

HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE

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

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The Way

Vol. 74 | No. 8
December 2022

HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE | LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

TEMPLE SCHEDULE

DECEMBER

- 4 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
- 11 10:00 am Bodhi Day/Year-end Family Service
- 18 9:00 am Temple Clean-up
- 25 No Service
Mochitsuki Canceled
- 31 6:00 pm Joya-e Year-end Service

JANUARY

- 1 10:00 am Shusho-e New Year Service
- 8 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
- 15 10:00 am Sunday Service
Discussion Group
- 22 10:00 am Family Service
- 29 10:00 am Eitaikyo Service
New Year Luncheon
& General Meeting

FEBRUARY

- 5 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
- 12 10:00 am Sunday Service
Discussion Group

JOYA-E | YEAR-END SERVICE

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31 | 6:00PM

SHUSHO-E | NEW YEAR SERVICE

SUNDAY, JANUARY 1 | 10:00AM

Please see details on page 2.

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](https://www.facebook.com/HHBT.LA)

SUNDAYS | 10 AM

HIGASHI HONGANJI
GOLF
TOURNAMENT

SAVE THE DATE

MARCH 6, 2023

VIA VERDE COUNTRY CLUB



The Way



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Sentimental Souvenirs of the Past

Rev. Frederick Brenion

I like mind puzzles. Some of them don't really have solutions, some have too many solutions! There's a famous one about a ship that was sailed by the Greek hero Theseus. It was carefully preserved and honored for years and years. In time all the planks had been replaced. So...is it still the same ship? Or is it gone and all they had was a replica? I had a watch my father gave me ages ago. In time all its parts have been replaced. Is it still the watch he gave me? Certainly looks like it...and yet...

I came across this story on Facebook from the famous sci-fi author Douglas Adams – known for his beloved 'Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy' series.

"I remembered once, in Japan, having been to see the Gold Pavilion Temple in Kyoto and being mildly surprised at quite how well it had weathered the passage of time since it was first built in the fourteenth century. I was told it hadn't weathered well at all and had in fact been burnt to the ground twice in this century. "So it isn't the original building?" I had asked my Japanese guide.

"But yes, of course it is," he insisted, rather surprised at my question.

"But it's burnt down?"

"Yes."

"Twice."

"Many times."

"And rebuilt."

"Of course. It is an important and historic building."

"With completely new materials."

"But of course. It was burnt down."

"So how can it be the same building?"

"It is always the same building."

I had to admit to myself that this was in fact a perfectly rational point of view, it merely started from an unexpected premise. The idea of the building, the intention of it, its design, are all immutable and are the essence of the building. The intention of the original builders is what survives. The wood

of which the design is constructed decays and is replaced when necessary. To be overly concerned with the original materials, which are merely sentimental souvenirs of the past, is to fail to see the living building itself."

I was really wowed by this. I hadn't thought about the puzzle in this way. In fact, in many ways, Douglas Adams stumbled on a kind of Buddhist appreciation of the import of this puzzle. Perhaps we are caught up too much in originals. Certainly, they ought to be preserved as best as one can.

But now I wonder about me. How much of me is original? A good question. I just turned 70 and my body is really turning on me! Earlier this year I had my first serious fall. Not to mention a lot of serious dental work. On top of all that I've joined the ranks of the diabetic. But I've made some good turns around with that, and my glucose levels have dropped. But I've crossed the cusp leading into 'old age.' Sickneses I've had some share of. Birth, I've done. Death? It waits. Some of you may remember the last time I wrote for our newsletter of my 'memento mori,' a 'snow globe' or rather 'ash globe' of the Grim Reaper, robed and to my amazement, bowing in gassho to me. I bow each day as well to the Reaper, asking what we have to teach each other today. I ponder that in death there is Namu Amida Butsu. The day will come when I must have my final bow to the Reaper. But if I am accepted by Amida while alive, I sense more and more that I am accepted in death as well. Perhaps that is the meaning of the Reaper's bow to me. I would that compassion and wisdom be the final word. I desire more and more that it be the final response, the defining response from me, and to me.

