

PAY IT FORWARD

By Jeff-Shannon Davidson

(In November, Shannon attended a retreat at Higashi Honganji Honganji's main temple (Honzan) in Kyoto, sponsored by our North America District)

The entrance gate at Higashi Honganji's main temple in Kyoto is stunning. Walk through it and you're immediately overpowered by the immensity of the "Great Hall" and other temple structures.

I was a bit anxious about staying at the temple, fearing freezing rooms with ancient plumbing, a starvation diet and no Wi-Fi. As it turned-out, the retreat center is modern and comfortable (but no Wi-Fi). That really wasn't a problem because there were many interesting people to meet. Along with four from mainland U.S., there were 10 people from Hawaii plus countless others from throughout Japan. A large group came from Brazil and most of them spoke excellent English.

Hoonko at Honzan

"headquarters" is a weeklong series of memorial services for Shinran Shonin. Memorials typically are sad events focused on loss, but this service was the opposite. Shinran died 750 years ago so we were there to appreciate what he taught us. Rather than looking back sadly, we focused on the present and future. People spoke of how these lessons can improve our lives. We weren't there to "take from Shinran," rather "to give back," or as they say, "pay it forward."

At the retreat center, we lived a semi-communal life-style with everyone assigned to a "work group." Before breakfast, I went to my assignment in the cafeteria but there was little to do but a great deal of "paying it forward." The retreat center has a kitchen staff and so all the tables already were set. Our assignment consisted of using a paddle to serve rice into bowls. Other people soon arrived to help so it only took perhaps five minutes to finish. It wasn't

really work but a Buddhist lesson in helping each other.

Later, our group was supposed to "rake leaves in the garden." We were given rakes, then walked a few blocks to Higashi Honganji's Shosei-en garden, which is about three city blocks large, including a large pond filled with koi fish and probably 100 maple trees. Our group leader, Rev. Kenshi Ise, carried a large canvas bag and told us to rake. The place was covered with maple leaves. It looked like it would take some time, but a short while later, Rev. Ise told us to stop. The park has a gardening staff and they would complete the job. Once again, I realized that raking leaves allowed us to give back to Honzan as a gesture of appreciation.

We attended three days of services at Honzan. All services were in Japanese. I understood virtually nothing being said or chanted. But the retreat process was well planned. We had wireless radios with which to listen to an English

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February 2016



Date	Day	Time	Event
3	Wednesday	12:30 p.m.	Mah jong club
6	Saturday	11:00 a.m.	Private memorial service
7	Sunday	9:45 a.m.	WBA meeting
		10:00 a.m.	Nirvana Day/Shotsuki service/Dharma School
		2:00 p.m.	All Together Now music
13	Saturday		San Luis Obispo retreat
14	Sunday		No Sunday service/San Luis Obispo retreat
16	Tuesday	7:30 p.m.	Temple Board meeting/ABA meeting
17	Wednesday	12:30 p.m.	Mah jong club
20	Saturday	7:30 p.m.	Concord Howakai
21	Sunday	10 a.m.	Eitaikyo Perpetual Memorial Service
		2 p.m.	All Together Now music
27	Saturday	9 a.m.	Kurimanju making
28	Sunday	10 a.m.	Family service/Dharma school
		8 a.m.-6 p.m.	Ohtani Basketball Jamboree (Berkeley High School)
March			
1	Sunday	10:00 a.m.	Family service
		noon-5 p.m.	Spring Food Bazaar

UPCOMING EVENTS

FEBRUARY TOBAN

(Toban #1-thru April) *Michi Takata, Satoko Davidson, Janice Adachi, Wendy Adachi, Hiro Chin, Grace Goto, Hiroko Higuchi, Julie Kihara, Connie Morita, Denise Nakano, Diane Nishioka, Dorise Ouye, Sachiye Toyofuku, Sachi Yamada*

