

# Gassho

Newsletter of the Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple

Spring 2026



## Sensei's message

***For myself, I do not have even a single disciple. For if I brought people to say the Nembutsu through my own efforts, then they might be my disciples. But it is indeed preposterous to call persons "my disciples" when they say the nembutsu having received the working of Amida.***

- Tannisho 6

### Vision of a Healthy Temple

This passage is from the Tannisho or "A Record in Lament of Divergences" which was a collection of authentic sayings compiled by Yuien bo in the 13th century. As a minister or layperson, I find it helpful to remind us that even though we find teachers that relay the Buddha's Teachings well, it is still not their teaching. As Jodo Shinshu Buddhists, we are not followers of individuals, but are moved by Amida Buddha's efforts, which then moves us away from our own working or efforts to a life of authenticity and appreciation through Nembutsu recitation. Do you say Nembutsu or *Namu Amida Butsu* when you take something for granted or see a flaw in yourself? Do you say it when you find you are more into yourself than acting for the benefit of everyone?

As we contemplate the feeling of our hearts as Jodo Shinshu Buddhists, what is your idea of a healthy temple? I think about this question all the time. Do you? Do you have a physical unit of measurement? I think many of us would use our temple's membership as an indicator of health, or the financial numbers. Is there a system to weigh the fleeting heart? When taking this into consideration you might look at the donations of Dana that come into the temple. Donations of Dana are important for our individual growth. They are made when there are moments in our individual lives that we celebrate not just with family and friends, but in appreciation for the Buddha, the Teachings, and the Temple that makes you realize how meaningful the moment really is. When we know that everything from the moment we are conceived is a gift, we can't help to celebrate, and give what we can to the temple for receiving this teaching. There are also many people that look to the past, and model their

## *Sensei's Message continued...*

vision for the future. These are all valid forms of measure, but I feel you would have to ask yourself “what is the current definition of a Jodo Shinshu Temple?”

It has been almost 15 years since Reverend Hoshō Shindo passed. It is unfortunate, but I never knew him in a state of health. I use this as an inspiration and template for ministry. Work hard, accept others, and say what needs to be said. He once gave a message of how the temple isn't just a building, but a place of worship. He then said saying the nembutsu is like catching fireflies in a jar. One gives off a beautiful light, but as you continue to collect these amazing and wonderful insects, the cumulative light allows us to see through the darkness. At the time, I would reflect on my path. Even though my heart had already changed through Nembutsu recitation, I thought I would have to continue to reflect on its importance within. The firefly's individual life is too short, and like the effect of Nembutsu, if I tried to hold onto it, as if in a confined space like a jar, it will die or fade even quicker. So, I constantly tried being mindful, saying *Namu Amida Butsu* to keep inspired and connected, thinking the more Nembutsu, the brighter the jar. Maybe this was a good way to contemplate Amida's Nembutsu and continue on an individual path, but as we look to the temple, I now believe Shindo Sensei was saying something different. Or the message just changed for me.

One day, I remember setting up for a service being in pain behind the Gardena Naijin, and I said it. Then I heard an echo. I was shocked, because of it was so clear and said spontaneously. When I looked in the Hondo there was no one there. Then Shindo Sensei appeared from a crouched position on the Naijin. Hearing him moved me. I always thought about how no matter how much physical pain I was

in, it was nowhere as much as his. He worked so hard every day. He was patient, kind, and understanding with a vision.

A Jodo Shinshu Temple is vital and should be filled with Nembutsu followers. As I think of the health of our temple, it is not how often we say Nembutsu, but how many of are moved by Amida Buddha's Vow and then say Nembutsu. The more people that come together in the jar, the more we can learn about ourselves in a safe and compassionate environment. We may get upset, but we have to really remind ourselves why Jodo Shinshu is right for us and share it with others.

A healthy temple knows no one is perfect. With this in mind, we accept support from others and can truly appreciate the compassion they give. This place of worship, our temple is truly the home we need, and not just a place or building for learning. Make it your home. You are the host. When people come, say “WELCOME HOME!” This is important. The safety of a home is shared with everyone. Remind everyone not to just use the temple, but take care of their home and extended family. What is your vision of a Healthy Temple? Let's work together as a Community, a Family, a Temple.

**GASSHO  
WELCOME HOME!!!  
NAMO AMIDA BUTSU  
Rev. Kory Quon**



# President's Message

Happy Spring!

Hope this letter finds you well. It's been a busy March at the temple.

First of all, most recently we had Hanamatsuri celebrating Siddhartha's birth. Dharma school did an excellent job with the flowers for the Hanamido and presentation. At the same time, we had four families celebrating their Hatsumairi. Hana, George, Wren and Aiko welcome to the temple! It's good to have you with us.