So, there we are. The reminder, living proof, of the truth of Impermanence,

of Change, as taught by our Buddha. This really should be no surprise. I've lived a life of change from the moment I began. Memory tells me there is continuity, I can see semblances in appearances, and yet how did I get from there to here? There is a saying that our body replaces itself entirely every seven years. If that is true, then I've gone through ten bodies and now entering my eleventh. Amazing!

When I consider the atoms that have made me through the years there is a bit of a different story. It seems that every part of each atom came into being at the Big Bang! All these protons, neutrons, and electrons originated within the first split seconds of the universe. It took a bit for the hydrogen and helium atoms to shortly form. The 'heavier' atoms, like carbon and calcium, atoms needed for life were forged in the exploding first stars that went nova leading to the second-generation stars that now had the material to make planets like ours. When I consider the air that I breathe I can tell you that statistically, you are breathing air that has been in the lungs of every dinosaur that ever was! Even now we are breathing air that is becoming part of us that was breathed by Buddha, Moses, Jesus, and even Shinran! I must also mention that atoms of people we detest, or regret are also part of us. We must not forget this! In a very real, physical way, we are truly interconnected with everyone and everything. Much of what has been a part of me over the decades now forms parts of others. What journeys our particles

(Please see BRENIION, page 3)

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



Betsuin News



In Gratitude

NOT COMPLETELY, BUT ALMOST BACK TO NORMAL

The situation regarding COVID-19 has gotten so much better than in the previous two years. The new streams of the virus are still with us. But fewer people are testing positive who must be hospitalized and many fewer people have died from the disease. As with many other families, members of my family including myself had COVID this year, but fortunately, the symptoms were generally mild.

The temple is back...we moved to in-person Sunday services in October and will continue with our members and friends here, but since we learned how to stream our services, we will continue in a hybrid mode – in-person as well as online. We hope that you will continue to join us for our Sunday services.

As is true every year, we had so many members who went out of their way to support the temple on a regular basis. Tad Kawahira comes at least a couple of times a week and Hirokichi Maehara also comes regularly to maintain our beautiful gardens.

Recently, we had two volunteer sessions to make our temple even more beautiful than it is. On one weekday morning, a group of volunteers came to polish our brass articles such as vases, candle holders, hanging lanterns, incense burners, and other implements. It had been a while since we last held the polishing sessions we call "omigaki." The crew did such an amazing job that all the articles sparkled after they were finished. Most recently, we had our HOONKŌ service and for that, the crew came out again this time to stack rows of colorful mochi for what is called "osonae" which are the food offerings placed on the altar. I hesitate to list the volunteers because I may miss someone. But we have had Masako Sato, Tomoko Ito, Nancy Kurihara-Johnson, Kazuko Higashi, Yuko Gabe, Irene Ota, Kathy Ikeda, the three Elaines...Harada, Barbod, and Tanaka-Jackson all come

out to help us on these occasions. Our North America District ministers, Revs. Hasegawa and Goto, always help also. In this last session, we had Rev. Miyoshi and Rev. Nagayama help out as well.

Also, we must thank our tech crew, Jason Wong, Gary Kanemoto, and on occasion, Shin Ito, who have all been coming when no one else was here every Sunday to stream our services. They have consented to continue to do the work to allow our members who may not be able to come to the temple in person to be able to participate from their own homes.

Although we were not able to have our normal Obon Festival again this year, we were able to go out to the Murata ranch out in Camarillo for a "not at the temple" Obon celebration and bon odori at Steve's farm. We are fairly confident that in 2023, we will be able to have our Obon here at the temple. So, we may go to the "ranch" again for our Temple Fun Day probably in September.

We would like to thank Rev. Tomoyuki Hasegawa, Rev. Kensho Goto, who help out every Sunday, and also Revs. Miyoshi, Osa, Hata, Brenion, Toyo-

(Please see GRATITUDE, page 3)

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Joya-e New Years Eve Service

Come celebrate the end of 2022 at our Year-end Service on Saturday, December 31st at 6:00 pm. It is an opportunity to reflect on the past year and to prepare for the New Year, so please join us! The service will be held in person at the temple. Attendees must show proof of vaccination or negative test and masking is required for everyone. Please note that there will not be refreshments after the service. If you are unable or choose not to join us in person, please join us for the live stream on Facebook.

