

Gassho

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



Sensei's Message

Once in a Lifetime... did you have your Awesome looking glasses?

How many times have we said to ourselves "This is once in a Lifetime? We are constantly telling ourselves "this is it, there will never be another one like it," but how many of us really listen to what we know is the truth? On Monday August 21, 2017, it was one of those times. Did you watch the Solar Eclipse? The Moon moved in front of the sun blocking it's light. All of North America was treated to this eclipse of the Sun. Anyone within the path of totality could have seen one of nature's most awe-inspiring sights. The Moon covered the Sun! Observers outside this path were still able to see a partial eclipse.

When I first heard about this astronomical event happening, I thought to myself "I remember the last time this happened. I've been through that before." As we get older we take it for granted that these kinds of events happen all the time. We tell ourselves that it is "just a part of nature." When we rationalize life we can down play the value of events like these. We can think about how there were 4 eclipses this year. 2 were solar and 2 were lunar. Do you do this? This is an example of our human nature taking over and allowing us to miss out. We are constantly weighing and judging, analyzing and calculating how valuable each moment is worth. As we continue on this path of Nembutsu as entangled egotistic beings, sometimes I ask myself "what are we doing?"

On Monday, August 21, 2017 we here at the temple came to have our regular 9:30AM service. Before we began I ask if we could finish a chanted a little quicker than usual so that we could finish service early. This would allow us all to take advantage of what was happening outside. Are we bad Buddhist for rushing service? Of course not. Jodo Shinshu is not practice based. The message for this day was what we come to temple to show our appreciation for Amida's Nembutsu which allows us to live our everyday lives and not be totally perfect. With this knowledge that our birth is assured, there are times that we should not pass up the opportunity to share the rare memorable moments in this life together.

"If there are persons who, having hear the Name of that Buddha, leap and dance with joy and say it even once, know that they receive the great benefit; that is, they acquire the unexcelled virtues."

-Shinran (Notes on Once Calling and Many Calling)

When I read this passage and looked out upon those in attendance, I knew that this was a chance for our human selves to live and enjoy life. The Name of the Buddha, Namo Amida Butsu allows us all to not feel guilty for not practicing. It also allows us to realize that by being in service could cause us to miss something special. The Buddha's teaching remind us to not squander the solar eclipse, but to treat it as if it were our last. The next total solar eclipse over North America will be April 8, 2024 (a wonderful way to celebrate Shakyamuni Buddha's birthday.)

Continues on Page 2



Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple

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(This photo is from Nasa.org. Amazing how neatly the Moon fits within the Sun. The Sun is 400 times larger than the Moon and 400 times farther away from the Earth.)



(We were fortunate to have some cloud cover.)



(Taken through the lens of the glasses)



(It was not a full eclipse, but it was still spectacular)

Again as Amida's followers, there was no reason to feel guilty for rushing service. We are always receiving Amida's infinite wisdom and great compassion. It urges us to use our time to expand Amida's Light within and share the feelings that emerge. As you can see on our faces, that the temple provided this shared experience. Do not waste time. Take a moment to listen and make an effort to reflect within. It is easy to take nature for granted. It is easy to miss out on the ever-changing world around us. It is easy to miss out on the valuable lessons that are right in front of us and guide us. We cannot experience everything, but we can try and treat each moment as "once in a lifetime." Then say Namo Amida Butsu for helping us to realize something so valuable and meaningful. Gassho.

-Rev. Kory Quam



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President's Message

Planning for the Future

Back in 2010, during the 50th anniversary of the Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple, a Long Range Planning project was conducted to look after our temple's long term health. A lot of time and effort went into the project, resulting in five goals which encompassed areas of religious education, financial stability, strengthening ties with temple organizations, and membership growth. Most importantly, the temple's mission statement, which I mentioned in the last issue of the Gassho, was created, acting as a guide for future activities of the temple.

