

Pure Land Life

The Pure Land Buddhism of Honen Shonin



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2018 No. 31

The 80th Anniversary Commemorative Service

By Kodo Tanaka
Jodoshu North America
Buddhist Missions



The year 2017 fell on the 80th anniversary since Rev. Reikai Nozaki founded the first Jodo Shu temple on the continental United States in 1936. On Father's Day, June 18, 2017, we observed the 80th Anniversary Commemorative Service with about 120 local members and friends to celebrate this precious event of the Jodo Shu ministry in North America. It was especially our honor that Rev. Gyokei Honda and his fellow ministers from Shimane Prefecture, Japan, who had kindly visited Los Angeles many times in the past to help us observe such auspicious services as Goju Soden (Special Three-days Retreat) in 2010 and the 800th Memorial Anniversary Service for Honen Shonin in 2012, officiated this service.

In retrospect of the 80-year long history of our temple, we realize that there were many ups and downs, joys and sorrows, encounters and

departures. Knowingly, there is no one but Amida Buddha who has witnessed it all these past 80 years. Amida Buddha, who is enshrined in our temple, has been watching over all our congregation from the past to the present. It was our sincere hope that this service would encourage all our family and friends to strengthen the spiritual link that connects us together. Without air, no sound can be heard. Love and affection that all forebears have for their descendants are invisible. So is Buddha's compassion toward all beings. But these facts are indispensable for us to live our life, just like one voice needs air for it to be heard.

With this appreciation in mind, this special service was planned along with the theme "Family" and featured the special blessing for about 35 children, from newborn babies to graduate school students. The commemorative party followed in



Special blessing for children



80th Anniversary commemorative service



High school student's performance



Magic by a junior magician

the social hall and everyone enjoyed the Hawaiian buffet and such entertainments as singing songs and magic by a junior magician. We would like to thank all those who gathered at our temple that day and all our temple members, who worked very hard to hold this service. Nothing was more precious for us than to recite “Namu Amida Bu” together in our temple and see everyone smiling to each other. Rev. Gyohei Honda, the officiant, pointed out the importance of this gathering in his greeting message as follows:

“Looking closely at the history of Jodo Shu ministry before the first temple was formed, the record shows that it was started by Rev. Sayama in 1923 and Rev. Reikai Nozaki followed in 1928. It has been 80 years since Bishop Nozaki formed Jodo Shu North America Buddhist Mission in Little Tokyo, the first Jodo Shu temple in North America. I would like to pay my sincere respect to all people who earnestly served the well-being of this temple such as resident ministers, ministers’ family, members and supporters, and those who departed over the last 80 years.

There is an old Japanese saying that goes, ‘If you are delighted to see the flower blossoms, think of the root in the ground that made it happen.’ The same is true for this 80th anniversary celebration. Let us

all be mindful and grateful. All our lives, existing here and now, are never possible without our parents, grandparents, and ancestors, who are no longer with us. These invisible causes of our lives are difficult to see.



Special blessing for children



Officiant delivering his message



Commemorative party

Jodo Shu European Buddhism Center Celebrated Its Tenth Anniversary



By Koryu Koso
Jodo Shu European
Buddhism Center

In 2017 Jodo Shu European Buddhism Center celebrated its tenth anniversary. In the mid 80s, I started living in France thanks to relationships built in Japan. A few days after I arrived to France, I received an invitation to perform a burial service, since then every year I receive new requests such as consulting for memorial services from Japanese compatriots.

One day after several years, a Japanese person asked me if there were any Japanese Buddhist temples in Paris. Unfortunately, after making some research, I found that there were no Buddhist temples in Paris. One day, a Japanese company

based in France needed a temple and a priest.

Ten years later, thanks to Jodo Shu's cooperation, we found the Jodo Shu European Buddhism Center. In order to celebrate its creation in June 2008, we held a Buddhist conference in a hotel based in Paris. At that time, Archbishop Ryukai Mano, my former professor, who is the head of Shojokein temple, came to France and presided over the conference. Professor Jean Noël Robert of Collège de France, a Buddhist expert and editor of the French translation of the Lotus Sutra, also helped us a lot to launch the association, by giving us a conference. We have many wonderful memories with Archbishop Mano. After the conference, someone came to me and said to me smiling: "Now the Buddhist teachings are spreading." Since then, the Association holds a Buddhist conference each year thanks to the help and the generosity of Archbishop Mano and Professor Robert. We truly appreciate their devotion each year. Also, we organized a monthly *Bukkyo no Tsudoi*, which is a traditional Buddhist session. During this time, we learn about Buddhist teachings, and the history and evolution of Japanese Buddhism.

