

HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE

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

Address Service Requested

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Los Angeles, CA
Permit No. 24616

The Way

Vol. 76 | No. 1
January 2024

HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE | LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

TEMPLE SCHEDULE

JANUARY

- 7 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
- 14 10:00am Sunday Service
Discussion Group
- 21 10:00 am Family Service
- 28 10:00 am Eitai-kyo Service
120th Anniversary
Celebration/New Year
Luncheon & General
Meeting

FEBRUARY

- 4 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
- 11 10:00am Sunday Service
Discussion Group
- 18 10:00 am Family Service
- 25 10:00 am Sunday Service



Celebrating

120

Years in Los Angeles

SUNDAY, JANUARY 28

EITAIKYO SERVICE

10:00 am

120TH ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATION
New Year Luncheon &
General Meeting

12:00pm | JANM | RSVP REQUIRED

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

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

**BEST WISHES FOR A
HAPPY AND HEALTHY
2024!**





The Way



Volume 76 | Number 1 | January 2024

HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE • LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

New Year Greetings

Yul Ōtani

Overseas District Abbot,
Shinshū Ōtani-ha
(Higashi Honganji)



To our fellow seekers in our overseas districts, I send my warmest wishes for a Happy New Year. I would also like to express my deepest appreciation for your continued efforts in learning the Dharma, as well as in maintaining our Sangha and teaching tradition.

In 2019, the Covid-19 began to cause indescribable anxieties all over the world. Amid the dire situation, Russia began to invade Ukraine and thousands of precious lives have continued to be lost in which there still seems to be no end in sight. To make the situation even worse, another series of large-scale conflicts have been taking place between Israel and Palestinian militant groups.

In this world filled with never-ending wars and conflicts, what can we do and how should we live our lives? I cannot help but reflect on my responsibility as a nenbutsu practitioner. I earnestly wish that peace will be restored as soon as possible in the lives of all of the people who have been undergoing the fear and sorrow caused by war.

At our mother temple in Kyoto, the 850th Celebration of the Birth of Shinran Shōnin and the 800th Anniversary of the Establishment of Jōdo Shinshū were observed successfully last year. We were joined by so many of our Sangha members not only from across Japan, but also from the overseas districts, at the Celebration. I am truly grateful for having been able to celebrate those historical events together with many of you.

Upon reflection of the main theme for the Celebration, “Namu Amida Butsu: To Discover the Meaning of Being Born as Human Beings,” I believe that we are at a point where we must raise awareness

about the preciousness of our lives and the deep interconnection among all people in the world through the teaching of the nenbutsu.

Even though I have assumed the position of the Overseas District Abbot since 2020, because of the Covid-19 pandemic, I had been unable to travel to overseas districts for a long period of time. However, I was finally able to observe the Hōonkō Service together with you in person in the previous year. Those opportunities have reinforced my realization that we are all fellow seekers deeply interconnected with each other by the nenbutsu. Even though we live far away from each other, we are connected as stated in the phrase, “There are no boundaries between the oceans of the world.”

I sincerely look forward to seeing you all in person again at the celebratory events to be held in each overseas district and the World Dōbō Gathering in the near future.

In closing, I ask for your continued support as we begin the New Year.

Bishop Wataru Kigoshi

Chief Administrator,
Shinshū Ōtani-ha
(Higashi Honganji)



To everyone in our overseas districts, I wish to extend my New Year’s greetings for the year 2024. I would also like to express my deepest appreciation for the support you continue to give to our district activities.

The Covid-19 pandemic, which began to rage across the globe in 2019, has finally been diminishing. Because of that, the city of Kyoto is now bustling with countless numbers of tourists again.

In April last year, the 850th Celebration of the Birth of Shinran Shōnin and the 800th Anniversary of the Establishment of Jōdo Shinshū were wonderfully celebrated

at our mother temple. So many of our Sangha members, not only from across Japan but also from the overseas districts, were able to join in the Celebration. As I mentioned in my greetings at the Hōonkō Service last year, because of the pandemic, we were unable to meet together in person to listen to the teachings for such a long period of time. Then I believe many of us subconsciously had the desire to “gather and listen to the teachings together.” Since the Celebration was the first major event since the beginning of the pandemic, I was truly grateful for being able to “gather and listen to the Dharma together.”

In our overseas districts, we are planning upcoming Dharma events such as the Celebration and the World Dōbō Gathering in a few years. On such occasions, let us once again remind ourselves of how precious such opportunities are, and renew our commitment to listen to the teaching of

the nenbutsu together.

If you have a chance to visit Kyoto in the near future, please come to the Shinshū Honbyō to encounter the image of Shinran Shōnin and to refresh your appreciation of the teaching of the nenbutsu here. When you return home, please share your appreciation of the teaching with your family and friends. It is in that way that we can carry on our tradition. This is my sincere wish for the coming year.

In closing, I ask for your continued support and guidance as we begin the New Year.

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

(BOARD, cont. from page 2)

elevator, and renovation of the kitchen.

