

# Gassho

To promote a greater understanding and appreciation of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism  
and to continue to live the nenbutsu as a warm and friendly temple



## Sensei's Message

The light of your face is unsurpassed in majesty,  
Your awesome greatness is beyond limit,  
A brightly shining flame with no equal.  
Next to your brilliance,  
Even the brightness of sun,  
Moon, and Manji jewel (any jewel from sutra) seem covered in black ink.  
-Larger Sutra of Immeasurable Life

It is February, and I am looking out on the makings of an already blooming spring. Can you believe how green it is here in the Los Angeles area? Rare is it to see so much life, and yet this is not totally true. When we look out into the world and contemplate the budding of new life around us, have you thought to yourself "Wow life is beautiful!"? As human beings, it is hard to realize that true brilliance is in the words "Life is Infinitely Beautiful!"

Let the Buddha reach you. The passage above is the first verse of what Jodo Shinshu Buddhists know as the San Butsu Ge. It speaks about what it is to be in the presence of a Buddha. Even though we are not physically close to one, we can imagine the brightness and brilliance that engulfs all sources of beauty and pales them.

When we attempt to think with a pure heart and mind, no matter where we are and what is happening "Life is Beyond Words." Because of our judgmental perceptions, we only weigh every event of our linear lives. The highs and lows become benchmarks of our perceivable reality. We become fixated on these events and they hinder us to see the truth. I can hear the birds singing, feel the wind blowing on my face, take a whiff of the fresh air, and exhale with relief. Even the ants working so vigorously at my feet are amazing marvels of life. Is it so hard to always appreciate these things when they don't serve a selfish end? Amida Buddha accepts us for being so selfish, and urges us to awaken to hear the call of Nenbutsu.

Yes, our human lives are seemingly more complicated than this, but we make them this way. We have to work hard to fulfill our basic needs for survival. Then it is to open our eyes to the many blessing we have already received. These blessings are clothing, shoes, shelter, and the nutrients to carry us to the next day. These blessings are the connections, and people that support our daily lives and future endeavors. Then look around and pass on this truth and beauty.

Think on the Buddha's face, and receive the Buddha's light. Allow it to teach, overtake, and guide you to see the True Treasure of Life in this fleeting moment. The Buddha's wish is for us to live a fulfilled life. Amida's wish allows us to hear the calling Name, Namu Amida Butsu that continues to resonate within us as we journey on our path.

Namu Amida Butsu



Venice Honwanji Buddhist Temple  
12371 Braddock Drive, Los Angeles California 90230

# President's Message

*Yoroshiku onegaishimasu* (よろしくおねがいします). This common Japanese phrase can have several different meanings depending upon the context. When introducing yourself, it can mean, "glad to meet you," or "please be kind to me." It can also mean, "please do this for me." When working within a group, it can mean, "let's work hard together," or "thank you for your valuable time." What a perfect phrase to use in my first Gassho article!

First of all, let me introduce myself. I am the new President of the Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple, Ron Gee, *yoroshiku onegaishimasu*. I am of Chinese ancestry (both of my parents immigrated to the United States) and I didn't grow up within an organized religion. The only ritual we followed was going into our backyard on New Year's Day and burning incense while making offerings of food.

I came to the VHBT through marriage. My wife, Iris, had started her Buddhist life at Senshin Buddhist Temple, where her parents were members, and then, when her family moved to Santa Monica, she started attending West Los Angeles Buddhist Temple. Eventually, she moved to Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple, where we were married close to 27 years ago.

I can't say that I became deeply involved with the temple right away. We would come for the special services and events, like Hanamatsuri and Obon Festival, but it wasn't until our kids reached school age that we started attending Dharma School services on a regular basis. It was at those services where I was exposed to the Dharma, and I was fortunate to hear ministers who could relate the Dharma to our everyday lives.

To list the ways that the Dharma has made a positive and lasting change in my life would take another page in this newsletter, so maybe I'll save that for another issue. But I began to participate in more activities at the temple, helping out at the different festival booths, mochitsuki, youth organizations, temple cleanups, etc. A few years ago, I was asked if I would join the Communications Committee and help with the temple's [web site](#). Since I have a programming background, I readily agreed, and ended up redesigning the site, as well as creating the [VHBT Facebook page](#).

As a member of this committee, one of the responsibilities I had was to attend the temple's monthly board meetings so I could report on the progress of the web site. After a year or so of attending board meetings, I was asked to be one of the Recording Secretaries, to replace Emily Kariya, who was elected to be our temple's President. Again, I readily agreed; it seemed like a nice, low-key position. Little did I know that the role of Recording Secretary was the fast track to the temple presidency.