We also celebrate Buddhist events, practice Nenbutsu and hold several friendly parties in order to gather everyone. The "Bukkyo no



Archbishop Mano delivering his talk



Archbishop Mano and Prof. Robert with members



Betsuji Nenbutsu service Chateau of Breteuil

"Tsudoi" events take place in different places: In a hotel conference room or at "Maison de Kiso," a traditional old Japanese house, located in Jardin d'Acclimatation in Bois de Boulogne in Paris. It also takes place in Acon, which is the headquarter of Jodo Shu European Buddhism Center. For the annual Buddhism conference, because our association does not have a temple yet, we use different places for the conference. In addition to the Parisian hotel, the Maison du Japon, which belongs to the Cité Internationale Universitaire of Paris, the university ESMOD (one of the most famous fashion schools) has lent us a beautiful conference room for many years. We truly appreciate their generosity. For many years, priests from Japan came to France to support us and give us encouragement for this conference. We organized a "Betsuji Nenbutsu service" in the Château of Breteuil, a castle classified in the historic monuments located in the suburb of Paris. In July 2015, we invited the town's major and his wife to our Acon headquarters. The city committee and neighbors also joined us.

We organized a presentation of the Jodo Shu European Buddhism Center with all the members. It was a beautiful and sunny day with more than 40 degrees all day long. During the tenth anniversary

conference of the Jodo Shu European Buddhism Center in 2017, we invited Professor Jérôme Ducor to give us a lecture. He is a professor of Lausanne University and a priest, who published the French translation of *Senchakushu* by Hônen Shonin. He also appeared on several tv shows about Buddhism. It was a wonderful opportunity to have him talk about Buddhism in a very easy and pleasant way, addressing his own experiences.

Since that time, we have had many Buddhist events. We started celebrating O-Bon at Maison de Kiso. We have also been observing Hanamatsuri for two years. It is very peaceful to see everyone pour sweet tea on the Baby Buddha statue in front of the families.

Jodo Shu European Buddhism Center can increase and develop thanks to the fusion of French culture, Japanese culture, and Buddhism. Our Buddhist association is now recognized as part of Japanese society in France. We would like to learn Buddhist teachings and take advantage of its wisdom for our daily life. It is thanks to the understanding and to the seamless support of Jodo Shu and thanks also to everyone that we can celebrate the tenth year anniversary of the Jodo Shu European Buddhism Center. And for that, we would like to deeply and truly thank you.



24-Hour Continuous Nenbutsu



Bon Dance practice



With the Mayor of Acon and his wife at our headquarters

2017 International Kaikyo-ku Report

Brazil



News from South America

By Rev. Ryoho Sasaki
Jodo Shu South American Missions

The Jodo Shu South American Missions are celebrating its 65th anniversary this year and the directory board, along with all missionaries, have decided to mark this passage focusing on deepening the knowledge and faith in Master Honen Shonin's teachings on Amida Buddha's Pure Land. For this purpose, the famous course-retreat Goju Soden took place at both Curitiba and Ibiuna Nippakuji temples in early February. It was conducted by Rev. Zuikai Matsuno from Hogenji Temple, Nagasaki, along with eight priests from the Kyushu area, kindly endorsed by the head temple Zendoji, as well as grand head temple Chion-in.

The Curitiba Nippakuji Temple is reaching its 10th year of activities, and there's no bigger bliss than to commemorate it with the arrival of a new Amida Buddha statue, generously donated by Rev. Daishun Fujii, of Chushoji Temple in Kobe to whom our community and its leaders are deeply grateful. The inaugural kaigen "eyes-opening" rite was held at the Gyoki-e ceremony in late January. The local Nippakuji community will be carrying out a wide range of activities that reaches all the ages, with cultural initiatives and religious programs that certainly inspires other Jodo Shu temple communities to adapt and incorporate them into their annual activities as well.