A big shout-out to the Murata family for offering a safe and spacious site, their ranch in Somis, as the location of the Obon, 2 years in a row. With the efforts of many volunteers, we all enjoyed a wonderful day there. Our wish is to safely bring back the Obon to our temple this year.

Overcoming the challenges of the pandemic, we slowly and carefully opened up the temple to in-person services and events, while continuing the live-streaming for those unable to attend. It has been a welcoming sight to see many members return to the temple. In September, we welcomed our new minister from Japan, Rev. Mayuki Nagamine, who has been a tremendous asset to the Betsuin, delivering Dharma messages, in both fluent English and Japanese. You will also see her singing in the Otani Gakuen choir at Sunday services and teaching Japanese language and songs to the children at Lumbini Child Development Center. If you haven't yet, please come and meet

her. This past November, the North America District, in partnership with the Betsuin, had the rare privilege to host our Overseas District Abbot Yul Otani, Bishop Shunjin Nasu, and Rev. Yasuyoshi Nobesawa from our Kyoto Honzan. We were honored to have their presence at the Hoonko Gathering and the Hoonko service, in memory of our founder Shinran Shonin, the most important observance of the year.

I am very grateful to so many people who have contributed their time, guidance, support, enthusiasm, and willingness to help wherever needed. They include Bishop Ito, Rev. Nagamine, Rev. Hasegawa, Rev. Goto, Rev. Brenion, Rev. Hata, Rev. Osa, Rev. Miyoshi, Rev. Imahara, Rev. Toyoshima, and Rev. Yamada, who have guided us through their Dharma messages and written articles. A big thank you goes to the Board of Directors and all organizations for their recommendations, wise counsel, and support. Thank you to Kazue Funai and the Otani Gakuen Choir; we very much enjoy listening to your

musical selections at services. Thanks to Gary and Jason, who make possible access to weekly services for those unable to attend. We are grateful to the property crew and gardeners, Tadahide Kawahira and Hirokichi Mayehara for maintaining the upkeep of the building and garden. Thank you to Janet Ito, Fujinkai, and Toban volunteers who provide otoki and refreshments after services, when everyone can socialize and reconnect. We are so thankful to have such an efficient office staff, Susan Kashiwabara, Mika Ito-Yamada, and Nancy Kurihara-Johnson, who run the day-to-day operations, events planning, and mailings. And to our entire Sangha, we are very grateful for your continued generous contributions, upon which the existence of our temple depends. Finally, we extend our sincere wishes for Penny Murata's steady improvement and recovery. It has been an honor to serve as Interim Board President.

In Gassho,
Irene Ota



EITAIKYO SERVICE 120TH ANNIVERSARY NEW YEAR'S LUNCHEON & GENERAL MEETING

The Eitaikyo Service will be held on Sunday, January 28th 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.

This year is extra special, as we will be celebrating our 120th Anniversary at our New Year Luncheon & General Meeting following Eitaikyo Service at the Japanese American National Museum. Further information will be mailed to you in January.

We look forward to seeing everyone for this special celebration!

Rev. Fred Brenion A New Year's Greeting

There is a custom in Japan to celebrate the New Year with a haiku commemorating something first for the year. Here is mine:

This New Year poem,
All my words fly out crazy.
Were I silent, Truth.

Well! Let me wish each of you a Happy New Year! I hope that you meet your deepest aspiration this coming year. This past year some of us have experienced great joys, some great sorrows. Yet each day has been a reminder of the teachings of the Dharma. We live in a world of impermanence and change. There is nothing new in this. Right now, the Sun is shining. Each of us is breathing. The flowers on our altars or at our homes have wonderful scents. There is

(Please see **BRENION**, page 4)

Rev. Tomoyuki Hasegawa Higashi Honganji USA Headquarters

Happy New Year! I wish to express my deepest gratitude for your continued support of our temples and district activities throughout the past year. There were many sources of anxieties such as the breakdown in public order and soaring prices, as well as the continued crises in Ukraine and Gaza Strip, which have had direct and indirect influences on our daily lives. However, those difficulties have made us reflect on what is the most important in our lives. In other words, we have been given opportunities to think about what the innermost wish deep within our existence is. That is the essence of the Mahayana, which is embodied as Shinran Shōnin's teaching. Let's continue to walk the broad path of awakening guided by the everlasting truth in the teaching as well as by our innermost wish.



New Year Greetings

ABA

Wishing you a “Happy New Year” from the Adult Buddhist Association!

During 2023 our ABA property group continued to be responsible for Temple maintenance issues which included plumbing leaks and ceiling repairs. Additionally at the request of LA Fire Department the crew cleared storage areas that were deemed a potential fire hazard.

Periodically during the year, at the request of our landscape group, tree debris and trash on the sidewalks on Third and Central was cleaned and removed. Graffiti on fencing was painted over and larger “tags” were referred to LA City’s graffiti removal team.

We are continuing to insure that our Board of Directors is fully informed about Little Tokyo area issues. The safety of our daycare children, staff, members and visitors is paramount.

During the year, thanks to all who volunteered for reception duties and provided security for our Sunday services. Also special thanks to Jason and Gary

who insured that our Sangha could stream “every” Sunday service!