SHOTSUKI MEMORIAL SERVICE

We will hold our Shotsuki monthly memorial service on Feb. 7, at 10 a.m, which is also Nirvana Day, the day the Buddha passed into

parinirvana at the age of 80. The following families will observe memorials for loved ones this month: *Asazawa, Fujikawa, Garvey, Higuchi, Hirano, Honda, Ichioka, Ito, Jitoshu, Kondo, Makishima, Mori, Nakano, Otani, Shinoda, Takahashi, Tanji, Uyeno, Yamada, Yatabe*. Our guest speaker today will be Mr. **Shannon Davidson**, who will talk about his visit and retreat at Higashi Honganji headquarters in Kyoto. We hope you will attend.

EITAIKYO PERPETUAL MEMORIAL SERVICE

February 21 at 10 a.m. will be our annual "Eitaikyo" service in which all families, past and present, who have shared a connection with our temple, are invited to attend. Traditionally we observe, not only the passing of our loved ones, but also gratitude to our ancestors, who are essential links in our existence. This tradition, which started in Japan's Edo Period, hundreds of

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years ago, also is a way for people who live far away to observe a service for their families, listen to the Dharma, and make offerings to help keep the temple and Buddha's teachings alive "perpetually."

ABA MEETING The Adult Buddhist Association (ABA) will meet after the temple board meeting Tuesday, February 16 (7:30 p.m.) in the social hall for Spring food bazaar planning. Anyone interested is invited to attend.

CONCORD HOWAKAI Monthly gatherings at the Japanese American Religious and

Cultural Center in Concord resume this year with a short service and social gathering on February 20 at 7:30 p.m. For more information, contact Rev. Ken. Everyone is invited.

OHTANI BASKETBALL JAMBOREE Our temple's Ohtani basketball organization will host its annual basketball jamboree on Sunday, February 28 all day at Berkeley High School. The one-day tournament has become a popular event for elementary school-age players from around Northern California and is Ohtani basketball's biggest fundraiser. Come out, support your team, and check out what's for sale at our famous snack bar!

WBA FOOD BAZAAR Our Spring food bazaar will be held on Sunday, March 6 from noon to 5 p.m., sponsored by the Women's Buddhist Association and the Adult Buddhist Association. Enjoy delicious Japanese food for lunch, early dinner or takeout at this annual fundraiser and community event. Please also come help on Saturday from 9 a.m., Sunday from 7 a.m. and throughout the day.

**Members and Supporters -- Please don't forget your baked goods and check the calendar for preparation times. Remember to invite your friends! Thank you.*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BIG THANK YOU'S TO THE FOLLOWING

New Year's Day service *Irving Yamashita* (chairperson)

The Adult Buddhist Association (ABA) for sponsoring their annual appreciation dinner at Seison restaurant in Oakland last month, attended by 32 people.

Thank you everyone for your donations, time, energy and support. Because of you, our temple exists for us and for future generations. Help us by calling or emailing the temple if names are inadvertently omitted from acknowledgements or donations. Domo arigato gozaimashita!

Mochitsuki



The 2016 Family Retreat: Being Buddhist in America

Lecturer: Rev. Masao Kodani

Date: Feb. 13 (Sat.)~14 (Sun.), 2016 (President's Day Weekend)

Location: San Luis Obispo Buddhist Temple
6996 Ontario Road
San Luis Obispo, CA 93405

Fee: \$35.00/adults; discounted fees for children

Checks payable to: WCHHBT

Mail to: West Covina Buddhist Temple

P.O. Box 1616 West Covina, CA 91793



More Info: (626)689-1040

revnobuko@gmail.com (Rev. Miyoshi) or pishsato@gmail.com (Pat Sato)



◆ Rev. Masao Kodani will talk about "Being Buddhist in Christian America" and he will cover and discuss the following four points:

1. If you are born and raised in America, you are Christian in culture, attitudes, value judgments, etc., regardless of what religion you might profess.
2. If you profess to being Buddhist but can see not real appreciable difference from other Americans, how then does Buddhism affect your life? Especially since Buddhism, along with Hinduism, Confucianism, and Taoism are religions fundamentally different from the great theistic religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.
3. What are the differences, and how do these differences, if accepted, change our lives in world view and attitudes from Christianity?
4. How do we plug into the Buddhist view of life that necessarily must change our way of life?

