

# HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE

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# The Way

Vol. 75 | No. 6  
August/September 2023

HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE | LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

## TEMPLE SCHEDULE

### SEPTEMBER

- 3 No Service - Labor Day
- 10 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
- 17 10:00 am Autumn Ohigan Service
- 17 1:00 pm Autumn Seminar
- 24 10:00 am Sunday Service  
Temple Fun Day

### OCTOBER

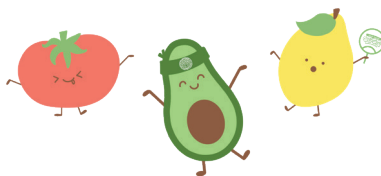
- 1 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
- 8 10:00 am Sunday Service  
Discussion Group
- 15 10:00 am Family Service
- 22 10:00 am Sunday Service
- 29 10:00 am Sunday Service  
Dharma School  
Halloween Party

### NOVEMBER

- 5 Daylight Savings
- 5 10:00 am HOONKO Service
- 12 10:00 am Kaikyo-ki/Shotsuki  
Service

## THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING

*higashi honganji*  
**OBON**  
RANCH EDITION



SUNDAY,  
SEPTEMBER 17, 2023

**Autumn  
Ohigan  
Service**  
10:00 AM

**Autumn  
Seminar**  
1:00 PM

### VISITING THE TEMPLE

The temple is currently open  
for private services and visi-  
tations 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](https://www.facebook.com/HHBT.LA)  
SUNDAYS | 10 AM



# The Way



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## The Significance of Obon

Rev. Tomoyuki Hasegawa

The months of July and August are the season of Obon. As you know, Obon is a Buddhist tradition that has a long history and is deeply ingrained in the people's lives in Japan. It is also a synonym for a summer break when family members and relatives get together for reunion while reflecting on their ancestors' lives. As I grew up in a local temple in Japan, I have many fond memories of Obon. In my childhood, it was a fun time to spend together with my relatives and temple helpers over bowls or trays of fruits and snacks. The name of the tradition *Obon* might originally have come from the term *bon* (*obon*), which simply means a bowl or tray for offering foods in Japanese.

As a Buddhist service, Obon is also called "Urabon-e" in Japanese. The word *urabon* is the same as an ancient Chinese term *yulanpen*, which means "a cooked rice (*yulan*) bowl (*pen*)." It refers to a bowl of cooked rice offered to Buddhist monks so that the donors' ancestors, who were believed to be suffering in the world of afterlife, would be saved from suffering by the merit of the act of offering. This practice of offering rice bowls to Buddhist monks in mid-summer originated in a story of a disciple of Shakyamuni, which appears in a sutra titled *Urabon-kyō* in Japanese or *Yulanpen jing* in Chinese. In fact, there have been some twists and turns in the study of this Buddhist sutra *Urabon-kyō* in history and the meaning of the word *Obon* has often been misinterpreted. But here I'd like to focus on what is the most important in observing the *Obon* tradition no matter how its concept is interpreted: the importance of reflecting on the deep wish in the lives of our loved ones as well as of ourselves.

Generally speaking, the Obon season is considered to be an opportunity

to remember our loved ones who have passed away and to make some offering or make our wishes for them, just like the Buddhist followers who offered the bowl of cooked rice to Buddhist monks for the benefit of their ancestors. It is a commonly held understanding of Obon.

However, let us think about it. What can we truly do for our ancestors? What can we offer to them to save them from suffering? Can we really make wishes for their peace and happiness in the Pure Land? In fact, our ancestors have already been in the world of Buddha's enlightenment, where all the causes and conditions of suffering are completely extinguished. In other words, they are already buddhas and bodhisattvas. On the other hand, we are still in the world of suffering, struggling to make a living and often creating new causes of anxiety. We are the ones who need help from those who are in the world of buddhas. There is nothing we can do for our ancestors and this is the reality of our lives. Our way of thinking is basically centered on our ego-self, which is the most fundamental problem in our existence.

Shinran Shōnin, our spiritual forebear of our Jōdo Shinshū tradition, describes the problem of our self-centeredness as "*Jaken kyōman aku shujō*" (Evil sentient beings with wrong views and arrogance) in the *Shōshinge*. The content of the *Shōshinge* can be divided into two parts: the first half is the explanation of the teaching based on the sutra titled Larger Sutra, and the second half is the explanation of how the teaching has been understood and handed down by Buddhist teachers in history.

