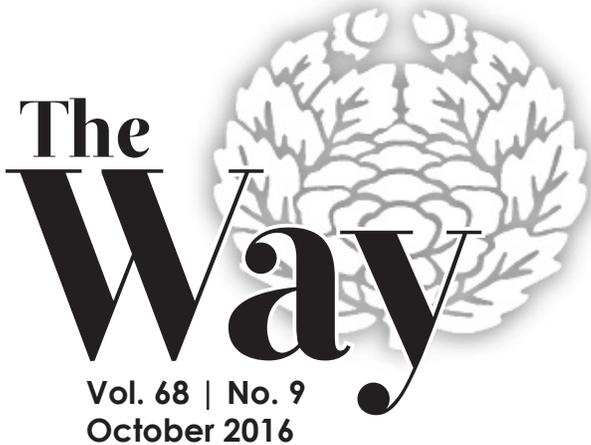


# HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE

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HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE | LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

## TEMPLE SCHEDULE

### OCTOBER

- 23 10:00am Sunday Service  
30 10:00am Sunday Service  
Discussion Group

### NOVEMBER

- 6 *Daylight Savings Ends*  
6 10:00am **Kaikyo-ki/Shotsuki  
Service**  
12 6:00pm **Hōonkō Gathering**  
13 10:00am **Hōonkō Service**  
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 10:00am Temple Clean-up

## **Kaikyo-ki Shotsuki Memorial Service**

Sunday, November 6  
10:00am

## **HŌONKŌ GATHERING**

Saturday, November 12th • 6:00pm  
Guest Speaker: Rev. Ken Yamada  
Berkeley Higashi Honganji

## **HŌONKŌ SERVICE**

Sunday, November 13th • 10:00am  
Officiant: Overseas District Abbot Chōyū Ōtani  
Guest Speakers: Rev. Ken Yamada (English)  
Rev. Nobuko Miyoshi (Japanese)



# The Way



Volume 68 | Number 9 | October 2016 ●

HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE • LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

## Where is Buddha?

Rev. Paul Imahara

Sometime ago at our Sunday Service, a visiting minister started his message to our children. He faced the children and asked, "Where is the Buddha?" a proud young boy perhaps 6 or 7 raised his hand high and said "in here" by pounding his chest. The Buddha was in this boy's heart. I wish for him to have this same feeling as he grows older. The Buddha is also in my heart. I have heard this statement many times and I want to believe it, but how do I know for sure?

Soga Ryojin, the well-known Buddhist philosopher, raises questions and his handwritten words are framed and hung in our Betsuin conference room. His question #1 is "what kind of person is Buddha?" The answer "I am the Buddha called Namu Amida Butsu." (Butsu is Buddha in Japanese). Question #2, "then where is this Buddha?" The answer "The Buddha is right in front of us when we recite Nenbutsu."

In the answer to question #1, why did Soga Ryojin say "I am the Buddha called Namu Amida Butsu" when he could have left the word Namu out and said "I am the Buddha called Amida Buddha." Normally the word Namu is translated as "I take refuge in, I believe in, or I have trust in." Then Soga Ryojin's answer to question #1 does not fit well.

In present-day Southeast Asian countries, far away from large cities, in the small and minority tribes and communities, there remains a greeting, "Namase, Namaste, or Namaskar." It means something like "good morning, goodbye, and how are you?" I feel that the word Namu in Namu Amida Butsu has changed slightly over the past century as Buddhism has spread through different ethnic groups with their own cultures and languages. Therefore, Namu is a greeting or calling from Amida Buddha and we repeat Namu Amida Butsu in response. I feel this is

where our spiritual conversation begins with Amida Buddha.

There are three Sutras that Shinran thought highly of and one is the Amida Sutra. In this Sutra, Shakyamuni Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, explains to his disciple Shariputra about Bliss Land, the Pureland. Shakyamuni Buddha explains that when we travel west, far away west, beyond the beyond, there resides Amida Buddha in a place called Bliss Land. Traveling beyond the beyond takes us into the universe. But the earth is a star in the universe so we who live on earth are living in Bliss Land. Then it makes good sense when Soga Ryojin said Amida Buddha is in front of us when we recite Namu Amida Butsu.

This is one way to explain where Amida Buddha is, and the meaning of reciting Namu Amida Butsu. When the Buddha is right in front of us, he is also in our heart. When I think of Amida Buddha in this sense, I feel comfort. If Amida Buddha is in my heart, I am part of Amida Buddha. How wonderful and exciting it is and how appreciative I am to live my life now, just the way it is with Buddha.

Ayako Suzuki wrote a book called "Living With Cancer" that was translated into English. In her final stages of cancer as she is in and out of the hospital, she wrote that all of these people in front of her became Buddhas. Her husband, her four children, the doctors and nurses, and other patients in the hospital became Ayako's Buddhas. She was only 47 years old when she left her family and friends. There is a photo of her smiling and making a victory sign with her fingers in this book. I strongly feel that she received not just energy and comfort but a deep appreciation from all those Buddhas in front of her as she passed away.

Twice a month on the first and third

Thursday, I visit the Keiai (formerly Keiro) Nursing Home in Lincoln Heights. There is one section in this nursing home that I enjoy visiting the most. Anyone can walk into this section just like the main section of the home but we can't come out without knowing the code at the door. It is locked to prevent Alzheimer patients from walking out of the building and getting lost. In this special section I get to meet many Buddhas. Every visit I ask the residents to chant Shoshinge with me. It is surprising that many follow the Sutra book and chant with me. After chanting, I explain in simple words that Pureland is here; Amida Buddha is in front of us. As I explain about Amida, I begin to feel those residents in front of me are Buddhas to me. What a wonderful, enjoyable, and exciting feeling I get. I wonder why I feel this way, but I don't need an explanation. It is simply the way it is.