Next, we had the Cub Scout Pine Wood Derby. Thanks to 'Joe Belli's Garage' they had about 65 super-fast and wildly designed cars racing down the track. A couple of days later we hosted the Girl Scout Powder Puff derby with at least 33 entries of their own (although I think the GS cars had better paint jobs). It was a good time for everyone. Thank you to Joe Belli and everyone involved putting on an exciting race night for both events!

Sangha Teens sold tasty Chex mix if you didn't get a chance to order any don't miss out next time!

I'm so grateful of all the activities our temple has going on, and I look forward to seeing you

all at these events! Remember to check our 'weekly happenings' to keep current on all that is happening at our temple!

With Gratitude and In Gassho,

**Jon Ito**  
**Temple President**



# Buddhist Women's Association

## Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple BWA Memorial Service

Buddhist Women's Association (BWA) co-president Margo Oku chaired the Memorial Service, and she and Phyllis Hayashibara read the names of the 124 BWA members who have passed away. Guest speaker Rev. Ellen Hamada Crane of OCBC presented a well-illustrated history of Eshinni-Sama and Kakushinni-Sama, wife and daughter of the founder of the Jodo Shinshu sect, Shinran Shonin.

She shared many rare photographs not only of Lady Takeko Kujo, but of her sister-in-law, Kazuko (Kujo) Ohtani. They both co-founded the Buddhist Women's Association in 1904, originally named the Fujinkai. Lady Takeko's father was Ohtani Koson, or Monshu Myonyo; and her brother was Ohtani Kozui, or Monshu Kyonyo. Kazuko Kujo had married Lady Takeko's brother Ohtani Kozui; Lady Takeko Ohtani later married Kazuko's brother, the Baron Yoshimune Kujo in 1909.



Lady Takeko Kujo wrote poetry, plays, and gathas, which helped fund her charitable work. She sent care packages to soldiers in the Russo-Japan War or 1904 - 1905, and helped families who lost fathers and sons. She founded Kyoto Women's College in 1920, engaged in social welfare work in Tokyo slums, assisted the injured and orphaned after the Great Tokyo earthquake of 1923, and established the Asoka Hospital in Tokyo. In 1928, Lady Takeko Kujo succumbed to blood poisoning and passed away at age 42. Her memorial day, February 7, is known as Kisaragi-ki.

Julia Ueda played the gatha, Seiya ("Starry Night"), written by Lady Takeko Kujo about her Buddhist faith, evoking infinite Buddhas, as numerous as grains of sand or stars in the night sky. Rev. Crane also showed a video of a visiting student choir from Japan singing "Seiya" at OCBC.

BWA members generously contributed to an otoki buffet of chirashi, osushi, tsukemono, casseroles, salads, fruit, and vegetables; and cakes, cookies, jellos, lemon bars, and chocolates for dessert. Eighteen lunches were packed up and delivered by BWA to those who were unable to attend in person. Thank you to all the cooks, bakers, and drivers!



## *BWA continued...*

### **Visiting Yuri Amamoto**

On February 21, eleven BWA ladies carpooled to Atherton in Alhambra to celebrate Yuri Amamoto's 94th birthday. Seven members of Yuri's family met the BWA there, including Yuri's daughters Alene and Alicia, son Andy, and their spouses and grandchildren. Friends and family members enjoyed apple pie, cream puffs, and a fruit tart, with coffee and tea. Yuri opened many gifts from the BWA, including homemade blankets and scarves, *sembe*, Girl Scout cookies, Sumo mandarins, and cans of ginger ale. Happy Birthday, Yuri!



### **Surf and Turf Fundraiser at Nishi**

At the Surf n Turf fundraiser at Nishi Betsuin on March 7, June Fujioka, Barbara Fukuji, Phyllis Hayashibara, Ayako Masada, Judy Nawa, Linda Oshinomi, Vicki and Carey Tokirio ordered salmon and/or beef bento that came with miso green beans, rice, tsukemono, and kurimanju. Nishi prepared over 700 bento for this event! Cakes, pies, and cookies were also sold at their bake sale. Mrs. Esther Quon scored a \$20 Boston Cream Pie for only \$10, which she generously offered to Venice Hongwanji for after service refreshments on Sunday. Itadakimashita! Arigatou gozaimasu! Bingo winners from VHBT included June Fujioka, Barbara Fukuji, Judy Nawa (three times), and Carey Tokirio. A friendly gentleman from West LA named Ron Kato also won, and bought us all bingo sheets, so we could keep playing. It was a pleasure to see Rev. George and Mrs. Kay Matsubayashi there; they picked up their bento on their way home from another event.



# *BWA continued...*

## **BWA Meetings**

BWA members are getting accustomed to meeting in person at the Temple every month after Sunday service. 15 BWA members attended the meeting on March 15, which is about the same number of members who used to attend virtually via Zoom on Tuesday evenings.

Future Sunday meetings: May 3, June 7, July 5, maybe a meeting in August if needed, September 6, October 11 (FBWA Conference in San Diego: Oct 2 – 4), November 8, and December Bonenkai (TBA).

