

Pure Land Life

The Pure Land Buddhism of Honen Shonin



SPECIAL

What is the "Urabon" (Obon) 1

KAIKYO-KU REPORT

2018 International Kaikyo-ku Report 6

DID YOU KNOW?

Kōmyō-ji, Head Temple in Kamakura 7

READERS' VOICES

READERS' VOICES 9



2019 No. 32



What is “Urabon” (Obon)

Urabon (盂蘭盆 also Obon or Bon) is the traditional summer Buddhist festival of welcoming home the ancestral spirits held in mid July and mid August in Japan. It was originally a ceremony of offering food to the monks at the end of their rainy season retreat (安居 *ango*) in India. The ancestors are called *hotoke sama* (仏様), literally “venerable buddhas”, especially in the Pure Land tradition in which we are assured birth in the Pure Land and ultimate enlightenment in the next life through Amida’s

great compassion. During Urabon, priests visit each family’s home to chant the nenbutsu and the Pure Land sutras in front of a special table of food offerings (精霊棚経 *shoryo-dana*) made to the ancestors and departed loved ones. This special chanting is called *tanagyō* (棚経). Also during Urabon, individual families get together to make offerings and prayers at the family grave site.

From *JODO SHU: A DAILY REFERENCE* (Edited by the Jodo Shu Research Institute).

Historical Floating Lantern Festival for Over 60 Years

By Rev. Koji Ezaki

On the warm shores of Haleiwa, Hawaii, thousands of people gather at Haleiwa Jodo Mission over two summer nights to participate in the annual Obon festival. Here members, friends, and neighbors honor their ancestors at the annual service, Bon Dance, and *toro nagashi* (floating lantern ceremony).

At the Obon service, guest ministers join HJM’s resident minister to lead the congregation in *toba* (memorial tablet) prayers. The names of the deceased loved ones are read as family and friends approach the special Obon altar to offer *senko* (incense) as spiritual food. The altar also displays symbolic animals made of vegetables and other food for the journey back to the Pure Land.

At the Bon Dance, dancers of various cultures and backgrounds join the Haleiwa Bon Dance Club (led by Mrs. Shomida - 87 years young) in over 50 different dances. The most popular and lively dance is the Fukushima Ondo, performed by the Aiea Taiheiji Yaguragumi of Aiea Soto Mission.

During the Bon Dance, HJM sells towels and t-shirts as a fundraiser. Both are specially designed by a very good temple friend who now lives in

Osaka. He volunteers his time to prepare new and beautiful designs every two or three years. About 1,000 towels are sold over the two days of the festival.

The biggest event of the weekend is the *toro nagashi*. Rev. Shunjo Shiratori started this tradition in 1955. Held only on Saturday night, about 1,200 lighted lanterns with the names of deceased loved ones are set afloat to guide the spirits back to the Pure Land, while participants reverently recite Namu Amida Butsu. Year after year, HJM strives to be environmentally conscientious and in 2018 brought newly designed toro, which are more water soluble.

Preparation for the Obon festival requires the cooperation of many groups and people and the help of many volunteers. HJM is truly grateful to them. HJM is also



Toro Nagashi



New Haleiwa Lanterns



Lahaina Bon Dance



Koloa Bon Dance

thankful to receive permission to use the park next door as parking. The conclusion of the festival is the annual beach

and park cleanup so that HJM may leave the park and beach cleaner than it was three days prior.