The temple will be closed
December 24th - 26th
and January 2nd - 3rd

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

 facebook.com/hhbt.la

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

Shusho-e New Year Day Service

Shusho-e is the first service of the New Year. It is a tradition in Japan to visit nearby temples and shrines on New Year's Day. We welcome you to join us to greet the New Year on Sunday, January 1, 2023 at 10:00 am. Attendees must show proof of vaccination or negative test and masking is required for everyone. Please note that there will not be refreshments after the service. If you are unable or choose not to join us in person, please join us for the live stream on Facebook.

Eitaikyo Service & General Meeting

The Eitaikyo Service will be held on Sunday, January 29th at 10:00am at the temple. This service is held in memory of all temple members who have passed away. It is also held to remember those who have been placed into the Eitaikyo register. If you are unable or choose not to join us in person, please join us for the live stream on Facebook.

The 118th Annual General Meeting and New Year Luncheon is tentatively planned to be held after the service. Further information will be mailed to you in January.

Attendees for both the service and luncheon must show proof of vaccination or negative test and masking is required for everyone.

(BRENION, cont. from page 1)

have taken and will take. Eons from now, our sun may vaporize this world, and all that has been us will be scattered back into the cosmos, perhaps to form future worlds, sentient beings. Part of you may form the Buddhas of future worlds! Who knows? But we are always and have been star stuff. This is a part of Buddhist Interconnection as well as Buddhist Change and Impermanence.

Of course, there is so much that I do not know and will never know. Yet all that is us will continue to participate in this cosmic dance that is reality. Changing and changing yet drawn together through ongoing connections. There is more variety than I can ever imagine, ever conceive.

And in this dance of Buddhist Change and Interconnectedness about me, through me, with me, is the recognition that I have never been what I've illusively thought I was, a singular self, the center of my universe. The wannabe center of everyone's universe. This too must go. The giving up of self is the opening up of real personhood. We are formed and reformed together through change and interaction. Only then are we truly living.

And so...

My elder days are arriving. Yes, I will keep a cane close by when walking and be more mindful of my health. But Buddhism teaches me to approach life with open hands, not grasping hands. Then Life will be living me. And when the time comes for my final breath, that breath will also belong to all.



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!

(GRATITUDE, cont. from page 2)

shima, and Yamada for supporting us with your video Dharma talks throughout the year. We have been without a Betsuin minister for over a year now. But we look forward to welcoming a new minister sometime in summer 2023.

As you all know, the grand celebration of the 850th Birthday of our founder, Shinran Shōnin, and the 800th Anniversary of the founding of the Jōdo-Shinshū tradition centered in April 2023. We will have a tour group to celebrate this celebration which is held only every 50 years. Although early registration is over, you may still have a chance to sign up and go to what is considered a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Best wishes for a wonderful 2023. We look forward to seeing all of you again soon.

Gassho,
Rinban Noriaki Ito



TOUR TO JAPAN April 19-27, 2023

For the 850th Celebration of the Birthday of Shinran Shōnin & the 800th Anniversary of the Establishment of Jōdo Shinshū

*Reminder to apply now for this once in a lifetime opportunity!
Applications due in January 2023.*

TO APPLY, CONTACT
Rev. Kensho Goto | 213-621-4064
hokubeikantokubu@gmail.com
or your temple minister

SUBMISSION DEADLINE!

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

Our deepest condolences

to the family and relatives of ...

Mr. Sadao Yamamoto (86)
October 16, 2022

Mrs. Atsuko Fukumoto (85)
October 27, 2022

Mr. Duke Takumi Nomura (81)
October 31, 2022

Mrs. Fumiko Okamura (103)
November 5, 2022

Mr. Toshio Tawatari (94)
November 6, 2022

Mr. Hiroshi Niwa (94)
November 9, 2022

Namu Amida Butsu

FOR UPDATES, PLEASE
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HHBT-LA.ORG

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closed national holidays