## **Looking Ahead**

Sunday, May 31: BWA Toban for Dana Delivery

Monday, June 1: LACMA: Realms of the Dharma: Buddhist Art Across Asia

Saturday, October 31: Chirashi sale

*BWA Presidents Margo Oku and Vicki Tokirio present a gift of appreciation to outgoing BWA President Linda Oshinomi during Shinnenkai in January*



*It's a UCLA onenju!*





The first few months of 2026 have been very busy for our Dharma School.

On February 1st, Julia Ueda and Emily Kariya held Dharma School classes about Impermanence.



On February 8th, Dharma School hosted a Scout Sunday breakfast and service. Roughly 80-90 people attended, including families from multiple Girl Scout and Boy Scout troops/packs. Our Dharma School staff provided yummy food from Rutt's and also cooked eggs, bacon, and sausage. Cub Pack 79 brought various pastries to round out the

meal.



After breakfast, everyone attended our Scout Sunday service, with guest speaker Rev. Ellen Crane, who presented an interesting talk about her visit to historic Buddhist sites in India; she even got to see the Dalai Lama on her trip!



## *Dharma School continued...*

Girl Scouts from Troop 5325 led the service – Leah Matsubayashi was our organist, and a group of Brownies were chairpersons. The Brownies were working on their Padma awards and had made obutsudans under the guidance of Joe Belli. Their obutsudans were dedicated by Rev. Kory during the service.



We thank these Girls Scouts for their leadership, as well as our Dharma School staff and persons-in-charge Barbara Fukuji and Tom Yamaguchi for preparing breakfast for everyone.

On February 21st, we held our first Kids' Club event of the year; the theme was "Shinshu K-Pop Demon Hunters." About 70 people attended, and the kids enjoyed making crafts decorated with the Demon Hunter characters. They also hunted for

"demon" images around the temple, saying "Namu Amida Butsu" when finding them. The evening was capped with a big potluck dinner. Thank you to Jan Ozaki for taking charge of this event.

On February 22nd, we held our annual Pet Memorial service. Participants were able to remember their pets with a candlelight ceremony, remembrance cards and photos. After the service, there were refreshments, which included pet-themed goodies.



That same day, Judy Hopfield represented our Dharma School as a guest at Cub Pack 79's Blue and Gold event. Thank you to the Pack for a lively evening and a marvelous dinner.

## *Dharma School continued...*

On February 28th, Rev. Kory and Dharma School teachers Jan Ozaki, Julia Ueda and Judy Hopfield attended an SDDSTL mini workshop and meeting at Vista Buddhist Temple. It was fun and informative, and we thank Vista for hosting.

On March 8th, classes on Ohigan were led by Judy Hopfield and Emily Kariya.



Three weeks later, on March 28th, we held our Kids Club #2 event; the theme was “Hanamatsuri.” About 20 kids participated, including a group from Troop 5325’s Padma Brownies, who were just finishing up their requirements to earn their Padma awards. In addition to attending service led by Rev. Kory, the children enjoyed decorating our Hanamido with flowers, as well as making treat-

filled butterfly crafts and beautiful globe-shaped dioramas depicting baby Prince Siddhartha in Lumbini’s garden. As always, the evening ended with a big potluck feast. Thanks once again to Jan Ozaki for organizing all the activities for the evening.



The next day, our Dharma School took charge of our floral displays and bouquets for our Hanamatsuri service and also facilitated our annual Hatsumairi ceremony. This year, there were four children who participated in the ceremony: Aiko Brown Guimond, George Aki Ogawa, Hana Gurung Sharp and Wren Olivia Tallman.

# Tuesday Playdates

The Tuesday Toddler playdates continue, now as an official part of Dharma School, led by new assistant Dharma School teacher, Shawn Heyl. The playdates begin with an arts and craft session or story led by Shawn. Then the children go upstairs to the Matsubayashi Family Room to play. This is followed by a short service, led by Rev. Kory, and then a sumptuous potluck lunch brought by the parents and grandparents.

Recently, the group celebrated Mrs. Kay's birthday with crowns and a birthday cake and singing. The toddlers created a butterfly Happy Birthday card for Mrs. Kay. On a subsequent playday, Mrs. Kay brought over her butterfly case, which included a caterpillar who was ready to become a cocoon. When the butterfly emerges from his cocoon, the children will again visit Mrs. Kay to see "Fly Fly Little Butterfly."





On March 15th, our Buddhist Education Committee took charge of our annual Spring Ohigan service and otoki. Thank you to our BEC members for all their work in facilitating this event.

The committee will also facilitate an April 11th seminar about the experiences and harm caused by incarceration of Japanese American families during World War II. The seminar keynote speaker will be incarceration redress activist, Kay Ochi, and the guest speaker will be producer/filmmaker, Barbara Kagawa Shore.

A recap of the seminar will appear in the next issue of the Gassho News.

