.”

The Original Vow is the aspiration of Amida Buddha to awaken all sentient beings who have lost sight of their true selves. The expression of this aspiration is the Buddha’s Name, “Namu Amida

Butsu.”

When we recite the Buddha’s Name, it is the moment when we are awakened to the fact that all of us, anytime, anywhere, and whoever we are, have been embraced by the boundless compassion of Amida Buddha.

For those of us who have lost sight of ourselves and strayed into isolation, “Namu Amida Butsu” is truly the awakening to the fundamental reality of our interconnectedness, beyond the differences in nationality, race, ethnicity, gender, social status, economic resources, and ability.

Of course, the phrase “Namu Amida Butsu” originally came from India. However, these words transcend India, China, and Japan to enable all human beings to regain their humanity. This phrase, in other words, is truly universal.

Even though we talk about regaining our humanity, we are beings who exist on mother earth, who exist through the grace of mother earth. Wherever I am, the world I create is there. However, that “human being” and the “world of humans” pose huge problems from the viewpoint of the teaching.

From Amida’s viewpoint, the world we have created is none other than the realms of hell, insatiable spirits, and animals. In pursuing our self-centered interests, we have lost sight of our interconnectedness and the truth of the world.

The Pure Land is the true foothold for us where we can regain the lost interconnections with people and the world whom we can truly rely upon. The phrase “Namu Amida Butsu” is always trying to direct our minds to the world of the Pure Land.

The Pure Land is the embodiment of the Buddha’s aspiration. Therefore, it is always trying to awaken us. It is always questioning our way of living. Without that guidance, we don’t even try to establish the true foothold from where we can regain our humanity. We are so fully attached to our self-interests that we lose sight of who we are, even when we suffer in the hell of isolation.

That is the working of the Pure Land. It is always trying to direct our minds to that land and is always encouraging us to be born there.

It is Vasubandhu (Tenjin or Seshin), an Indian Buddhist teacher, and Tanluan (Donran), a Chinese Buddhist priest, who clarified that the Pure Land is the world of the Buddha’s aspiration and the embodiment of the Original Vow. It is, they said, the Buddha’s wish and the Original Vow that are always reaching out to awaken us. The Buddhist teacher who named himself after those two masters was our Shinran Shōnin.

The name Shinran is also beyond the boundaries of nationality, ethnicity, or race. He, who was born in Japan, took one kanji character, *Shin*, from the Indian teacher and the other character, *Ran*, from the Chinese teacher. It can, therefore, be said that Shinran Shōnin lived a life that overcame national barriers.

All of us have a strong attachment to our own worldview. We are so attached to our ethnicity, nationality, culture, and religion that we cannot accept people who have different identities from ours. Beyond such a closed-minded and ego-centric way of life, the name “Shinran” signifies a true international identity. He understood the burden of ethnic karma but still tried to find a way to overcome such limited karma.

Shinran Shōnin challenged those fundamental issues for all human beings before us. Even though we participants of this gathering come from different backgrounds, we can learn so much from those differences. Let us continue to walk the path together to seek a true foundation upon which to base our lives in “Namu Amida Butsu.”

With this, I wish to conclude my talk for the Shinran Shōnin Memorial Gathering and the Closing Ceremony.

Thank you for listening.



(KIGOSHI, cont. from page 1)

of the activities of the temple. During their performance, I happened to find the wishes of the previous generation vividly alive in the ten-member band.

There was a member named Mr. Richard Fujii in the band. When I was serving the temple as the minister, Richard's father, Mr. Masuji Fujii, supported the temple and my family as the president of the temple. He and his wife have already passed away. In 1988, when the United States government made an apology and offered reparations to Japanese Americans for incarcerating them during World War II, he used the funds he received to travel to Japan with his four children in order to visit the Higashi Honganji in Kyoto, and to sit in front of the image of Shinran Shōnin together

with them. For people in the United States, Shinran Shōnin is so far removed that it is not easy for them to regard him as our spiritual forebear. That's why Masujisan wanted his children to directly encounter the life of Shinran Shōnin. I was deeply touched to see that his wish for his children was passed down to Richard and other temple members and those wishes continue to support the Berkeley Higashi Honganji. This year's Gathering was



truly a gathering for Dōbō, an event filled with the wishes of our predecessors.



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**Onegai-shimasu!**

### SUBMISSION DEADLINE!

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

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