So here I am, your new President, humbled that the Sangha feels that this Chinese boy has what it takes to lead the temple, a little scared because of the great responsibility that comes with the position, yet excited because I see so many possibilities for the temple to grow. I want our temple to reach out into the general community and become active in issues that are in line with the Dharma. I want to strengthen our educational programs so that people who are new to Buddhism, and new to our temple, can quickly feel comfortable that Jodo Shinshu is right for them. At the same time, I want to make sure that our current activities, which culturally means so much to our existing members, and which also helps to "keep the lights on" through their fundraising, continue. I hope I can inspire the Sangha with my vision, and together, may we all work hard for the future of the Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple. *Yoroshiku onegaishimasu!*

**-Ron Gee**



# Fujinkai

By Judy Hopfield with Phyllis Hayashibara

The winter season was a busy one for our Venice Fujinkai. On December 6, 2016, we held our annual Bonenkai, with our lively ladies and special guests Temple President Emily Kariya and ABA President Tom Yamaguchi. After a brief meeting, everyone enjoyed a delicious bento dinner followed by two kinds of cake for dessert and several rounds of 25-cent Bingo. Tom made a great Bingo Number Caller.

Later that month, Fujinkai ladies gathered to prepare for our traditional year-end events. On the morning of December 30, 2016, the ladies prepared dashi, udon and toshi-koshi soba for our Joya-e otoki. Without the expert leadership of Mrs. Tatsumi Omote (who was in Japan at the time), we were all a little nervous; but everything turned out nicely. We tried a new recipe for dashi that was provided by our Fujinkai president, Phyllis Hayashibara. After a few adjustments, the dashi was declared "ready!" and everyone enjoyed it after Joya-e service that evening. We made enough of the dashi to save and use for making ozoni two days later.

On New Years' Day, we prepared a special ozoni, using Phyllis' dashi, with renkon, takenoko, carrots, daikon, shiitake, kamaboko and two pieces (!) of komochi per bowl. After Shusho-e service, we all sat down to enjoy the delicious ozoni.

On January 29, 2017, we held our annual Shinnen Enkai and Keiro Kai, which our BWA coordinated this year. We held our event in our temple social hall, and everyone enjoyed delicious food catered by Roger's Catering Service, lots of door prizes and wonderful entertainment by young hula dancers from Halau Hula 'O Nalikotaikawekiulani and from guitarist/singer Tyson Amano.

We thank all our hardworking ladies for all their help at these holiday events and look forward to their continued support.



ABA began by installing the 2017 Cabinet on Tuesday, Jan 17th. Looking forward to another busy year. Monthly meetings are held on the second Tuesday after the General Board meeting. Come and join the group. We work hard and play hard.

Our first event will be the Aloha Breakfast on Sunday, April 23rd. Mark your calendar.

For questions please contact Tom Yamaguchi at [tommyyami@gmail.com](mailto:tommyyami@gmail.com)

OH BABY!

Hatsumairi 4/16/17

For more information contact

sensei@vhbt.org







# Dharma School



Can you believe that we are a quarter of the way through 2017 already? Time flies when you are having fun! Back in December, Dharma School was in charge of otoki for Oseibo Taikai Service. Thank you to Karyn Heyl for coordinating the catering with Rutts and to everyone who brought salads, desserts and other delicious dishes to share. On that day Dharma School also presented tokens of appreciation to Rev. Kory, the temple, our organists and ministers assistants for their help throughout the year. We also presented gifts to all of our Dharma School Students that were generously provided by the Bukkyokai.

Also in December, Dharma School participated in the annual caroling field trip to Kei-Ai Healthcare Center in Boyle Heights (formerly Keiro) along with Girl Scout Troop 5325, Cub Pack 79 and Sangha Teens. It was a pleasant surprise that Rev. George Matsubayashi was able to accompany us as the Japanese master of ceremonies and performer. Many thanks to Rev. George for making the day so warm and friendly. Also a big thank you to Karyn Heyl and Barbara Wakasa for managing the production of 300 calendars that we presented to the residents at Kei-Ai.

### Upcoming Events:

Spring Ohigan Service & Otoki Lunch 3/19/17 @ 10am  
Oshoko by : High School

Hanamatsuri & Hatsumairi Service & Otoki Lunch 4/16/17  
@ 10:00am  
Oshoko by: 1st/2nd/3rd

ABA Breakfast Fundraiser 4/23/17  
Service at 9:30/ NO CLASS

Mother's Day Service & Brunch 5/14/17 @ 9:30

Gotanye Service & Otoki Lunch 5/21\*17 @ 10:00am  
Oshoko by: 4th & 5th

Memorial Day Weekend 5/28/17  
No Dharma School

Our committee has been hard at work planning our first few events of 2017.