## 2026 Memorial Service Schedule by Years

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

2025: 1 year

2024: 3 year

2020: 7 year

2014: 13 year

2010: 17 year

2002: 25 year

1994: 33 year

1977: 50 year



*Painting the Elephant for Hanamatsuri*



# Junior Young Buddhists Association

The Venice, Nishi, and West Los Angeles (WLA) Jr. YBA chapters came together in a wonderful spirit of fellowship and tradition to host Seminar 2, centered on the meaningful theme of Obon. The event brought together members for a day filled with learning, creativity, and connection, all rooted in the rich cultural and spiritual significance of Obon.

Throughout the day, participants engaged in a variety of interactive workshops that celebrated both the fun and the meaning behind Obon traditions. Members enjoyed classic Obon games that sparked laughter and camaraderie, while arts and crafts sessions allowed everyone to express their creativity through lantern and fan decorating. These handmade creations later became a beautiful part of the evening's festivities. Another highlight was learning traditional odori dances, including favorites like "1 + 1" and the "fan dance", giving members the opportunity to actively participate in this cherished cultural practice.



One of the most memorable moments of the seminar was the icebreaker activity, where members collaborated to create a quilt reflecting their favorite parts of Obon. Each piece of the quilt told a unique story, and together they formed a vibrant representation of shared experiences, memories, and appreciation for the tradition. The quilt was hung in the Social Hall throughout the day, serving as a meaningful visual reminder of the significance of Obon and the connections shared during the seminar.

The seminar also provided meaningful opportunities for reflection through Dharma messages from Rev. Takata and Rev. Kory. They shared insights into the history of Obon and its spiritual practices, helping deepen everyone's understanding of honoring ancestors, expressing gratitude, and recognizing the interconnectedness of all beings.

As the day transitioned into evening, members were treated to a special dinner prepared by Mr. Joe Belli, who generously made his world-famous udon dashi. The warm, comforting meal was enjoyed by all and added to the sense of community that defined the seminar.

The night concluded with a joyful Obon dance held in WLA's Bingo Hall. Surrounded by the lanterns they had crafted earlier in the day, members formed a circle and danced together, celebrating tradition, friendship, and gratitude. It was a beautiful and fitting end to a day that truly embodied the spirit of Obon.

Seminar 2 was a meaningful and memorable experience for all involved, strengthening connections between the Venice, Nishi, and WLA Jr. YBA chapters while honoring the traditions that bring us together.



# Sangha Teens

On the last weekend of March, Sangha Teens hosted the Chex Mix Fundraiser. On Saturday, we got together to make the Chex mix, and on Sunday, we handed it out to everyone and sold the extras after the Hanamatsuri Service. We would like to thank everyone who bought the Chex mix and supported the Sangha Teens.



# Girl Scout Troop 5325

## Powder Puff Derby

Troop 5325's Powder Puff Derby was held on March 16, 2026, at the Temple.



The race was officially started by Temple president, Jon Ito, who greeted everyone and wished good luck to all the contestants.



Most of the cars were built at Joe Belli's workshop on February 21, 2026.



A new award this year was the "Kawaii" Award (or Cutest Award) given by the Temple's Sangha Teens. The members of the Sangha Teens who were present selected the winner. Sangha Teen co-president, Kami Nobuyuki, presented the award certificate to Daisy Josephine Netter. As part of the prize, Josephine will get a free shave ice at the Sangha Teen's shave ice booth at Obon and her car will be on display.



## Girl Scouts continued...

### World Thinking Day

On March 20, 2026, Brownies and Daisies from Troop 5325 joined other troops from the Marina Service Unit (MSU) to celebrate the 100th anniversary of World Thinking Day. World Thinking Day was established for Girl Scouts and Girl Guides from over 150 countries around the world to embrace perspectives outside of their own, and to give their “sisters”, thanks and appreciation. World Thinking Day is officially February 22, the birthday of both Lord Baden-Powell, founder of the Boy Scout movement, and Lady Olave Baden-Powell, his wife.

At the MSU’s World Thinking Day, troops each selected a country to celebrate. Troop 5325 chose Mexico and waved Mexican flags in the opening parade. They sang “De Colores” in Spanish during the performance time, and provided Mexican themed-crafts, and goodies to sample, including vegetarian chicharrónes and horchata.

When asked about their favorite international food that they sampled, some of the Scouts said:

- Sahanna, Maia, and Monica – Blue lemonade from Korea
- Zena – Brigadeiros from Brazil
- Shiny – Vegetarian chicharrónes from Mexico
- Sarah – Horchata from Mexico

At the closing ceremony, all the Scouts joined hands in a circle of sisterhood.