At the end of the first half part, Shinran Shōnin describes himself as "*Jaken kyōman aku shujō*." By placing these harsh words as the conclusion of

the first half part, the Shōnin shows us that this is the reality of our existence. Each word of the line "*Jaken kyōman aku shujō*" sounds very sinister but it does not simply mean we are morally wrong.

The word "*jaken*" is often translated as "wrong views" but it also refers to the limitation of our self-consciousness. No matter how hard we try to understand people around us and things in this world, we can only have superficial understanding. Even within our family, it is extremely difficult to have a perfect understanding of each other. Even so, we tend to believe we always see and understand things correctly. This blind belief in our viewpoint is pointed out by the words "*jaken*" (wrong views) and "*kyōman*" (arrogance).

Another example of our "*jaken kyōman*" is our tendency to take our life for granted. The Buddhist teaching has taught us that a countless number of causes and conditions make up every moment of our lives. Every moment is unique and different. Also, life and death are the two sides of the same coin. As long as we live, death is always part of our lives. We don't know when this coin flips and the other side faces up. This uncertainty is referred to as "impermanence" in a Buddhist term. Even so, our mind can be distracted by many matters in our everyday lives. Because of the distractions, we tend to forget about the most fundamental fact of our life: we are given a precious life right at this moment.

At the Obon service, we are given

(Please see *OBON*, page 3)

PLEASE CONSIDER DONATING  
TO HIGASHI HONGANJI  
BUDDHIST TEMPLE AT  
**HHBT-LA.ORG**



# Betsuin News



## Autumn Ohigan & Autumn Seminar

This year's Autumn Ohigan Service will be held on Sunday, September 17th at 10:00 am. The Autumn Seminar will be held the same day as our Ohigan Service at 1:00 pm. The guest speaker for both our Autumn Ohigan Service and Autumn Seminar will be Rev. Frederick Brenion. Ohigan is held twice every year on or about the equinox in the spring and fall. At these times of year when the weather is most often ideal, we endeavor to strengthen our commitment to the Buddhist life. We welcome you to invite your friends and family to join us for both important events!

## No Sunday Services in August

We are taking a break from services for a few weeks through the remainder of August. There will be no service on September 3rd due to the Labor Day holiday weekend. We will resume in-person and streaming services with September Shotsuki on Sunday, September 10th. We hope you will join us then.

Thank you for your continued support and we hope that you stay safe and enjoy the rest of your summer!



**WYLIE KASAI**

DARTMOUTH COLLEGE

Master of Science in Computer Science  
with Concentration in Digital Arts  
Fellowship at DesignInquiry

Do you know kids who are interested in

**Jr. YBA,  
DHARMA SCHOOL,  
or SANGHA TEENS?**

Jr. YBA has a calendar of events starting up in the Fall! Please contact us if you know of high school-aged students who are interested! [info@hhbt-la.org](mailto:info@hhbt-la.org)

We have monthly DHARMA SCHOOL storytime and in-person activities once a month during Shotsuki Services! Please let us know if you would like to attend! Email us [hhbtkids@gmail.com](mailto:hhbtkids@gmail.com) and let us know the ages of your kids. Preschool age through elementary school/middle school.



**CY SHIGERU MIYAKE**

UTAH TECH UNIVERSITY

Bachelor of Science in Social Science

Composite Teaching

Will be teaching US History, Government, and World History at Riverton High School in Utah

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

Mr. Richard Masao Uno (72)  
June 15, 2023

Mrs. Hideko Tani (96)  
June 21, 2023

Mr. Yoshitaka Ena (83)  
July 13, 2023

Mr. Masaru Takeuchi (74)  
July 30, 2023

Mrs. Fumiko Shigemura (95)  
August 5, 2023

Namu Amida Butsu

visit our website at  
[hhbt-la.org](http://hhbt-la.org)



[facebook.com/hhbt.la](https://facebook.com/hhbt.la)



[@higashihonganjila](https://www.instagram.com/higashihonganjila)

## SUBMISSION DEADLINE!

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

CONGRATS  
GRADS!



## higashi honganji OBORI RANCH EDITION

Special thank you to STEVE and the MURATA FAMILY for hosting another memorable OBON, ranch style, in Camarillo!

The delicious chicken & beef combo, Lumbini's baked goodies, the YABA Café, the cold drink/beer booth, the refreshing shave ice, the fresh produce, the beautiful flower mart, the amazing entertainment line-up, the busy raffle booth, the exciting sky ride, the informative walking farm tours, the memory tag table, and clean porta-potties were brought back from last year!