In March, we will hold our annual film festival, with three films to be screened at the temple after Sunday service. This year's theme for the films is "The Social Face of Buddhism." For more details, please see flyer attached to newsletter.

The committee will also be in charge of our spring Ohigan service and otoki. One of the three films will be screened after otoki lunch on that day.

In April, we will be offering an Introduction to Buddhism series of classes. The classes will be taught by one of our minister's assistants, Richard Modiano, with support from our BEC. They are open to any interested parties, both temple and non-temple members. For details, please see attached flyer.

Our monthly Dharma Club classes continue, with sessions scheduled on either the last or next- to-the- last Sundays of the month (depending on our event calendar) at 11:00 at the temple. So far, we have had several enlightening study and discussion sessions and steady attendance by our "regulars." But we can always use more people, and we invite all to attend and check us out!



Scout Sunday





September was the Kick off for Pack 79's Cub scout year and what better way to do it then with a picnic. The Scouts played games learned knots and enjoyed food cooked with the help of scouts from Troop 764. We also celebrated Reverend Kori 1 year anniversary at VHBT. The boys sold popcorn and if you didn't get some this time there is always next September. Our Webelos attended a Camp at Cherry Valley on Catalina Island. They earned some achievements, shot BB guns and archery. Some snorkeled and paddled kayaks. It was a great weekend.

October the scouts participated in Heal the Bays Coastal Cleanup and our Den 3 put on a carnival at our Pack meeting as part of a requirement to earn the Bear badge.

November the Scouts worked hard earning achievements to earn their respected badges and rested to get ready for the busy months ahead.

December the Scouts rolled up their sleeves and got busy at Mochitsuki. There wasn't a clean shirt to be found. We also helped box up fruits and vegetables at One Voice (a group that helps families in need) while feel good music played to keep everyone's spirits up.

January is time for our family fun night. This year it was held at Scooters Jungle. All that showed up seem to have fun except for those that got scooters burn. At the pack meeting the scouts enjoyed a presentation from Adopt & shop about pets. The Pack held our annual Scouting for Food drive to benefit the Westside Food Bank at the Ralph's in the Marina and collected 36 boxes of food and almost \$500 dollars. I could not be more proud of our Scouts as they were so polite and well behaved for such a great cause.

February is the time to celebrated the birth of Scouting so we will have our Blue & Gold Dinner and learn about the origin of Scouting.

The Senior Outreach Group would like to say "THANK YOU" to the following people for their generous donations, monetary gift, refreshments, case of bottle water, coffee, tea and paper goods:

Rev. Kory & Mrs. Quon & family, Yuri Amamoto, Sharon Blawn, Mr & Mrs Roger Mitsui-Brown, June Fujioka, Mr & Mrs Jack Fujimoto, Tomoko Fukuda, Barbara Fukuji, Arlene Hamashita, Mildred Ichinotsu, Minnie Iseda, Sachiko Ito, Kay Kawano, Shinobu Koda, Mae Kumagai, Nori Kurashige, Toni Lowitz, Ayako Masada, Irene Matsumura, Nancy Matsunage, Yoshiko Morita Family, Katsuko Nakagawa, Judy Nawa, Fusae Nishina, Alice Ogawa, Tatsumi Omote, Elsie Osajima, Chez Shoji, Cyndy Uehara, Harue Ueki, Lauren Wolpert, Tom Yamaguchi, Roseann Yoshida

#### Come Join Our Senior Outreach Program Schedule

Let's Learn Day:	Mondays 10:30 am to 11:30 am
Exercise Day:	Tuesdays– Chair Exercise (video) 10:30am to 11:15am
Game Day:	Fridays 10:30am to 11:30 am



## TEMPLE MEMBERSHIP

As we begin our membership drive for 2017, we want to thank the members who supported the temple with their paid memberships in 2016. Temple membership income represents the largest percentage of annual income for Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple and is vital to our continued success.

The Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple thanks the following members for their 2016 dues received from January 2016 through December 2016. The asterisks (\*) identify our Honorary (Keiro) members who made membership donations.