## Girl Scouts continued...

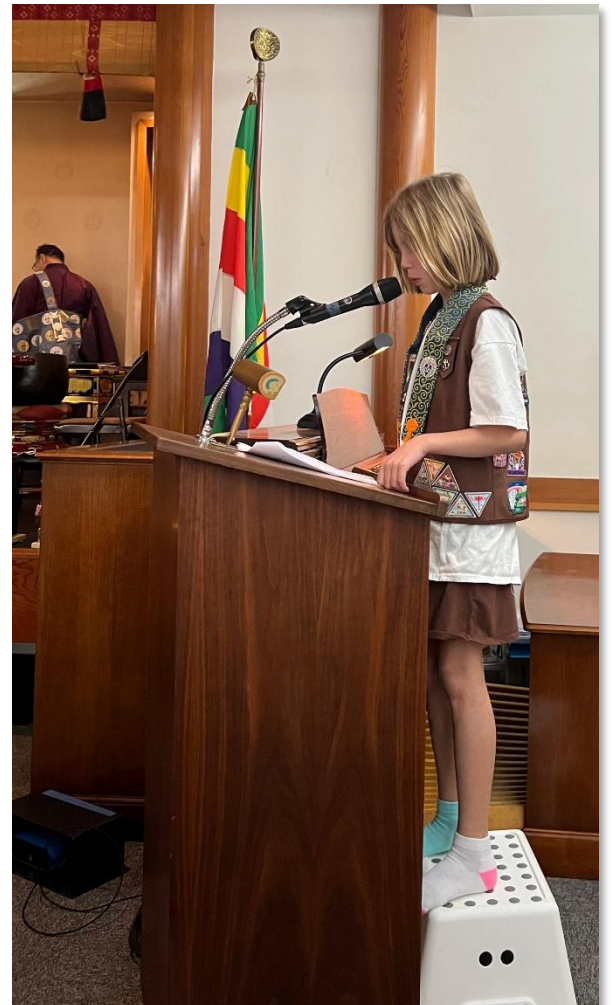
### Padma Award

The Brownies (2nd and 3rd graders) of the Temple's Girl Scout Troop 5325 have almost completed the requirements to receive the Padma Award. The Padma Award is the Buddhist Churches of America's course on the fundamentals of Buddhism. A Scout does not have to be Buddhist to take the course. There are eleven (11) Scouts from Troop 5325 taking the course.



For Brownies, the course is 6 hours over 60 days. The courses are more involved for older Scouts and can take up to 40 hours over a year for Seniors and Ambassadors. The course at Venice was led by Dianne Kujubu Belli and assisted by Monica Belli Haley, Brycelyn Fukuji, Joe Belli, Sandy Saeki, and Rev. Kory.

One of the things that the Padma Scouts did was put together their own personal obutsudans, assisted by Grandpa Joe. These obutsudans were displayed and dedicated at the Temple's Scout Sunday service. The Padma Scouts also chaired the Scout Sunday service.



## *Girl Scouts continued...*

Another highlight of the program was that the Temple Sewing Group assisted the Padma Scouts in sewing their own uchihiki, altar cloth, for their personal obutsudan. Sandy Saeki, whose granddaughter, Patience, is one of the Padma Scouts, led the sewing session, and embroidered the Scouts' names and a Wheel of Dharma on each cloth. The members of the Sewing Group who assisted the Scouts were Sandy Saeki, Patti Heyl, Tammy Ito, Shinobu Koda, Linda Oshinomi, Ina Saeki, and Vicki Tokirio.

The Padma Scouts and their families appreciate all the support that they have received from the Temple and the Sangha.



*While not taking the Padma class, Leah Matsubayashi, a Senior Girl Scout from the Troop, played the organ at the service.*





# Cub Pack 79

Cub Scout Pack 79 has had an exciting and activity-filled spring season, bringing our scouting community together through fun, learning, and service. We kicked things off with our annual Blue & Gold Celebration Dinner, a wonderful evening that showcased the diversity and spirit of our Pack. A heartfelt thank you goes to the Webelos Den, especially Chaitra Hardison and Akemi Hayashibara, for organizing such a memorable event. Families contributed delicious dishes from around the world, and we were honored to hear from Megumu Kageyama, who shared insights about Scouting in Japan—reminding us of the global community we are part of and the shared values of outdoor adventure, civic engagement, and friendship.



The evening also highlighted the talents of our scouts, who entertained everyone with skits and sing-alongs, setting the stage for future Pack traditions like performances at family camp. Special thanks to Grant Sunoo and Emily Mayeda for coordinating food pickup, Michael Chang for leading the Den Chiefs in setup, and all Den Chiefs and Leaders for guiding scouts and supporting the event. We are especially grateful to everyone who helped set up and clean up, with a special note of appreciation to Kenji and Brandi Arai for ensuring everything was packed away at the end of the night.



## Cub Pack 79 continued...

Another spring highlight was our Pinewood Derby, held March 14 from 1–6pm, with races running from 2–5pm. The event brought excitement and friendly competition, as scouts proudly raced their handcrafted cars (after the parents helping with the weigh-ins). Thank you to all who arrived early to prepare the space and stayed late to clean up. We also appreciate those who donated snacks and volunteered at the concession stand, helping raise funds to support Pack activities. This event would not have been possible without the dedication of our many volunteers.