New to this year's Obon... "The Tiny Plant Table Workshop" created by Heather, the return of Fujinkai's delicious kurimanju, the spam musubi, the hotdogs and hamburgers at YABA Café, the wonderful shade from 16 pop-up tents generously lent by Oxnard Buddhist Temple, the adorable children's game booths, and a very memorable 95th birthday celebration for Mr. Henry Yasuda with his whole family!

Our ancestors definitely found their way back to dance alongside their loved ones with their memory tags fluttering in the breeze!

The captivating music of Bon Odori, led by our dance instructors, Trish and Nancy, had MANY dancing in this glorious annual tradition!

Thank you to ALL the raffle donors and in-kind donors and to EVERYONE who donated towards our temple's largest fundraiser!

We love and appreciate Bishop Ito, all our reverends, our temple family and friends and especially to our Supervisor Janet, Office manager Susan, Overseers, Mika, Lindsay, and Nancy plus ALL the volunteers who helped make Obon 2023 possible!

ALSO....Please send powerful healing energy to our Board president, Penny Murata, a warrior woman who is getting stronger each day!



Thank you, ALL, and see you back at Higashi for Obon 2024!

Until then, please take great care, stay safe, stay healthy ... and HYDRATE!!

(OBON, cont. from page 1)

an opportunity to remember our loved ones who have passed away. By remembering our loved ones and making wishes for them, we can reflect on our self-centered way of living, how "Jaken kyōman aku shujō" we are, and our state of being upside down from the way we should be. Through reflection, we can once again awaken to the true preciousness of the moment we are living now. I believe this is the significance of the Obon tradition.

Lastly, I'd like to add one more thing. Our loved ones who have passed before us are not separated from us. They are still part of our lives supporting us as causes and conditions that make up each moment of our lives. Through deep reflection, we can be together with our loved ones in great joy in the true sense. The Obon service has another Japanese name: *Kangi-e*, the "gathering of deep joy."



## OBON RAFFLE WINNERS

### 1<sup>st</sup> Prize

\$1,000 Cash  
Y. Imamura

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize

4 Tickets to Universal Studios  
Lysander Caceres

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize

\$500 Cash  
Mary S. Yamaguchi

### 4<sup>th</sup> Prize

Apple iPad  
Ray Uyemori





The collage consists of 30 individual photographs arranged in a grid-like fashion. The photos capture various moments from the 2023 YABA CA event. Key elements include:

- Food and Drink:** Several photos show food preparation stations, including a large grill with meat, a beer garden with a 'BEER GARDEN' sign, and a 'BAKE SALE' booth. A 'RAFFLE BOOTH' is also visible with a sign for 'RAFFLE TICKETS'.
- People:** Numerous photos feature groups of people, many wearing purple t-shirts with the YABA CA logo. Some are posing for group photos, while others are engaged in social activities.
- Activities:** A 'The TINY PLANT Table workshop' is shown with people working on plant-related projects. There are also photos of people sitting at tables, possibly for a meal or a game.
- Signage:** Several signs are visible, including 'YABA CA', 'HIGASHI HONGANJI 505 E. 3RD ST. L.A.', 'BAKE SALE', 'RAFFLE TICKETS', 'BEER GARDEN', and 'The TINY PLANT Table workshop'.

The overall atmosphere is festive and community-oriented, with people enjoying food, drink, and social interaction in an outdoor setting.



## LUMBINI CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

# REGISTER NOW!

Licensed to care for 2 ½ years through Kindergarten. Year-round program with individual classrooms unique to each age group. Established in 1977, our philosophy remains the same. To provide a nurturing learning/social environment where children can grow and develop each passing year. A morning and afternoon snack is provided daily.

PLEASE CALL US FOR AN APPOINTMENT!

Hours of Operation:

Monday - Friday | 7:30 AM - 6:00 PM

**WE'RE OPEN FOR ENROLLMENT FOR  
CHILDREN AGES 2 ½ - KINDERGARTEN!**

Contact: Ms. Leslie

213-680-2976 | [lumbini.missleslie@gmail.com](mailto:lumbini.missleslie@gmail.com)

**Lumbini Child Development Center**

505 E. 3rd Street, Los Angeles, CA 90013

[lumbinidc.org](http://lumbinidc.org)

[@lumbini\\_preschool](https://www.instagram.com/lumbini_preschool) [@lumbinidc](https://www.facebook.com/lumbinidc)