Obon Schedule of the Hawaii Council of Jodo Missions in 2019

Betsuin: Bon Service July 12, 13, & 14, Bon Dance August 16 & 17

Haleiwa: Bon Service and Bon Dance July 19 & 20, Toro Nagashi July 20

Kirtistow: Bon Service and Bon Dance August 3

Hilo: Bon Service July 13 & 14, Bon Dance July 13

Hakalau: Bon Service and Bon Dance August 17

Hamakua: Bon Service and Bon Dance August 10

Kohala: Bon Service and Bon Dance July 13

Hawi: Bon Service and Bon Dance August 3, Fune Nagashi August 4

Kahului: Bon Service and Bon Dance June 28 & 29

Wailuku: Bon Service and Bon Dance June 14

Lahaina: Bon Service July 5 & 6, Bon Dance July 6, Toro Nagashi July 6

Kapaa: Bon Service July 7, Bon Dance July 12 & 13, Toro Nagashi June 24

Koloa: Bon Service June 2, Bon Dance June 7 & 8, Toro Nagashi August 4

Service to connect the past, present and future

By Rev. Kodo Tanaka
Jodo Shu North America Buddhist Missions

In our Obon service, we dedicate a prayer for the deceased with the offering of memorial tablet which are paper-thin, portable wooden tablet that we offer for this service so that the attendees can take them home. We hope that this procedure of offering tablets and taking them home encourages our congregation to embrace the importance of Obon by welcoming their loved ones'



once-a-year return to their home. In this sense, Obon is the most descriptive service in Japanese Buddhism that promotes so-called "ancestor worship."

This phrase "ancestor worship" may impress you that Japanese Buddhism focuses only on the past and has no option to affect



people's present. However, from the Buddhist perspective such as karma and interrelationship of all beings beyond space and time, the "present" is regarded as the accumulation of our deeds in the "past" and "future" will be the result of our deeds today.

It is often said that "a man dies twice." The first death is his physical death regarded to occur when he dies. The second death is regarded to occur when no one cares to

remember him. In Japanese Buddhism, we periodically observe services to dedicate merit to the deceased. Also, we enshrine the statuette of the Buddha and a memorial tablet of the deceased in our home altar. But unfortunately, “out of sight, out of mind” is a sad reality in our lives. If you do not observe a memorial service for your late parent(s), it won’t be long before your child (their grandchild) will regard him/her as one who dies twice. Perhaps wrongfully so, like a stranger who never existed.

Obon and all other temple services provide us an opportunity to not only prevent the deceased from their “second death” by repaying them, but to also face the issue of our own “first death” through the reminiscence of



them. Most importantly, these services help connect the past, present, and future within a family and encourage its members to put religious acts into practice “now.”

Obon “Down Under” (“Down Under” is a colloquial term used to refer to Australia)

By Rev. Tetsuyu Wilson
Jodo Shu Buddhism Community of Australia

Greetings readers. In this issue of Pure Land Life I would like to describe the way in which Obon touches the lives of so many people “Down Under”. To begin with, Obon is held in Winter and far from being cold, the daytime temperature here in Brisbane is a warm 23-25°C. Such pleasant weather provides a comfortable and invigorating atmosphere in which one can easily feel the presence of the Buddha of Infinite Life.

We begin the Obon Ceremony at 10:00am in the small room in which the statue of Amida resides. It is very cramped and those who sit in the hallway can only hear the ceremony. But, undeterred, everyone sits quietly smiling, opening their hearts to the embrace of Amida and to the remembrance of their ancestors. As I look on their faces I am reminded of Honen’s words, ‘may it even be in the hovel of a fisherman’.

Following the ceremony, we move outdoors to the



The Japanese community of Thursday Island together with the Mayor and Consul General of Japan



Ceremony at Amidaji

backyard to have morning tea. Warmed by the sun, the members mingle in pleasant conversation. Their lives are connected through nembutsu and harmony pervades their interaction with each other. By one o’clock most have returned home, leaving a few to stay behind to clean up and put away the tables and chairs until next year when again the members of Amidaji come together for Obon.

In addition to holding Obon at Amidaji, I also travel to Thursday Island and Broome to perform an Obon Ceremony at their Japanese Cemeteries. For the descendants of the Japanese pearl divers living in these remote places, Obon is very close to their hearts. It is not only a time for them to



The Japanese Cemetery of Broome

remember their ancestors but it is also a time for them to connect with their Japanese roots.

The last place I visit during the Obon season is Cowra. Though this is not an Obon Ceremony it is a ceremony in which the tragic deaths of 231 Japanese prisoners of war are remembered. On the night of August 4, 1944 over one thousand Japanese soldiers made a futile attempt to escape

from the POW camp at Cowra. That night 4 Australian soldiers and 231 Japanese soldiers lost their lives. Since then on August 5 many people from the local community as well as members of the Japanese Embassy and Australian Government gather in remembrance and confirm their hope for peace in the world.