## *Cub Pack 79 continued...*

Our Ice Skating event at the Toyota Center on February 28 was another big success. Coordinated by Scott Crichton, this fundraiser offered a fun and easy way for families to support the Pack while enjoying time on the ice. With 120 tickets available, it also provided a great opportunity to invite friends and introduce new families to scouting. Many thanks to Jill Kobayashi for her help coordinating ticket sales and making the event run smoothly.

We also continued our community outreach and den-level activities throughout the season. Pack 79 participated in the El Marino Science Fair as a recruiting event, connecting with new families and sharing the excitement of scouting. Our dens stayed active with meetings and adventures, including the Webelos, Lion & Tiger, and Bear Den gatherings. The Wolf Den enjoyed a scenic and engaging hike to the Culver Steps, combining outdoor exploration with camaraderie and fun.

## **Upcoming Events**

Looking ahead, we have several exciting events on the horizon. Webelos and Arrow of Light scouts are invited to attend Camporee on the weekend of April 24-26, and registration is now open. This is a fantastic opportunity for our older scouts to deepen their outdoor skills and connect with other scouts. Parents are encouraged to attend the Pack Parent Planning Committee Meeting on May 7 at 7:00 pm to help shape upcoming activities and support our Pack's continued success.

In May, we will also host our Pack Fishing outing on May 16 at 7:00 am, offering scouts a chance to enjoy the outdoors and learn new skills together. Finally, we will honor Memorial Day with our annual Flag Placement on May 23 at 7:00 am, giving scouts the opportunity to participate in a meaningful act of community service and remembrance.

Thank you to all of our volunteers, families, and scouts for making this spring season so memorable. We look forward to more adventures together as the year continues!



## ABA Installation

Our new ABA cabinet was installed on February 8, during Scout Sunday. Here are the people who were installed:

President: Mike Amano

Treasurers: Tomoko Fukuda, Tom Davall, Joyce Enomoto

Recording Secretary: Tom Yamaguchi

Membership: Shinobu Koda, Aya Masada

Phone Tree: Judy Nawa, Barbara Fukuji

Information Technology: Ron Gee

There has been a change to the cabinet since 2/7. Janet Davall is taking over Tomoko Fukuda's role as one of the treasurers. Thank you Tomoko for your help, and thank you Janet for stepping up to backfill for Tomoko.



# *ABA continued...*

## Senior Dana Delivery

ABA chaired the Senior Dana Delivery on February 22, 2026.

We packed 136 bags of goodies for the seniors this quarter. The bags included a delicious yakisoba bento from Mitsuwa, a bottle ITOEN tea, a box of Girl Scout cookies, a package of Milano Cookies (donated by the VJCC), and a wonderful message from Reverend Kory. Many thanks to Joyce Enomoto, Barbara Fukuji, and Tom Yamaguchi who did the heavy lifting in procuring all of the goodies, and thanks to the 18 drivers who delivered the bags to the seniors.



## *ABA continued...*



Although ABA didn't host the Great Udon Pigout on February 28, we supported it behind the scenes and we must extend great thanks to Joe Belli, once again, for cooking up the best bowl of udon found anywhere on the planet!



Hanamatsuri is one of our bigger services and ABA was in charge of Otoki this year, so we prepared some "good eats" enough to feed a hungry white elephant!

## Upcoming Events

We're looking forward to the exciting events and activities coming in the months to come like Aloha Breakfast in Aril and Obon in July!

## TEMPLE MEMBERSHIP

*The Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple thanks the following members for their **2026 dues** received **through March 31, 2026**. The asterisks (\*) identify our Keiro Honorary and Senior members who made membership donations. As we continue our membership drive for 2026, we want to thank all of you for continuing to support the Temple through your membership dues.*