◆ Rev. Masao Kodani is a former resident minister of Senshin Buddhist Temple and co-founder of Kinnara Taiko - the second taiko group established in the United States and the first Japanese American Buddhist group. He was born and raised in Los Angeles. He graduated from UC Santa Barbara in East Asian Studies and later earned a M.A. degree from Ryukoku University in Kyoto. He served at Senshin Buddhist Temple from 1968 until he retired in 2013.

◆ The \$35.00 fee includes all meals, and there is free lodging available at the temple (though space is limited and you must bring a sleeping bag); nearby motels are also available.

Name(s): _____

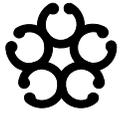
Number of Attendees: _____ E-mail: _____

Cell phone*: _____

*Please provide instead of home/landline number for communications at the retreat.

Credits:

This is a publication of the Berkeley Higashi Honganji. Please contact Rev. Ken Yamada at 1524 Oregon Street, Berkeley, CA 94703. 510-843-6933. www.bombu.org. ken_yamada@rocketmail.com. Newsletter design by Kevin Sullivan



12th World Dobo Gathering August 27/28, 2016

The 12th World Dōbō Gathering will be held on the weekend of August 27/28, 2016 at the Hilton Hotel Los Angeles/Universal City and at the Los Angeles Betsuin. It is anticipated that approximately 360 people will gather from the three overseas districts and Japan. The theme of the upcoming meeting is "Dōbō: Seeking Unity in the Midst of Diversity," with the accompanying slogan, "Learning from the Past – Living in the Present – Envisioning the Future." The keynote speaker will be Dr. Mark Unno, associate professor and head of the Religious Studies department at the University of Oregon. We hope that all of you will join us for this historic event.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Registration Fee: \$250.00

Application period: 1/1/16~6/15/16

Fee includes full participation at the event, transportation and admission to JANM, as well as two lunches and the dinner banquet

Registration Deadline: 6/15/16

JTB Registration webpage: <http://online.jtbusa.com/group/DOBO/>

WDG Updated information site: <http://higashihonganji.org>

Members-Only Early Registration Fee - \$200

Available for full-fledged paid members of Higashi Honganji Temples (Betsuin, Berkeley, West Covina, Newport Beach)

This discount is available only to those verified as paid members by each temple.

To take advantage of this offer: 1) Submit your name and email address to your minister, 2) The minister will then submit your name to the NAD office, 3) An email will be sent directly from JTB to each applicant with a link to the discounted rate registration page.

A limited number of subsidies are available and offered at a first-come first-served basis. As a result, this Early Registration may not be available during the entire 3-month period.

Registration for this discounted rate will only be available from 1/1/16 to 3/31/16.

Cancellation Policy:

No refund if cancelled on/after June 1, 2016

Aug 27 Banquet only Participants

We want everyone to participate fully in the Gathering. However, for various reasons, there may be those who cannot attend the entire program but wish to come only to the banquet. The banquet-only option, therefore, is being made available to those people who cannot attend the entire event.

Dinner cost: \$120 – Child meal available (10 and younger): \$48

Hilton Los Angeles / Universal City room rates (does not include breakfast)

Single/Double Occupancy \$290

Triple Occupancy \$335

Quad Occupancy \$380

Hotel Parking Rates:

Overnight self parking (hotel guests) - \$24.00 – One-day Self parking - \$12.00

Overnight valet parking (hotel guests) - \$28.00 – One-day Valet parking - \$20.00

All parking rates are subject to 10% applicable tax (as of Dec 2015 – subject to change)



BERKELEY HIGASHI HONGANJI
1524 OREGON ST., BERK.