Namu Amida Butsu.

Obon in France

By Rev. Koryu Koso
Jodo Shu European Buddhism Center

Since the creation of the Jodo Shu European Buddhism Center, its members have been respecting and celebrating the important observance of Obon. Since 2013, we have had the opportunity of celebrating Obon in a Japanese house called Kiso House (*Maison de Kiso*), which is situated in the west of Paris in the northern part of the Bois de Boulogne. There is a 47-acre children's amusement park called *Le Jardin d'Acclimatation*, which can be enjoyed by children and adults. It offers visitors a variety of experiences and is a place for the public to walk within an exceptional landscape and architectural heritage. In the park's grounds, there is an old privately owned house that was built more than 150 years ago in Kiso, Nagano Prefecture, Japan.

This house is called *Maison de Kiso*. The story behind *Maison de Kiso* started when an ethnologist named Jane Cobbi visited Japan to carry out research. During her stay, she met Madame Tami Hatanaka who lived in the house and who later donated it to Jane Cobbi.

Later Jane founded the *Maison de Kiso* Association where she organises various events to present Japanese culture such as Hina Matsuri (Girl's Day), Kodomo no hi (Boy's Day), Tsukimi (Moon Festival), among others.

Also, during a few years following the Great East Japan earthquake in 2011, she invited children from Fukushima to recuperate in Paris for a few weeks at a time.

After a Japanese couple who are members of the Jodo Shu European Buddhism Center offered cherry tree seedlings to the Kiso House Association, this act created a relationship between us. After which, the two associations started to organise joint Obon events that took place at *Maison de Kiso*.

This old authentic Japanese wooden house provided us with a peaceful, sweet atmosphere. It was something other than the previous Obon events that took place in a conference room in a beautiful Parisian building.

The Obon ceremony at *Maison Kiso* began in the morning with members gathering together to clean the house thoroughly. Weaving machines and everyday objects previously used by the Japanese grandmother Tami Hatanaka are on display. After cleaning, we have lunch. Members bring their *bento* (lunch boxes) and sit around the *irori* (a traditional Japanese sunken hearth) and have a peaceful lunch together.

After lunch, we remove the *itado* (sliding doors with boards) and *shōji* (sliding doors with paper) and prepare and decorate the house for the Obon ceremony.



Obon at the maison of the Bois de Boulogne in Paris



Scene of incense offering



Poster of the Obon

At 3 p.m., we began the Obon ceremony. Around 40 people including Japanese and many other nationalities attended the ceremony, although it was not possible for everyone to get inside *La Maison Kiso*. Some participants even wore *yukata*, or summer kimono.

Before starting the ceremony I explained the meaning and tradition of Obon. In the middle of the ceremony, one by one, participants advanced to the altar on which there is a statue of Amida Buddha to burn incense.

After the ceremony, the Kiso House Association organised entertainment in the garden:

- Samurai theatre for children
- Bon Dance
- Japanese songs
- Origami classes for children
- Selling of homegrown summer vegetables grown by Jodo Shu members
- Nagashi-sōmen (cold Japanese wheat noodles)

Following the entertainment, members return to *Maison de Kiso* for tea.

It had been customary for the Jodo Shu European



Bon Dance at Maison de Kiso

Buddhism Center to conduct Obon ceremonies at *Maison de Kiso*. Unfortunately in 2018, due to major renovations in the park, *Maison de Kiso* was dismantled. The owners managed to save the house and are looking for a relocation destination.

Everybody is very sad that *Maison de Kiso* is presently no longer available.

For now, we will hold the Obon ceremony in a large conference room of a Parisian hotel situated near the River Seine.

Obon in Brazil

By Bishop Ryoho Sasaki
Jodo Shu South American Missions

The tradition of Obon observed in the Brazilian Buddhist tradition was brought originally by the Japanese immigrants who settled here in the early 20th century. For many decades the religious framework and rites were observed following strictly the formalities of tradition. For instance, the Obon is observed basically in the summer in Japan, which is the middle of winter in South America. But it was reluctantly reset to adjust to the national calendar of the Memorial Day for the deceased, which is observed on November 2nd every year.