Mike & Laurie Amano, Joe & Dianne Belli, Roger Brown, Tani Brown & Rob Guimond, Marty & Robyn Cohen, Bryan & Aileen Cooke, Mark & Lisa Cummings, Davin Daimonji & Kristi Kaneshige, Tom & Janet DaVall, Karen Eguchi, Traci Eguchi & Khalid Mughal, Joyce Enomoto & Ken Rosengrant, **\*June Fujioka, \*Kei & \*Tomoko Fukuda**, Rob & Barbara Fukuji, Morgan Gee, Ron & Iris Gee, Glenn Hamashita, Janice Hankawa, Akemi Hayashibara & Tim Horton, Eugene & Phyllis Hayashibara, Patti & John Heyl, Jill Hopfield, Joe & Judy Hopfield, **\*Mildred Ichinotsubo**, Leonard & Gwen Imada, Shirley Inada, Stacy & Joyce Ino, Gerald Iseda, Nelson & Sharon Ishida, **\*Dale Ito**, Jo Ann Kanshige, Emily Kariya, Yoshiko Kariya, Kevin & Pati Kirio, Jim Kita & Gail Higa, **\*Sanaye Kita, \*Sam & May Kiyohara, \*Shinobu Koda**, Carolyn Komoto, Ann & Ricky Kotani, **\*Frank & \*Elaine Koyama**, Gary & Leticia Kurashige, **\*Milnes & \*Nori Kurashige, \*Tom & \*Delcene Kuwata**, Emily Leach & Brandon Yeh, Orr & Kimberly Limpisvasti, Jennifer MacFarlane & Josh Jordon, **\*Ayako Masada**, Natalie Masuoka, Amanda Matsubara, Irene Matsumura, **\*Alan & \*Jane Matsuzaki**, Charles & Sue Mayeda, Mark Mayeda & Debbie Ching, Mark & Diane Morimoto, **\*Victoria Morimoto**, Daniel Motobo, Jackie Motobo, Tom Nakagiri, **\*Jean Nakamoto, \*Kazuko Nakashima**, Eva Nakasone & Ted Nishimura, **\*May Nakasone, \*Hiroko Naruo**, David Nishina, Anthony & Kori Nobuyuki, Dale & Gail Noriyuki, Dustin Noriyuki, **\*Kay & \*Kimi Obana**, Fusako Ogasawara, Jino Ok & Aleya Minamoto-Ok, Margarita Oku, **\*Tatsumi Omote, \*Fujiko Oriba**, Mark & Michelle Orne, Craig & Linda Oshinomi, **\*Mitsuko Ota**, Ron & Janis Ozaki, **\*Valda & \*John Palacios, \*Janet Petersen**, Rippey Rense & Annie Chuck, Billy & Sandy Saeki, Greg Saeki & Luz Wardlow, Ichiko Sakamoto, Mabel Shimasaki, Mark & Sharlene Shinmoto, Catherine Silman, Ken & Sue Sogabe, **\*Kiyoe Suzuki, \*Norm & \*Yoshie Tachiki**, Dave & Arlene Tademaru, **\*Kagemi & \*Katsuko Takata**, Randy & Mari Tamura, Michael Tanaka & Jill Ishida, **\*Misako Tanida**, Carey & Vicki Tokirio, **\*Yasushi Udagawa**, Dean & Julia Ueda, Kayla Ueda, Kelsey Ueda, **\*Don Uehara, \*Yoshiko Uyeno**, Ron Wakabayashi & Jane Wong, Beverly Yahata, **\*George & \*Sheryl Yamada**, Tom & Judy Yamaguchi, Gail Yoneda, **\*Art & \*Roseann Yoshida**, Spencer & Courtney Yoshikawa

**Membership Categories:**

INDIVIDUAL	
Young Adult	\$50 (Single adult under age 30 yrs.)
Individual	\$250 (Single Adult age 30 and older)
Honorary/Senior	(Dana Amount) (Keiro – age 80 yrs. and older) Dana is generosity of giving freely without the expectation of anything in return. Suggested Amount is \$125 or more but any amount is greatly appreciated.
FAMILY	
Young Family	\$350 (Family under age 35 yrs.)
Family	\$500 (Includes children under age 22 yrs)

## *Thank You for Your Donations*

### **February 2026**

Eitaikyo Fund: Sanaye Kita

Funeral: Ann Tsutsui

Memorial: Dianne Belli, Kathy Bohannan, Colleen Kita, Jim Kita, Sanaye Kita, Shinobu Koda, Bruce Morimoto, Emily Munekata, Shelly Okamura, Jocelyn Tahara, Judy Yamaguchi

Obon Sponsorship: Jacqueline Motobo (2)

Special Donation: Craig Cummings, Traci Eguchi, Yoichi Fujimoto, Jill Ishida, Sharon & Nelson Ishida (2), Jacqueline Motobo, Billy Saeki, Catherine Silman, Ken Sogabe, Yasushi Udagawa, Rob Yamamoto, Gail Yoneda

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### **March 2026**

Eitaikyo Fund: Milnes Kurashige

Funeral: Conrad Ohashi, Tyrone Taylor

Memorial: Dianne Belli (2), Janet DaVall, Jeanne Ishikawa, Kenny Iwata, Dean Kujubu, Shelly Okamura, Reiko Oshima, Gail Sharp, George Yamada, Tom Yamaguchi, April Yamamoto

Obon Sponsorship: Jacqueline Motobo

Special Donation: Anonymous, Ellen Crane, Craig Cummings, June Fujioka, Phyllis Hayashibara, Sharon & Nelson Ishida, Ayako Masada, Hisako Matsumoto, Irene Matsumura, Galen Murakawa, Jean Nakamoto, Fujiko Oriba, Reiko Oshima, Santa Monica Nikkei Hall Fund, Seiko Shimabukuro, Mabel Shimasaki, Rob Yamamoto