Recently, the Board approved the renewal of a video surveillance security system contract which protects the physical integrity of our Temple including our Hondo and our priceless Onaijin artifacts.

In May our ABA and Fujinkai members and Sangha friends (Higashi Team) joined community volunteers to clean-up the sidewalks and streets of Little Tokyo. Higashi Team members continue to believe that our involvement in “Little Tokyo Sparkle” is particularly important because of the generous community support our Temple received after the 2021 vandalism incident.

Also in May our Temple mothers were honored with a strawberry daifuku manju set, compliments of Fugetsudo and the beautiful flowers donated by Lisa Shimamoto.

This past July our Sangha members and friends celebrated Obon at the Murata family farm. We thank the Murata’s for allowing us to gather for a very enjoyable Festival. Please join us in July 2024 when

the Obon Festival will return to the Temple.

As summer turned to Fall we had the opportunity to attend the Hoonko special services and memorial in honor of Shinran Shonin. We were honored that the Overseas District Abbott Yul Otani and Honzan representatives were able to join us for the special program.

In December we closed out the year with the Temple clean-up and celebrate the first Temple Mochitsuki since Covid.

Thanks again to the members and friends who are always willing to work the yearly events, including special concerts (Katis)and provide support and donations for the above projects. Your efforts help to defray maintenance costs so that your generous donations can be used to insure the future of the Temple.

If you are interested in joining us, please contact the Temple office.

Finally, we are so pleased and gratified to see the return of Dr. Penny Murata!!!

In gassho,
Adult Buddhist Association

FUJINKAI

2023 was another eventful year of contrasts and reminded us of the Buddhist teaching that change is a constant in our lives. In the midst of tragedies and chaos throughout the world, however, our sangha was able to experience some happy changes this year.

For the first time since the Covid pandemic, we were able to have otoki and enjoyed curry rice after Tanjo-e in May. On Father’s Day, thanks to Janet Ito and other members, lunch bags of onigiri, spam musubi, edamame, and fruit and desserts were served. In July, members and friends got together to make kurimanju for Obon at the Ranch. It was such fun.

In August, the temple welcomed our new resident minister, Rev. Mayuki Nagamine , who has assumed her duties with enthusiasm and has been a great help to everyone.

This year HOONKO observances were held early in the month because we were fortunate to have Overseas District Abbot Yul Otani come from Japan to officiate this

most important service. He also officiated at the kikyoshiki ceremony to present dharma names to five NAD members. Two additional guests from the Honzan attended our services: Bishop Shunjin Nasu and Rev. Yasuyoshi Nobesawa. They all joined with us to partake of otoki of vegetarian pizza after the gathering on 11/4/23 and then oden plus delicious desserts after the service on 11/5/23.

The Fujinkai is most grateful to our members and friends who have continued to support us with their invaluable help and donations. We hope to keep our temple strong as a beautiful place to hear the Buddhadharm and to be with friends.

Please stay well. We wish you a very happy new 2024!

(BRENION, cont. from page 3)

a New Year smile on your faces. And Life goes on. Always has, always will.

Still, there is something about a New Year that makes us want to celebrate, plan, and hope. It’s a new start. That’s the great thing about calendars. While they have a last day, that last day is always followed by another first day. The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. This day we all share in our first step into this year.

Each day is a new day. Every day a now day. Every now is always a new now. So every now is as a New Year’s now, even if it is at the last day of the year, and, when the time comes, at the last moment of my life. And this is as true for you as it is for me!

So I guess this really is going to be a happy New Year!

Happy New Year everyone!

Namandabu, Namu Amida Butsu!

visit our website at
hhbt-la.org

 facebook.com/hhbt.la

LUMBINI CORNER

Happy 2024! We cannot believe how fast the year came to an end and another one has begun! We hope everyone enjoyed the winter holidays safely with family and friends. 2023 has been another unique year. As challenging as it has been, we have been able to keep our doors open and have made every effort to continue to encourage our students to learn to their fullest abilities. With the support of a caring staff and caring families, the students succeed each year and grow into the next. Mr. Danny and Mr. Jack continue to offer wonderful classroom activities for their students in Red Room and Yellow Room. For the first time since the pandemic, we were so happy to bring back our Holiday Program! The students did a wonderful job performing two holiday songs and one Japanese song! After the program, students had a chance to see santa and received a special gift for a job well done. On behalf of the Lumbini Child Development Center Staff and Commissioners, we would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a happy and healthy new year. Thank you to everyone for your generous support and donations. We are looking forward to another successful year.

In Gassho,
Leslie Nicho,
LCDC Director

YOUTH GROUP UPDATE

Happy New Year! 2023 was a year of getting back together and we had so much fun! We hope more friends will join us this year! We look forward to regular Dharma School sessions in 2024! We will meet Shotsuki Service Sundays. Please join us!



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

Mrs. Kiyoko Kawashima-Motoyama (92)
November 29, 2023

Mrs. Sachiko Ogura (87)
December 13, 2023

Namu Amida Butsu