Most of the Japanese Buddhist communities take it as a festive occasion to express gratitude to each family's ancestors, participating in the ceremonies and altogether taking part in the "Bon Odori" dance. Some temples dedicate the "Hatsubon" (first Obon) for those who departed up to a year early. Few places in the country, including our Maringa Nippakuji Temple perform *Toro Nagashi* or the floating lantern ceremony that marks the end of the Obon period.

Previously many leaders, especially the elders, pointed

out that this Obon tradition was doomed to disappear since there were no signs among the younger generations of showing interest in preserving it. Time passed and the issues of the identity agenda transformed in a way that it was no longer a matter of cultural preservation but rather a question of addressing adequately its content and meaning for the younger generations who had to deal with themselves, on top of sharing its features within a heterogeneous society that expected them to respect, cultivate, and honor their own cultural roots.

The tradition of Obon, in spite of our own ability in making it survive as a tradition far away from its origins, provides a wonderful symbolic scenario that nurtures our consciousness and sense of existential identity, providing crucial support on questions about who we are and where shall we go. This is the reason why we can nurture optimistically the perpetuation of this tradition, provided we address the knowledge, wisdom, and richness of what Obon is all about. All that based on the simple act of expressing gratitude to our own ancestors, reciting. Namu Amida Butsu.

2018 International Kaikyo-ku Report

Brazil



Gojusoden

By Bishop Ryoho Sasaki
Jodo Shu South American Missions

The South American Jodo Shu Mission celebrated its 65th anniversary in 2018. To mark such an auspicious date, the whole community decided to organize the *Goju Sonen-e* (Fivefold Transmission Rite) for the first time in 25 years. The first venue was Nippakuji Temple at Curitiba, its resident minister Rev. Akiyoshi Oeda, who has served the temple since its founding, which was commemorating its 10th year of activities under. It was deeply meaningful once the participants were ready to take a step forward in learning the teachings of the Buddha Amida through the caring spirit of our beloved founder Master Honen Shonin. 45 people took part in expressing vows of their faith in practicing nenbutsu at least 300 times a day!

The team that led this tour de force was headed by Rev. Zuikai Matsuno from Hogenji Temple in Nagasaki, along with our former missionary Rev. Zuiko Matsuno, Rev. Mahito Kawai from Kyoto, Rev. Kodo Ezaki from Nagasaki, Rev. Chikai Maeda from Fukuoka, Rev. Joken Maeda from Nagasaki, and Rev. Daijo Tsujimoto from Nagasaki. They all participated on a voluntary basis, with active support from Rev. Bunsho Agawa of Zendoji Grand Temple in Kurume, Fukuoka.

The entire Kyushu area is the birthplace of many immigrants who came to Brazil. Many of the participants who came from this area were highly emotional and sensitive, feeling a deep reconnection with their origins since the immigration diaspora left deep wounds of alienation and culturally lost bonds.

The Goju Soden-e in Japan usually lasts 5 days long. In Brazil, we adapted it to a 3-day-retreat. However, before heading to the second program scheduled to happen in Ibiuna Nippakuji Temple in the Sao Paulo outskirts, the entourage made a stop over at Wajunkai Shelter for



Participants in Curitiba

Homeless Elderly run by Maringa Nippakuji Temple. Most of the interns there have some degree of mentally challenged condition, which makes a 3 or 5 day-long program practically impossible. Reverend Matsuno took a bold and compassionate initiative in giving a Dharma Name, *Kaimyo*, to everyone. This deed of a compassionate heart, is line with the moon shining its light to reach its grace to anyone no matter whether they notice it or not.



Rev. Oeda

The last stop of the Brazilian Goju Soden-e program was set at Nippakuji Temple in Ibiuna, under the direction of Rev. Soyu Sakurai. It was noticeable by the Goju Soden masters that the Nenbutsu was chanted fervently at all three places. Weeping tears and silent cries were noticed when Rev. Kawai wonderfully chanted homage of merit transmission for the participants' ancestors to whom all had a deeper meaning than imagined.