Among the many activities held at each of our South American temples, one of the highlights of the missionary activities in 2017 was certainly the "Tomoiki Shingyo Dojo" held in mid-July at the Ibiuna Nippakuji Temple. It is an annual two-days short retreat in which the activity concept centers in integrate parents and kids along, actively living the spiritual and religious experience that drive them all closer to the spirit



Turning the Big Rosary While Chanting Nenbutsu at Tomoiki Shingyo Dojo in Ibiuna



All Smiling Participants at Ending Ceremony of Tomoiki Shingyo Dojo

of Honen Shonin's teachings. We can notice the success of this initiative by observing the increase of participants from all temples every year.



The "Eye-Opening Ceremony" of the Amida Buddha Gohonzon Statue at Curitiba Nippakuji Temple

Hawaii



Gagaku Concert

By Ms. Sally Hayashi
Jodo Mission of Hawaii

On Sunday, February 11, 2018, Jodo Mission of Hawaii was privileged to have the *Jodo Shu Shizuoka Gagakukai* perform at our temple in Honolulu. All players are ministers of Jodo Shu and the event began with the entrance of all the ministers.



Gagaku performers from Shizuoka

Gagaku music is ancient court music and because many people in Hawaii are not too familiar with it. M.C. Kenko Takase began by introducing the various instruments that the group uses. The various numbers played were: *Netori*, *Goshouraku*, *Etenraku*, *Shuka Tsukikage*, *Bairo* and *Genjouraku*. The final number involved a dancer impersonating a snake-eater who lived in the western region of ancient China and was delighted with finding a snake.

Many people in the audience were very impressed with the presentation of Gagaku music, especially when M.C. Takase mentioned that two years ago this group did not know how to play a note but practiced and practiced and



Shizuoka Gagaku kai with Bishop Narashiba

came to Hawaii to play Gagaku music at Jodo Mission. They sounded wonderful! There were more than 100 people that came to enjoy this event. Not only did everyone learn about the many instruments used, but they also learned some history of Gagaku. They took us into the world of mysterious elegance. We would like to see them return to Hawaii sometime in the near future.

The Shizuoka Gagakukai was most appreciative to have the opportunity to perform in Hawaii and was also appreciative to Masatoshi Shamoto Sensei of the Hawaii Gagaku Society for loaning some instruments for this performance.



Australia



Achievements in 2017 and plans for 2018

By Rev. Tetsuyu Wilson
Jodo Shu Buddhist Community
of Australia

Amidaji fervently continued its missionary work in Australia in 2017.

We began the year by holding our first Hanamatsuri on April 23. Unlike other ceremonies such as Ohigan and Obon, this ceremony centered around the member's



Hanamatsuri in the garden of Amidaji

children. It was a time for them in particular to experience the grace of Amida.

Much of my missionary work focuses on children. Twice a month I teach Japanese to several local children at our Terakoya in Amidaji. Also, I visit schools throughout Brisbane to give instruction in Buddhism. This is part of a religious instruction program offered to schools throughout Queensland. Through these activities, I believe children will be better prepared for the challenges they will face later in life.

Later in the year, during August, Obon ceremonies were held in Cowra, Broome and Thursday Island. By continuing to hold Obon each year in these places, a close bond has formed between the communities there and myself.

In January 2018, Rev Toyooka, CEO of Jodoshu and Rev Sugiyama, Head of Social and International Affairs Department together with their entourage visited Australia. They visited the Japanese Cemeteries in Cowra and Thursday Island and were able to see the results of Amidaji's dedicated missionary work in those places.

Also, it was an honour to have had Rev Toyo-oka visit Amidaji and conduct a ceremony. I am sure the sound of six priests reciting prayers in unison will echo through the minds of the members of Amidaji for many years to come.

2017 was full of achievement for Amidaji and 2018 will be no less.