Earlier this year, the temple board decided it would be worth re-examining the goals from seven years ago to see if they are still relevant, or if new goals should be established. After several months of deliberations by our Long Range Planning committee, the following three goals were provisionally adopted at our last board meeting:

Goal 1: Encourage understanding of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism by offering, enhancing and integrating religious teachings into Temple activities.

I've recently been sensing a desire from individuals for a better understanding of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism. We've been having good discussions during the Dharma School adult class, and the attendance at our first *Introduction to Buddhism* class last spring exceeded our expectations. The first goal, then, will be an attempt to provide more educational opportunities to help fill that need, and to also make the teachings of Jodo Shinshu more accessible.

Goal 2: Express compassionate values of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism by actively engaging in community service.

During a recent Dharma School adult class, Richard Modiano, our Minister's Assistant, recounted how Rev. Taitetsu Unno, when asked what his practice was as a Jodo Shinshu Buddhist, replied that his practice was compassion. And I've heard from various individuals within our sangha that we should be more actively engaged with the broader community outside of our temple. This second goal, then, addresses that need, to break out of our insular and isolated shell and express our compassion.

Goal 3: Foster a safe, secure and all-embracing environment for everyone.

We want to make sure that everyone who visits or joins our temple (and/or our temple organizations) feel that they can meet in an environment that is warm and welcoming, regardless of their religious affiliation, age, gender, sexual orientation, etc.

The goals have been crafted to invite a wide range of group and individual involvement. We are not mandating that everyone in our temple take part in these goals. Our hope, however, is that groups or individuals within our temple will be encouraged to take the initiative in suggesting, organizing, and/or participating in activities related to these goals.

As I mentioned earlier, the goals have been provisionally adopted by the temple board, and for the next couple of months, we are soliciting feedback from our sangha, as well as the members from each temple organization. If you have any comments or suggestions regarding the goals, please feel free to send me a note at temple@vhbt.org. My feeling for those who actively embrace these goals: the goals will not only make you a better Buddhist, but a better person. Isn't that what we want from our temple? For everyone who comes to be a better person.

In Gassho

-Ron Gee





Our BEC has also been working on plans for the 2018 Southern District Conference, which Venice will be hosting, along with assistance from West Los Angeles Buddhist Temple. Scheduling conflicts have necessitated our changing the date of the event:

Save the Date:

2018 Southern District Conference
Saturday, October 6, 2018
Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple

Our BEC will also be in charge of our fall Ohigan service and otoki on Sunday, September 24, at 10:00 am. Guest speaker for the service will be Rev. Mutsumi Wondra, from Orange County Buddhist Temple. She will also facilitate a book club meeting starting at noon on that day. The book selected is "Hands and Feet of the Heart."



It has been a busy few months since that last newsletter. We had the VJCC Festival, and our OBON Festival. Both were successful. I want to give special thanks to ABA planning group for their hard work in preparing for the festivals. Preparing the work schedules, pre-planning, buying materials, set-up, and more. Without their help, it could not be done.

We had some challenges this year, but as always the ABA group came together, and with perseverance, and TRUE GRIT, made the 'Chicken Teriyaki' a successful event. Big shout out to our Chefs Dale Noriyuki and Carey Tokirio. Also, organizers Joyce Enomoto, Cyndy Uehara, Aya Masada, and the many others who helped. A HUGE thank you.

Events for the remainder of the year: September 9 is ABA Memorial, with Reverend Kory Quon officiating and Special Guest speaker Reverend George Matsubayashi will be at the service at 7:30 p.m.. On November 11th, we will have our Annual Steak Feast and bingo night. On December 2nd, will be the annual Mochi Tsuki. We will be sending out flyers of the events.



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



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Fujinkai

Our BWA was busy during the first half of 2017. On February 18th, we held our annual Fujinkai memorial service, along with memorials for Eshshinni-sama, Kakushinnisama and Lady Takeko Kujo. Our guest speaker for the service was Rev. Yoshiko Miyaji. Rev. Miyaji delivered excellent messages in English and Japanese about the exemplary lives of the three women who played such important roles in Jodo Shinshu Buddhism.