This Goju Soden-e event was important to be carried out to the point that all participants, staff, and missionaries agreed that it will be held again when our mission celebrates its 70th anniversary in coming years. Despite our religious mission and social action commitment, deepening our doctrinal knowledge and faith is crucial to transmit and perpetuate our Master Honen Shonin's spirit and legacy towards the future. This is our community's contribution in the ethical and moral making of our country.



Rev. Sakurai



Participants at Ibiuna temple



The officiant Rev. Zuikai Matsuno



Priests from Japan and Brazil

Kōmyō-ji, Head Temple in Kamakura



Inside the Main Hall

Popularly known as Kōmyō-ji of Kamakura, this *daihonzan* or head temple, of Jodo Shu is officially called Tenshō-zan Renge-in Kōmyō-ji (literally, the “Heavenly Illuminated Mountain, Lotus Hall, Temple of Amida’s Light”). Kōmyō-ji was founded by the third patriarch of Jodo Shu, Nenna Ryōchū Shōnin (1199–1287), in 1243 under the patronage of Hōjō Tsunetoki, the fourth regent of the Kamakura shōgunate. At the time, Kamakura was the capital of Japan, and the influential Hōjō clan ruled the country as regents of the shōgun.

Like most monks of his era, Ryōchū Shōnin initially studied the Tendai sect as well as other schools of Buddhism. In time, he went to Kyushu in southern Japan and became the disciple of Shōkō Shōnin, a



Main Gate

direct disciple of Hōnen Shōnin and the second patriarch of Jodo Shu, who made Ryōchū his successor. Ryōchū Shōnin authored several books on Pure Land thought and had many followers. In 1292, Emperor Fushimi honored him with the posthumous name Kishu Zenji (Recording and Meditation Master).

Over the years, this historic temple flourished with the support of various rulers, and today is known as one of the four major temples in Kamakura.

Located near the seaside with a distant view of Mount Fuji, Kōmyō-ji continues to attract many visitors throughout the year. The temple has an expansive ground with multiple buildings, beginning with a small gate as its entrance, followed by a colossal Main Gate, which was rebuilt in 1847. Directly in front of this, as you enter, is the impressive Main Hall, or Daiden, which was built in 1698. Enshrined at the altar is a seated image of Amida Buddha, flanked by the bodhisattvas Seishi and Kannon. Also enshrined in the Main Hall is a carved portrait of



Main Hall

Hōnen Shōnin and a seated image of Nyoirin Kannon holding a wish-granting jewel. The Founder's Hall, the priests' living quarters, a traditional reception hall, the Kishu Garden, which was named for Ryōchū Shōnin, and a rock garden can also be seen here.

In the spring, Kōmyō-ji is celebrated for its cherry blossoms, and in the summer, for its lotuses in the Kishu Garden. The Taishōkaku (Pavilion of the Great Sage) was built in the garden in 2011 to commemorate the 800th Grand Memorial of Hōnen Shōnin.

The temple, however, is especially known for its *Jūya hōyō* (Service of Ten Nights), which has been observed here for over 500 years since 1495. Initiated by the eighth head priest, Kan'yo Shōnin, under the auspices of Emperor Tsuchimikado, the *Jūya hōyō* continues to be observed annually here from October 12 to 15. During this time, the temple holds various ceremonies and services day and night to pray for world peace as well as our inner tranquility and birth in the Pure Land.



Jūya hōyō procession



Pavilion of the Great Sage

The READERS' Voice section introduces members from Jodo Shu temples around the world.



NORTH AMERICA

George and Irene Tanaka

Member of Jodo Shu

North America Buddhist Missions



This photograph of Irene and me was taken during our wedding ceremony in 2011. The year before we were married, Irene persuaded me to take part in Goju Soden with herself and her brother Glenn. It is noteworthy that each of us took away something different from Goju Soden. To this day, when Irene and I discuss the teachings of Honen Shonin and our experiences

at the temple, we find that each of us has a different interpretation of the teachings and sermons. Upon reflection, it is only natural because we are individuals with overlapping but separate life experiences. Irene is more “spiritual” and applies that sense to her day-to-day life. I am more pragmatic and just recite the Nembutsu. What Irene and I share in common is that we both have ways to go before we are firmly on the Buddhist Path. It is a blessing that Jodo Shu is so welcoming to all persons regardless of the reasons they are here. An individual could be here because he is merely intrigued by Buddhism. A family could be attending a service to carry out a multi-generational tradition. Many in the congregation are, of course, faithfully devoted to Amida Buddha. Jodo Shu welcomes us all.