Spring
**Food
Bazaar**

*Sun. March 6
12:00 - 5:00 pm*

SUSHI • TERIYAKI CHICKEN •
CURRY RICE • UDON • ETC.

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translation by Professor Michael Conway from Otani University, whose language skills were phenomenal.

We also participated in lectures and discussions, which were great fun. We shared our thoughts and experiences, helping us develop friendships with people who might otherwise have been warm bodies in a cold temple.

At our services in Berkeley, usually Rev. Yamada sits alone in the altar to chant, while a few sitting in pews chant along. At the service at Honzan, about 30 priests in colorful robes chanted in the altar, with another 50 priests sitting in front, chanted along. About two hundred lay people sitting in the hall also chanted, most apparently by memory!

The big attraction at the main Hoonko service is called "Bando Bushi," a stylized form of chanting performed by a few dozen priests for about 20 minutes. I learned that most of them were blood-related descendants of priests who originated this chanting style, in which they violently rock back and forth, as if riding a boat in a turbulent sea. In fact, this style is said to come from a story of Shinran riding a boat in exile.

Rev. Ise was a pleasant and entertaining guide, giving us "an insider's tour of the temple" by showing us places most tourists never see, such as a 400 year-old building where the abbot long ago held meetings. Lowly disciples could only sit silently in a certain place without even seeing him. Higher ranked members sat close to the front, but just a few were allowed to speak. Security guards would stand nearby.

Rev. Ise announced with delight that soon we would meet the person likely to become the next abbot. It seemed intimidating, considering the explanation we just heard. Ise-sensei opened a sliding door, suddenly here in this old building was a room that looked like a presidential suite at a fancy hotel, with leather chairs, hardwood tables and plush carpet. I walked this future abbot and his wife alone without guards or servants. Friendly and humble, he warmly greeted us. We were a bit shocked but pleasantly surprised. Speaking for myself, this meeting was the highlight of our retreat.

Although I have attended services for nearly 50 years and read many Buddhist books, I'm not an academic Buddhist. I'm still a psychologist and focus more

on people around me rather than lectures. Throughout the discussions and tours of where Shinran studied, meditated for 100 days, and where he is enshrined, I didn't take any notes. What I learned was subtle and internal.

I'll never forget the people who taught me on this trip: Rev. Hasegawa from the North America District office with his knowledge of Kyoto and historical sites, and Professor Conway, who in his humble, self-effacing and humorous way, provided clear and informative lessons. I really appreciated Reverend Ise, who was charming and welcoming, and seemed always to answer our questions before we asked them. He was the consummate scholar and priest and I will never forget him.

I'd like to thank our temple board for giving me the honor to attend this retreat. This trip will stand out as a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

バークレー東本願寺会報

2016年2月号

2月お寺の行事予定

7日(日)	午前9時45分	婦人会会議
	午前10時	家族礼拝・ダルマスクール
14日(日)		休み
16日(火)	午後7時30分	仏教会定例理事会
20日(土)	午後7時30分	コンコード法話会
21日(日)	午前10時	永代経法要
27日(土)	午前9時	くりまんじゅう作り
28日(日)	午前10時	家族礼拝・ダルマスクール
		大谷バスケットボール・ジャンボリー(バークレー高校にて)
3月6日	12 pm— 5 pm	春日本食バザール

2月婦人会当番

岩田栄子、Davidson さとこ、あだちジャニース、あだち ウェンディ、チンひろ、ごうとう
グレイス、樋口裕子、木原ジュリー、森田カーニー、中野デニース、西岡 ダイアン、
Ouye ドリス、豊福さちえ、山田さちこの諸夫人。(敬称略)

祥月法要今

祥月法要は、7日(日)午前10時より、今月の施主は浅沢、樋口、肥和、市岡、伊藤、地頭所、
毛利、中野、登、佐野、篠田、高橋、山田、横田、の諸家です。

永代経法要

2月21日(日)午前10時より、本年の永代経法要が勤められます。有縁の方々に法要後案内が
発送されます。御家族おそろいでお参りください。尚、皆様からのこの法要への御寄付は永代経
基金として積み立て、寺の有事の時に使わせて頂いています。