Afterward, everyone enjoyed a delicious potluck otoki, and several meals were packaged and delivered to Sangha who were not able to attend the event.

On June 10th, several Fujinkai ladies enjoyed Southern District's "Jodo Shinshu for the Average Joe" Conference, held in Granada Hills. At the conference, the ladies also attended the Southern District BWA meeting.

Our ladies worked hard at our annual VJCC and Obon festivals and also provided otoki at our Hatsubon service. Wonton preparation and sales went smoothly at the VJCC festival, and our various booths at Obon were very successful, despite a last-minute challenge: city regulations forced us to use camp stoves and cast iron pots instead of our fryers for cooking our wonton. Despite this difficulty, we adapted our methods and met the challenge. Thank you to the Matsubayashi family for donating the camp stoves and propane tanks!

We'd like to thank chairpersons Phyllis Hayashibara and Alice Ogawa (wonton), Roseann Yoshida (spam musubi), Dianne Belli and Sharyn Yoshimi (sushi), June Fujioka (udon), Debbie Ching, Carol Kusama, Shinobu Koda (Lumbini Boutique) and all the ladies, friends and family who helped at our festivals!

Also, Lumbini Boutique thanks all the individuals and families who generously donated their treasures and made this a record-breaking year! This is particularly sweet in memory of Janet Mitsui Brown, a boutique founding co-chair, whose vision paved the way for this success.

Dharma School



2017-2018 Dharma School classes

Grades

Class

Preschool: Teachers: Ms. Jayme & Ms. Karyn
Location: Upstairs Kids Room

Kinder, 1st & 2nd: Teachers: Ms. Julia & Ms. Judy
Location: Kids Corner

3rd, 4th & 5th: Teacher: Ms. Janis
Location: Lobby

Middle School & High School: Teacher: Ms. Emily
Location: Back of Hondo



Fall 2017

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TEMPLE MEMBERSHIP

The Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple thanks the following members for their 2017 dues received from January 2017 through July 2017. The asterisks (*) identify our Honorary (Keiro) members who made membership donations.