Years ago when I started to make regular visits to this nursing home, I wanted the residents to feel that they are not alone or sad. I wanted them to feel the comfort that Buddha is in their hearts. But now I receive so much comfort and energy from them each time I go. It has become a place where I must go and I want to go to meet many Buddhas.

At most Sunday Services we chant Shoshinge. There is a line "Daihi-muken-joshoga" and the translation reads as "The Great Compassionate One is, all the time, untiringly shining upon us." Of course, the compassionate one is Amida Buddha. These words give me deep comfort. The Great Compassionate one is telling me there is nothing to worry about, why don't you take it easy, live life just as it is. That Compassionate one is shining upon me. How wonderful it is to feel that my life is with Amida Buddha.

Namu Amida Butsu





# Betsuin News



## HŌONKŌ

HŌONKŌ is the memorial service for Shinran Shōnin, the founder of our Jodo Shinshu denomination. The literal meaning of HŌONKŌ is "a gathering to repay a debt of gratitude." It is, therefore, an occasion to express our appreciation for having been given this opportunity to encounter the Buddha's teaching. According to Higashi Honganji tradition, the memorial date of Shinran Shōnin is November 28, 1262. This year, our HŌONKŌ services will be on the weekend of November 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>. Overseas District Abbot Chōyū Ōtani will come again to officiate at our HŌONKŌ on behalf of Abbot Chōken Ōtani.

This year, we will have our HŌONKŌ Gathering, an English-speaking discussion on Saturday, November 12<sup>th</sup> at 6:00pm with guest speaker Rev. Ken Yamada from Berkeley Higashi Honganji. For our HŌONKŌ Service on Sunday morning at 10:00am, Rev. Ken Yamada will join us again as the guest speaker in English and Rev. Nobuko Miyoshi will return to the Betsuin to be our Japanese guest speaker. We hope that you can join us for this special annual observance.



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

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

## 12<sup>th</sup> World Dōbō Gathering Held on August 27-28

After a twenty-year wait, our North America District was given the opportunity to host the 12<sup>th</sup> World Dōbō Gathering on the weekend of August 27-28. With about 150 guests coming from Japan, Hawaii, and South America, and a large number of members from our district temples, there were a total of 309 participants in all.

We wish to take this opportunity to thank all of the volunteers who worked so hard to ensure the success of the gathering. In addition, we wish to express our heartfelt appreciation to all of our participants. Due to your support, we received complimentary words from many people for organizing a meaningful gathering. A more complete report will appear in the next issue of The Way.

## Autumn Ohigan Service & Seminar

The Autumn Ohigan Service was held on September 18<sup>th</sup>, with a Dharma Talk by Rev. Frederick Brenion in English and Rev. Masashi Fujii in Japanese. Thank you to Rev. Brenion and Rev. Fujii for their enlightening words for this special service.

Thank you to Mr. Shin Ito for chairing service and Toban 1 and other members for a delicious chicken and vegetarian curry lunch with salad and lots of dessert. We appreciate your support of this year's Autumn Ohigan Service.

Following the service and otoki, we had our Autumn Seminar in the social hall. Rev. Frederick Brenion spoke on the topic, "Buddhadharma 101: A Prerequisite for Life 101." Thank you to Rev. Frederick for an afternoon of eye-opening and contemplative discussion.

## 2016 OBON Raffle Winners

### FIRST PRIZE

\$1,000 Cash

**Lee Ezaki**

### SECOND PRIZE

4 Disneyland Park Hopper Tickets

**Sam Tan**

### THIRD PRIZE

\$500 Cash

**Janet Masunaga**

### FOURTH PRIZE

Apple Watch

**Roseann Yoshida**

### FIFTH PRIZE

Apple iPad mini

(courtesy of Tad Okumoto - Star Mazda)

**Dave Teramoto**

### SIXTH PRIZE

4 Dodger tickets and autographed Dave Roberts bobblehead

(courtesy of Scott Akasaki - LA Dodgers)

**Jenni Takemoto**

### SPECIAL PRIZE

\$500 Travel Certificate

(Courtesy of New Japan Travel Center)

**Henry Kokubun**

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

*Mrs. Mari Sakamoto (95)*  
August 21, 2016

*Mrs. Chieko Fujii (88)*  
August 25, 2016

*Namu Amida Butsu*



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## Kiku Crafts & Food Fair

Sponsored by West Covina Buddhist Temple

**Sunday, November 6, 2016  
10:00 AM - 3:00 PM**

**Asian inspired crafts, clothing,  
jewelry, books, giftware, ceramics,  
original artwork and delicious food!**

**Come for some holiday shopping,  
Stay for the fun and food!**

	ESGVJCC	
		
	Puente Ave	
Sunset		Vincent
San Bernardino (10) Fwy		
	West Covina Fashion Plaza	

There will be no central cashing. Each vendor will handle their own sales and not all vendors take credit cards.

**East San Gabriel Valley Japanese  
Community Center (ESGVJCC)  
1203 West Puente Ave  
West Covina, California**

For more information go to:  
[livingdharma.org/CurrentEvents/WCOT.html](http://livingdharma.org/CurrentEvents/WCOT.html)  
or call 909-626-6131

# The Way