婦人会総会

婦人会総会が2月7日(日)午前10時から開かれますが、会議まえの9時45分より本堂で
お焼香をし、会議に臨んで下さい。



聖人の御影を拝んで

(上場顕雄 教学研究所嘱託研究員)

親鸞聖人の「御真影」を本山で拝する時、あるいは聖人絵像のお姿や顔を拝見し合掌する時、何を考え、何を思うのだろうか。否、何も考えずにただ敬意をもって合掌する場合もあろう。

聖人の教えを聞く場合、その言葉・内容とともに、顔や視線あるいは姿をイメージする場合もあろう。たとえば関東での二十年間、習俗や権力層にまどわされる民衆に、どのような姿で阿弥陀仏一仏の教えを語られたか、などである。

聖人のお姿は住職・寺族なら毎日のように拝しているのではないだろうか。朝のお勤めの時もそうであろうが、特にお仏飯をお供えする時、お顔や眼光を自らの眼前にみて合掌するのが常であろう。少なくとも筆者はそうである。

ご門徒も「鏡御影」や「熊皮の御影」などをかつての展覧会や図録で一度は拝見されたことと思う。また近年はそれらの複製掛軸があり、それに接することもあろう。

聖人絵像の原形ともいべきなのが「鏡御影」と「安城の御影」である。両絵像とも寿像で、前者は聖人七十歳頃の立像、後者は坐像で八十三歳の時とされる。寿像とは存命中に描かれた肖像画・絵像のことをいう。高僧の画像は多々あろうが、寿像は絵師が像主と対面して描いており、描写の正確さや迫真性を最も感じさせられる。

「鏡御影」は紙本(和紙)に墨線で描かれている。墨線の濃淡があるが、細線でていねいに描かれた聖人のお顔をよくみると、はりのある額、ややこけた頬、小さな腰や体格。不屈の念仏者としての心うたれるお姿である。

眼光は厳しさの中にやさしさが感じられ、その視線と口もとは今にも我々に話しかけてくださるような生き生きとした感をもつのは筆者だけではないだろう。

「安城の御影」は畳の前に鹿杖(頭の部分がT字型をした杖)、毛皮の草履、火鉢がおかれている。杖のにぎりの下が二つに枝分かかれし、赤い火がみえる火鉢は、冬の寒い中での法談を思わせられる。後に存覚はこの絵像について、草履は「猫の皮」、敷皮は「狸皮」などと材質まで記している。

これら聖人の日常の生活を感じさせ、また罪業をせおっている同じ人間として親しみを感じ、合掌する心を生ぜせしめる。「熊皮の御影」も同様で、熊皮の上に衣姿で着座しておられるのも聖人だからこそと思う。

聖人像・お姿と対峙する時、聖人が求められた仏道、我々に示してくださった人間のあり方など、その心に遇っていかうとする自らの姿勢が問われてこよう。おのずと感動をもって聞思の心が生まれてくるのではないだろうか。宗祖七百五十回御遠忌を近く迎えるにあたって、それはあらためて聖人の門徒としての自覚でもある。



REPAYING GRATITUDE

“In recent years, there have been services where everyone has dispersed after nothing more than sake, rice and tea. This is indeed contrary to the fundamental intent of the Buddha-dharma... It is essential that each of those lacking faith have discussions with one another...

“The import of our tradition’s spiritual mind is that, regardless of the depth of our evil hindrances, there is no doubt whatsoever that those who deeply entrust in Amida Buddha will be born in the Pure Land, one hundred out of one hundred times... Once they understand this, they will recognize that the holding of monthly services is a repayment of indebtedness and an expression of gratitude.”

(excerpt from a letter written in 1498 by Rennyo Shonin, abbot of Higashi Honganji)



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Address Correction Requested