***Yuri Amamoto**, Auggie & Billie Arsendiga, Joe & Dianne Belli, Roger Brown, Ken & Sheri Nagata Chen, Marty & Robyn Cohen, Bryan & Aileen Cooke, Mark & Lisa Cummings, Tom & Janet Davall, Donald & Lynn Shinmoto Devirian, Wayne & Karen Eguchi, ***June Fujioka**, Kei and Tomoko Fukuda, Kristina Fukuda, Ron & Barbara Fukuji, Ron & Iris Gee, ***Arlene Hamashita**, Eugene & Phyllis Hayashibara, John & Patti Heyl, Jill Hopfield, Joe & Judy Hopfield, Mildred Ichinotsubo, Leonard & Gwen Imada, Shirley Inada, Gerald Iseda, ***Minako Iseda**, Osami Ishida, Calvin & Sharyn Yoshimi Ito, ***Dale Ito**, Jimmy Ito, Joan Ito, Sachiko Ito, ***Hiroshi** & Kazuko Kadomatsu, Emily Kariya, Yoshiko Kariya, Scot Kawano, ***Sammy & Chieko Kishimoto**, Jim & Gail Higa Kita, ***Sanaye Kita**, Sam & May Kiyohara, ***Kenji** & Shinobu Koda, Frank & Elaine Koyama, ***Setsuko Kuda**, ***Mae Kumagai**, ***Milnes & Nori Kurashige**, Michael & Carol Kusama, ***Lillian Kuwata**, Tom & Delcene Kuwata, Ayako Masada, Erik & Cindy Matsubayashi, Irene Matsumura, Alan & Jane Matsuzaki, Charles & Sue Mayeda, Mark & Debbie Ching Mayeda, Mark & Diane Morimoto, Ryan Morimoto, ***Victoria Morimoto**, Hiroko Morita, Daniel Motobo, Jackie Motobo, Dan Nakagiri, ***Mary Nakagiri**, Tom Nakagiri, ***Tyler & Jean Nakamoto**, ***Setsue Nakamura**, ***Richard Nakashima**, John & Judy Nawa, David Nishina, ***Fusae Nishina**, ***Yayeko Nishina**, Jeff & Sachie Nitta, Anthony & Kori Nobuyuki, Dale & Gail Noriyuki, Darin Noriyuki, Dustin Noriyuki, ***Kay & Kimi Obana**, Fusako Ogasawara, Quinn Okamoto, ***Ruby Okamoto Malkin**, George & Margarita Oku, ***Tatsumi Omote**, ***Fujiko Oriba**, Craig & Linda Oshinomi, Robert & Leah Oye, Kazuko Ozaki, Ron & Janis Ozaki, Valda & John Palacios, Ken & Joyce Enomoto Rosengrant, Billy & Sandy Saeki, Ichiko Sakamoto, ***Hank Sakauye**, Merle & Gail Sharp, Edward & Mabel Shimasaki, ***Hitoshi Shimizu**, ***Sam & Kuni Shimoguchi**, ***Manabu & Emma Shimoyama**, ***Betty Shinmoto**, ***Minoru & Dorothy Shinmoto**, ***Harry Shinozaki**, Tisako Shoji, Hirohisa & Kiyoe Suzuki, Norm & Yoshie Tachiki, Dave & Arlene Tademaru, Kagemi Takata, Randy & Mari Tamura, Michael & Jill Ishida Tanaka, ***Sue Tanaka**, Etsuko Nancy Taylor, Carey & Vicki Tokirio, Karen Tokubo, Dean & Julia Ueda, Don & Cyndy Uehara, ***Harue Ueki**, Casey Uematsu, Scott Uematsu, Yoshiko Uyeno, Ron & Jane Wong Wakabayashi, Lauren Wolpert, George & Sheryl Yamada, Tom & Judy Yamaguchi, Robert & Peggy Yamamoto, ***Michiko Yamashita**, Gail Yoneda, Kenzo & Annette Yonemitsu, Art & Roseann Yoshida

Family Members	Individual Members	Senior Members
Family Membership (Includes children under age 22 years) \$500	Individual Membership (Single Adult age 30 and older) \$250	Senior Membership* (Keiro- age 80 years & older) Complimentary
Young Family Membership (Family under age 35 years) \$350	Young Adult Individual Membership (Single adult under age 30 years) \$125	



WISH LIST

Special Items & Service Projects

- Replace Storage Sheds & shelving in back parking lot
- Electrical installation of Candles for the Onaijin
- 2 New Vinyl Gates (by garage alley)
- Paint Temple interior & exterior
- Uchishiki-4 triangular matching brocade cloths for Onaijin—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
- Large sturdy Tables from Mity-Lite Tables, (12 needed—approx. \$275 ea)

On- Going Needed Items:

- Water, 1 gallon size
- Forever Postage Stamps
- 10 1/4" Lg. Paper 3- sectional Dinner Plates
- Sm, Med, Lg size Nitrile or Latex free, Powder- free Gloves
- 33 Gal Trash Bags
- Paper Dessert Plates; Bowls
- Fork, Heavy Wt. Plastic; Hashi
- 7oz. Paper Cold Cups; 6-8 oz. Paper Hot Cups
- Paper Towels, Napkins
- Green Tea Bags; Nestea Iced Tea
- Coffee, Regular & Decaf ground
- Mr. Clean Magic Erasers; Scotch- Brite Sponges; Stainless Steel Mesh Scrubbers
- Elmer's Brand Glue Sticks
- Rice, Short Grain

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

March to May 2017

The Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple gratefully acknowledge & thank all donors for their generous "Temple Wish Board" donations.

Thank you
for your
Donations!