SOUTH AMERICA

Meet the Toyama Family

Member of Jodo Shu

South American Missions

Curitiba Nippakuji Temple is considered among all South American Jodo Shu Missions, the most “busiest” in terms of social and educational activity initiatives. All this depends on several people who provide support in the backstage. As we say here in Brazil, we are talking about “those who carry the piano” (in order to allow the musician to play it). Angelo Toyama and his family are some of several people who strongly support our activities, such as Birthday Party of the Month, Charity Bingo, and Fund Raising Curry Dinner. He is highly praised when it comes to be in charge of the temple’s BBQ events.

Mrs. Ritsuko, his wife, teaches yoga at our temple.

The classes happen every Thursday. She is one of the earlier members of our temple in Curitiba, and she enthusiastically has helped us with many plans and activities to improve our health consciousness through



exercise and nutrition. We believe that health and faith are complementary for a harmonic lifestyle.

Their kids, David Gentaro, Diana Sakura, and Julio Naruyoshi take part in all our youth activities, especially the Otetsugi Hoshidan retreat. David and Diana have grown to the point to become leaders of these retreats.

Definitely, the Toyama Family and other member families inspire us to keep working hard for the sake of our community. We look forward in seeing kids like little Julio Naruyoshi grow up along with this big family called Curitiba Nippakuji.

FRANCE

Hisayuki Takagi
Member of Jodo Shu
European Buddhism Center



I have been living in France for 32 years. When I first arrived in 1987, I studied philosophy. Coincidentally, this was the same year that Rev. Koso, also arrived in France. We had attended the same university in Japan, where he was my senior. So when I met Rev. Koso again in Paris, it was a great relieve for me to know someone from my previous years in Japan.

In my early years in France, Rev. Koso was always there for me when I needed advice and he helped me immensely. I considered his advice invaluable.

We often met and spent many hours discussing the

differences between Japanese and French culture. And furthermore, from a philosophical perspective, I was searching for the “universal value” that surpasses various cultures and ideas in the world.

As time passed, my interest in the universal value had been forgotten in my daily life. But recently, and possibly due to my age, that interest has returned. I have become aware of the anxiety caused by the belief of limited life due to death.

Rev. Koso proposed that I pray to Amida Buddha. While praying to Amida with other members of Jodo Shu in Paris, I feel that I am finding peace of mind and getting closer to understanding the infinite universe, where human life and death are transcended. When reciting the sutra, I feel that I am part of the infinite universe.

I will be forever grateful to Jodo Shu Paris, and to Rev. Koso, my mentor, who provided me with the opportunity of seeing the light.

HAWAII

Kaori Muto
Member of Haleiwa Jodo Mission



I was born and raised in Saitama, Japan. In 2001, I got married to an American man and we lived in Saitama Prefecture for 11 years. After the 2011 earthquake and tsunami disaster in northeastern Japan, we decided to live in Hawaii where my husband was born and raised.

Right after we moved to my husband’s hometown of Waialua, I met Mrs. Ezaki, the wife of Rev. Ezaki of Haleiwa Jodo Mission, at a public park. Because Mrs. Ezaki and I have kids of similar ages, we started to exchange tips on child-raising. Finally, she and I started the Sunday School at Haleiwa Jodo Mission. We enjoy organizing various traditional Japanese events, and many more activities at Haleiwa Jodo Mission.

Five years have passed since I became a member of Haleiwa Jodo Mission. I participate in the major services regularly, and help at the Obon, Toro Nagashi, and the Craft Fair events with my family. I have met many people through the services and activities of Haleiwa Jodo Mission.