<b>Yuri Amamoto*</b>	Emily Kariya	<b>Richard</b> & Kazuko Nakashima	Michael Tanaka & Jill Ishida
Joe & Dianne Belli	Yoshiko Kariya	Eva Nakasone & Ted Nishimura	Etsuko Nancy Taylor
Nick Belli	Scot Kawano	John & Judy Nawa	Carey & Vicki Tokirio
Roger & Janet Mitsui Brown	<b>Sammy &amp; Chiyeko Kishimoto*</b>	David Nishina	Karen Tokubo
Ken & Sheri Nagata Chen	<b>Sanaye Kita*</b>	<b>Fusae Nishina*</b>	Dean & Julia Ueda
Marty & Robyn Cohen	Sam & Mae Kiyohara	<b>Yayeko Nishina*</b>	Donald & Cynthia Uehara
Bryan & Aileen Cooke	<b>Kenji*</b> & Shinobu Koda	Tony & Kori Nobuyuki	<b>Harue Ueki*</b>
Tom & Janet Davall	Richard & <b>Ayako</b> Kojima	Dale & Gail Noriyuki	Casey Uematsu
Wayne & Karen Eguchi	Frank & Elaine Koyama	Darin Noriyuki	Scott Uematsu
Ken & Joyce Enomoto Rosengrant	<b>Setsuko Kuda*</b>	<b>Kay &amp; Kimi Obana*</b>	Amy Umezue
<b>James &amp; June Fujioka*</b>	Gary & Leticia Kurashige	Fusako Ogasawara	<b>Masayo Uyeda*</b>
Kei & Tomoko Fukuda	Lon Kurashige	Quinn Okamoto	<b>Gary</b> & Yoshiko Uyeno
Kristina Fukuda	<b>Milnes &amp; Noriko Kurashige*</b>	<b>Ruby Okamoto Malkin*</b>	Ron Wakabayashi & Jane Wong
Ron & Barbara Fukuji	Michael & Carol Kusama	George & Margaret Oku	Lauren Wolpert
Ron & Iris Gee	Tom & Delcene Kuwata	<b>Tatsumi Omote*</b>	George & Sheryl Yamada
Monica Belli Haley	Hide & Yukari Marume	Fujiko Oriba	Tom & Judy Yamaguchi
Gary & Janice Hankawa	Ayako Masada	Craig & Linda Oshinomi	Robert & Peggy Yamamoto
Eugene & Phyllis Hayashibara	Erik & Cyndy Matsubayashi	Robert & Leah Oye	Kimiko Yasuda
Jayme Heyl	Irene Matsumura	Kazuko Ozaki	Gail Yoneda
John & Patti Heyl	Alan & Jane Matsuzaki	Ron & Janis Ozaki	Kenzo & Annette Yonemitsu
Jill Hopfield	Charles & Sue Mayeda	John & Valda Palacios	Art & Roseann Yoshida
Joe & Judy Hopfield	Mark Mayeda & Deborah Ching	Billy & Sandra Saeki	Kagemi Takata
Mildred Ichinotsubo	Joseph & Yuriko Miyamoto	Ichiko Sakamoto	Randy & Mari Tamura
Jeffrey & Heather Ignarro	Jennifer Miyoshi	<b>Hank Sakauye*</b>	<b>Masao Nakamura*</b>
Leonard & Gwen Imada	Richard Modiano	Eric Schmid	
Shirley Inada	<b>Victoria Morimoto*</b>	Merle & Gail Sharp	
Jerry Iseda	Hiroko Morita	Edward & Mabel Shimasaki	
<b>Kho &amp; Minnie Iseda*</b>	Danny Motobo	<b>Hitoshi Shimizu*</b>	
Osami Ishida	Jackie Motobo	<b>Sam &amp; Kuniko Shimoguchi*</b>	
Cal Ito & Sharyn Yoshimi	<b>Miyoko Nakada*</b>	<b>Manabu &amp; Emma Shimoyama*</b>	
Jimmy Ito	Dan Nakagiri	Lynn Shinmoto & Donald Devirian	
Joan Takeuchi Ito	Thomas Nakagiri	Harry Shinozaki	
Sachi Ito	<b>Tyler &amp; Jean Nakamoto*</b>	Ken & Sue Sogabe	
Hiro & Kazuko Kadomatsu	Edgar Nakamura	Norman & Yoshiye Tachiki	



# WISH LIST

## SPECIAL Items & Service Projects

- Replace Storage Sheds with shelving in back parking lot
- Weed barrier/ weed mat, 4 rolls
- 2 New Vinyl Gates (by garage alley)
- Paint Temple interior & exterior
- Uchishiki - 4 triangular matching brocade cloths for Onajjin - 1 Mizuhiki (table skirt), 1 Tocho (hanging brocade curtain surrounding Amida Buddha) - (approx. cost for all pieces: \$45,000)
- Obuppan-ki (set of 2 - approx. cost \$800)
- Kebyo set (2 matching altar water holders - repair leak or replace)
- New Steel Gate with lock by BBQ grilling area
- New Intercom (at side entrance); Install Smoke Detectors
- Home Defibrillator (Costco on-line - approx. cost \$1200+)
- New Storage Shed at south side of garage
- Wall mounted fold up baby diaper changing table
- Large sturdy Tables from Mity-Lite Tables, (12 needed - approx. \$275 ea.)