May 2017

Special Donations: Mr. & Mrs. Milnes Kurashige,
Ms. Lynne Ozawa, Sakura Restaurant,
Mr. & Mrs. Ken Sogabe, Ms. Jean Tsunemoto

June 2017

Memorial: Ms. Sandy Hanada, Mr. Scot Kawano,
Mr. Edgar Nakamura, Mrs. Tatsumi Omote, Ms. Gail Sharp,
Ms. Barbara Wakasa, Ms. Lauren Wolpert

Hakamairi: Ms. Janet Davall, Ms. Tomoko Fukuda,
Ms. Barbara Fukuji, Ms. Teresa Hirahara, Ms. Emily Kariya,
Mr. Jimmy Kita, Mr. Sam Kita, Mrs. Sanaye Kita,
Mrs. Ume Kita, Mr. Kenji Koda, Mr. Yukari Marume,
Ms. Karen Morita, Ms. Joan Nakagiri, Mr. Dean Ueda,
Mrs. Harue Ueki, Mr. Masaki Ueki, Mrs. Masayo Uyeda,
Mr. Tom Yamaguchi

Special Donations: Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Belli,
Mr. & Mrs. Ron Ozaki

Gomonshu Inauguration: Ms. Barbara Fukuji,
Ms. Emily Kariya, Mr. Billy Saeki

July 2017

Eitaikyo: Mr. Milnes Kurashige

Memorial: Mrs. Minako Iseda, Mr. Jimmy Kita,
Reiko Maemura Family, Ms. Rumi Mayeda,
Mrs. Fujiko Oriba, Mr. Curtis Tachiki,
Mr. & Mrs. Ted Takeuchi, Mr. & Mrs. Takashi Takeuchi,
Mr. Lance Wakasa, Ms. Janet Yasuda

Special Donations: Mr. & Mrs. Ritsuo Ito,
Kubota Nikkei Mortuary, Ms. Lena Mochimaru,
Mr. Hank Sakauye, Venice Ballroom Dance Class,
Venice Pioneer Project

Thank you for your generosity



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Special Articles

Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple

OBON Festival

I want to take this opportunity to thank all members, family and friends for all their help at OBON 2017. There was a lot of work and planning the event, and it all a successful with your help. Working in unison, we made it through the weekend.

It is this time of the year, that we take the opportunity to be thankful for those who have passed before us, and the appreciate all that they have done to make our lives what they are now. As we take this time to reflect, please take a moment to thank those around you. A simple smile and thank you will go a long way.

I appreciate everyone, and want to **THANK YOU** for all that you do to make this a memorable time of the year.

In Gassho,

Tom Yamaguchi

VHBT Remembers Adopted Vietnam War Killed in Action

Written by Diane Belli

On May 27, members of the Temple participated in the annual Memorial Day Service for all Japanese Americans (JA) who gave their lives in the nation's wars. This service was held adjacent to the Japanese American National War Memorial Court.

In 2009, the VHBT Board voted to participate in the JA Vietnam War Killed in Action (KIA) adoption program.

"I was 19 years old when I went into the Army and I spent my 20th birthday in Vietnam." These words are from Temple member, Danny Nakagiri, who represented the Japanese American Vietnam War Veterans at the Memorial Service.

The young men who were adopted by VHBT were:

- Edward M. Amato, SP4 of Commack, NY, who was 23 years old when he was killed.
- Bruce J. Mori, Pfc of Los Angeles, CA, who was 20 years old when he was killed.
- Masashi Nakashimo S/Sgt of Santa Barbara, CA, who was 23 years old when he was killed.
- Rockne Masayoshi Noguchi, Pfc of Honolulu, HI, who was 20 years old when he died.
- Terry Y Ogami, Cpl of Reedley, CA, who was 21 years old when he died.
- Takeshi Yabiku, Sp4 of Los Angeles, CA, who was 22 years old when he died.
- Naoto Yamashiro, Sp7 of Honolulu, HI, who was 43 years old when he died.
- Douglas Yuki, Sp4 of Altadena, CA, who was 22 when he was killed.

VHBT also honors these young men during our annual War Memorial Service, which will be held on Sunday, August 6, 2017.

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

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