AUSTRALIA

Mrs. Saho White
Member of Jodo Shu
Buddhism Community of Australia

It was the first time I did *shakyou* (sutra copying) and I really enjoyed it. I thought *shakyou* was just copying sutras but there are some steps for preparation to actually start copying it, such as washing hands, *zuko* (incense purification), meditation, and sutra reaction. These preparations made me calm and my body felt



From left: Mrs. White, Rev. Tetsuyu Wilson, Mrs. Mikiko Sone



Mrs. White doing Shakyou

purified. When I was concentrating on copying the sutra in a quiet environment, the anxiety and stress that I normally feel in my life were away from my mind and I felt peaceful and comfortable. I wanted to continue feeling this and didn’t want to stop copying. After the copying, my mind felt invigorated.

Introducing Our Newest Brazilian Minister

By Rev. Eiki Yamada



The Jodo Shu South American Missions last year welcomed its newest missionary to join our team. Reverend Milton Eiki Yamada, a Brazilian-born new generation of kaikyoshi (overseas priest) was embraced by the Sao Paulo headquarters community with high expectations.

Rev. Yamada was ordained at Chion-in Temple in December 2016, and spent the following year training at the famous Jogi Nyorai Saihoji Temple in Sendai, under the guidance of Rev. Oeda. He returned to Brazil in early 2018 in order to help out with Gojusoden (Fivefold

Transmission) Retreat that was carried out to celebrate the Brazilian Mission's 65th Anniversary.

It has been only a year since his arrival at the Sao Paulo Betsuin and one could easily notice the difference in the air and mood. New initiatives have been approved to be developed in order to make the temple's activities more open to the surrounding community, as well as fulfilling the expectations of the younger generations of our family members to cope with the core of our religious and spiritual traditions.

This approach is vital and sensitive to guarantee the development and transmission of our faith in the Buddha Amida through the Nenbutsu recitation to the coming generations, to whom we must impart the knowledge, wisdom, and faith to share and co-exist in an ever changing globalized world. Our missions in South America are driven by this vision and certainly Rev. Yamada will leave his mark throughout his missionary drive.

In Memoriam of Bishop Yubun Narashiba

By Rev. Koji Ezaki



Born in Osaka, Japan, in 1957, Bishop Yubun Hirofumi Narashiba spent his youth in Osaka and majored in English at Kansai Gaidai University. After graduating, he participated in the Jodo Shu ministerial training course and was ordained in December 1984.

On March 3, 1985, Rev. Narashiba was assigned to the Jodo Mission of Hawaii (Betsuin), where he served for two years. On September 1, 1987, he was transferred to Koloa Jodo Mission. In November 1997, he moved back to the Betsuin as an office manager, and in December 1998, he became the head minister of the Betsuin.

On September 12, 1999, he was elected as the 18th Bishop of the Hawaii Council of Jodo Missions. Four years later, in September 2003, he stepped down due to health reasons and became the head minister of the Betsuin to

support Bishop Dwight Ryokan Nakamura, and successive bishops. In September 16, 2017, Rev. Narashiba was re-elected as the 22nd Bishop. He took great leadership to plan for the 125th anniversary of Hawaii Jodo Shu in 2019.

Sadly, Bishop Narashiba suffered a heart attack on July 19, 2018 and passed away on July 20, departing for Amida Buddha's Pure Land as Rev. Koji Ezaki chanted the O-nenbutsu. Bishop Narashiba is survived by his wife, Yukari and daughter, Koyuki Sophia.

Bishop Narashiba's official funeral service was held on September 2, 2018 at the Jodo Mission of Hawaii, officiated by the Acting Bishop Koji Jeff Ezaki. In attendance were Bishop Shunmyo Sugiyama, Director of Social and International Department, and Bishop Shodo Kobayashi of Myojoin Temple Tokyo, representing Jodo Shu Headquarters; Bishop Joji Atone of Jodoshu North America Missions; and Bishop Edward Ryobo Sasaki of the Brazil Jodo Shu Missions. Nearly 400 mourners gathered together to honor the late Bishop Narashiba.

After Bishop Narashiba's passing, Kyoku President Leonard Chow appointed Rev. Koji Ezaki of Haleiwa Jodo Mission as Acting Bishop of the Hawaii Council of Jodo Missions.

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