## On-Going Needed Items:

- Rice, Japanese short grain
- Coffee, Regular ground & Decaf.
- Forever Postage Stamps
- Elmer's Brand Glue Sticks
- Large, Medium, Small size Nitrile or Latex free, Powder free Gloves
- Ziploc Bags (sandwich, quart, gallon size)
- 33 Gal. Trash Bags
- Paper Towels, Napkins
- Forks, Heavy Wt. plastic; Hashi
- 10 ¼" Lg. Paper 3-Sectional Dinner Plates; Dessert Plates; Bowls
- 7 oz. Paper Cold Cups
- Green Tea Bags; Nestea Iced Tea
- Windex in spray bottles
- Toilet seat covers, Bathroom paper towels
- Mr. Clean Magic Erasers; Sponges

\*The Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple will gratefully accept any donations or contributions towards the above needed items & services. Please contact Ron Gee, VHBT Pres ident @ (310) 266 - 7296 or via E - mail: [crouchingbruin@gmail.com](mailto:crouchingbruin@gmail.com) or Rev. Kory Quon @ (310) 391 - 4351 or via E - mail: [Sensei@vhbt.org](mailto:Sensei@vhbt.org) for more information.

November 2016 to February 2017 The Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple gratefully acknowledge & thank all donors for their generous "Temple Wish Board" donations.

Thank you  
for your  
Donations!

## October 2016

**Nokotsudo:** Mr. Robert Fujimura

**Special Donations:** Arts & Crafts Show Vendors, Mr. Ritsuo Ito, LA Hompa Hongwanji, ABA, Mr. & Mrs. Kenji Ogawa, Mr. & Mrs. Don Uehara

**Tri-temple Seminar:** Mr. & Mrs. Ron Gee, Mr. & Mrs. Tamao Sasaki

## November 2016

**Memorial:** Ms. Takako Ikegami, Ms. Mildred Kawano, Mr. & Mrs. Kenji Koda, Ms. Rumi Mayeda, Mr. David Nishina, Mrs. Yayeko Nishina, Mrs. Tatsumi Omote, Mrs. Kazuko Ozaki, Ms. Gail Sharp, Mr. & Mrs. Norm Tachiki, Mr. & Mrs. David Tadamaru, Mr. & Mrs. Carey Tokirio, Ms. Patricia Wada, Mr. & Mrs. Richard Yamashita, Ms. Roseann Yoshida

**Special Donations:** Arts & Crafts Show Vendors, Mr. & Mrs. Eugene Hayashibara, Mr. & Mrs. Billy Saeki, Mr. & Mrs. Donald Uehara

## December 2016

**Memorial:** Mr. Charles Mayeda, Ms. Gail Sharp, Ms. Amy Thibodeaux

**Eitaikyo:** Mrs. Noriko Kurashige, Ms. Jackie Motobo

**Special Donations:** Mrs. Amy Enomoto-Perez, FIA Insurance Services, Mrs. Yayeko Nishina, Ms. Tereza Ouchida, Mr. & Mrs. Merle Sharp, Ms. Catherine Silman, Mrs. Masayo Uyeda, Waves Hair Salon

## January 2017

**Memorial:** Mrs. Amy Ioki, Mr. Jimmy Kita, Mrs. Sanaye Kita, Mrs. Michiko Yamashita

**Special Donations:** Ms. Shirley Chami, Mrs. Kay Kawano, Ms. Irene Matsumura, Mrs. Yukiko Yumori

Spring 2017

Venice Honwanji Buddhist Temple

12371 Braddock Drive, Los Angeles California 90230

# 2017 Memorial Service Schedule by Year

Memorial Services for those who passed away in the following years:

2016- 1 year	2001- 17 year
2015- 3 year	1993- 25 year
2011- 7 year	1985- 33 year
2005- 13 year	1968- 50 year



2017 Fujinkai Installation

check out the attached flyers for  
information on upcoming events

Spring 2017

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