Special Event Donation: Anonymous, Cindy Akiyama, Mike Amano (2), Annie Chuck (2), Traci Eguchi, Joyce Enomoto, Barbara Fukuji, Lily Hara, June Hibino, Gayle Hiram (2), Kori Hojo, Sharon Ishida, Jo Ann Kaba, Jo Ann Kanshige, Keiro Services, Miho Kiriyama, Milnes Kurashige, Ayako Masada (2), Irene Matsumura, Judy Nawa, David Nishina, Stuart Oishi, Quinn Okamoto, Margarita Oku, Janis Ozaki, Gail Sharp, Catherine Tani, Carey Tokirio, Aileen Willoughby, Tom Yamaguchi, Tom Yoshikawa

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*Thank you for your generosity*

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# Labcc Summer Camp July 25 - August 1

Camper Age: 8 - 13 years

Registration opens 4/1

Round trip bus to and from Nishi

**CAMPER FEE: \$750 PER CAMPER**

**EARLY-BIRD DISCOUNT:**

**SAVE \$25 IF YOU REGISTER BY MAY 1ST**

**COUPON CODE: EARLYBIRD2026**

**REGISTRATION DEADLINE: JUNE 1ST**

[Registration](#)



**WEBSITE: LABCC.ORG**

**QUESTIONS?**

**LABCCORG@GMAIL.COM**



# GAME NIGHT

Take a chance and try your luck!

Blackjack | Bingo | Left-Center-Right

**May 9, 2026 | 6:00 - 9:30 PM**

Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple  
12371 Braddock Drive, Culver City 90230



[Buy Tickets Now!](#)

## TICKET INCLUDES

\$1,000 in Chips  
Finger foods  
Beverages



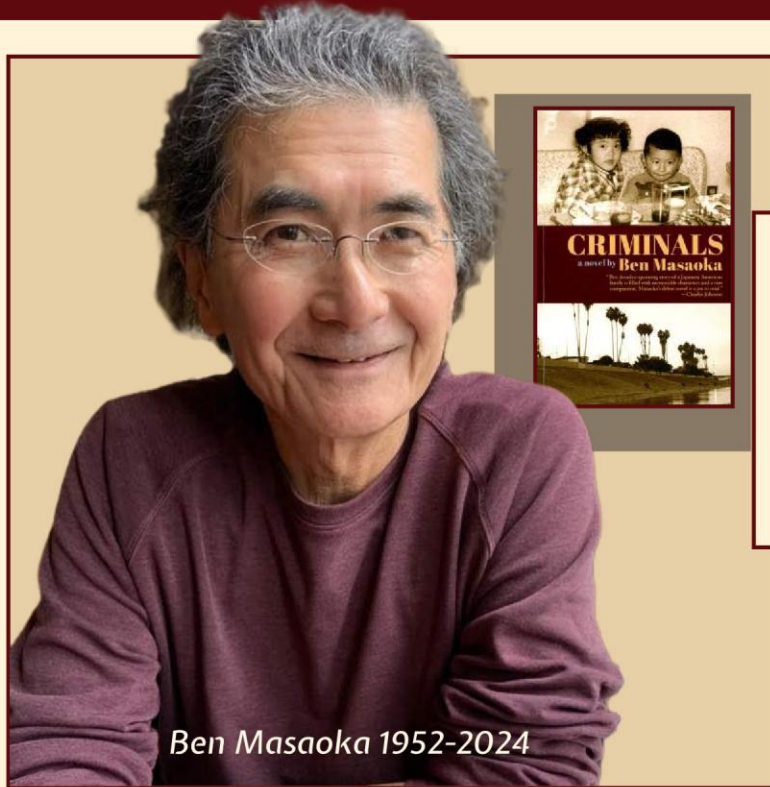
[Sign up to volunteer!](#)

**\$20 Early bird | \$25 after May 3, 2026 | Age 21 and over**

Email questions to: [tnakagiri21@gmail.com](mailto:tnakagiri21@gmail.com)

# GROWING UP SANSEI IN THE '60s

*A Book Reading and Tribute to Ben Masaoka and his novel CRIMINALS*



*Ben Masaoka 1952-2024*

**Free Admission**  
**Limited Seating**

Hosted by  
**Steven Okazaki**  
Academy Award Winning  
Filmmaker



Both Ben and Steven grew up in the  
Venice / Culver community

*With Special Guests*

**Saturday, May 16, 2026 · 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.**

**Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple · 12371 Braddock Drive, Culver City 90230**  
Additional parking available at Venice Japanese Community Center

RSVP:

<https://givebutter.com/VHBTcriminals>



Books will be available  
before and at the event.

Personal sponsorships to honor  
Ben's memory are available.

Sponsored by

*Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple  
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*Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple  
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Net proceeds will be shared with the  
*Venice Japanese American Memorial Monument*

For more information about the event  
<https://vhbt.org/criminals/>

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