Namu Amida Butsu



CEO of Jodoshu, Rev Toyo-oka with Rev Sugiyama, Head of the Department for Social and International Affairs conducting a ceremony at Amidaji, Brisbane



Children pouring ama-cha



Buddhist instruction at an elementary school



Buddhist instruction at an elementary school



Terakoya in Amidaji

Zendō-ji, Head Temple in Fukuoka

By Rev. Shinri Hara



Main Hall (right) and Three Patriarchs Hall (left)

Located near the bucolic Chikuō River in Kume city, Fukuoka prefecture, Zendō-ji is the southernmost daihonzan or head temple of Jodo Shu. Initially named Kōmyō-ji (Temple of [Amida's] Light), the temple was founded in 1191 by the second patriarch of Jodo Shu, Shōkō-bō Benchō Shōnin (1162–1238). Later, in 1217, the temple was renamed Zendō-ji, after the great Chinese Pure Land master Shandao (613–681), who is known in Japanese as Zendō. Today, the buildings on the temple grounds consist of the *Hondō* or

Main Hall, the *Sansodō* or the Three Patriarchs Hall, the thatched-roof *shoin* or study hall, and a traditional monastery kitchen.

Zendō-ji Temple observes many of the same traditional services as other Jodo Shu temples though one of the temple's most important annual observances is its memorial service in honor of their founder Shōkō Shōnin. As illustrated below, the festive procession for the memorial service includes young children dressed in the traditional *chigo* costume and a



Inside the Main Hall

seated image of Shōkō Shōnin, carried by men dressed as attendants. The memorial service for Shōkō Shōnin is also held in an equally grand manner in the Main Hall.

Shōkō Shōnin (also known as Benchō Shōnin), the temple's founder and the second Jodo Shu patriarch, was born in what is now Yahata in northern Kyushu. His mother died in childbirth and, like our founder Hōnen Shōnin, Shōkō Shōnin entered the monastery at an early age. At about age 25, he went to Kyoto to study on Mount Hiei, the center of Buddhism at the time. When he was 35 years old, he became the disciple of Hōnen Shōnin and studied at his side for eight years. Later, Shōkō Shōnin returned to Kyushu, where he became instrumental in the spread of Jodo Shu and Nenbutsu teachings in Kyushu, which became a center of Jodo Shu. Shōkō Shōnin was known to have founded as many as forty-eight temples in Kyushu and was also the teacher of the third patriarch of Jodo Shu, Nenna Ryōchū Shōnin (1199–1287).

Because of Shōkō Shōnin's prayers for his mother, who he lost at birth, Zendō-ji also came to be known and is even now locally popular as a place to pray for safe childbirth. In addition, the temple observes the *shichi-go-san* (7-5-3) festival to celebrate children ages three, five, and seven.



Shoin Study Hall



Commemorative procession in honor of Shōkō Shōnin

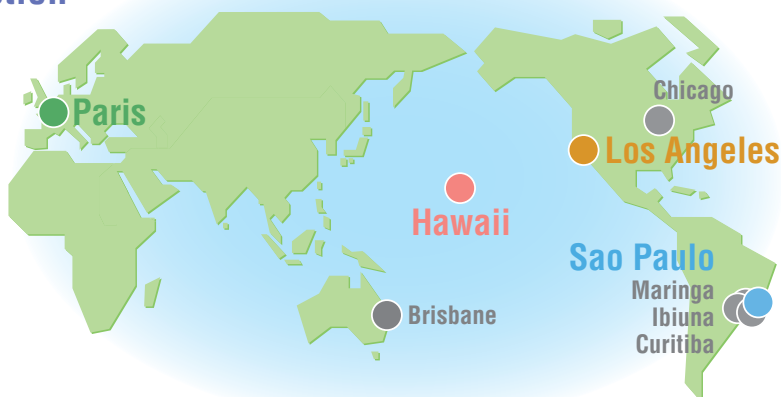


Inside the traditional monastery kitchen



Commemorative service for Shōkō Shōnin

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



SOUTH AMERICA

Yokomizo Family

Members of Jodo Shu South American Missions

The Yokomizo Family are members of our São Paulo community for more than 40 years. Mrs. Yooko widowed very early and Eduardo, the elder son of five, started to help managing a Japanese confectionery factory, today the famous “Castella Manju”. Check the web: castella.com.br. His drive and dedication to help his mother at the factory enabled them do provide college educations for all his siblings, except himself.

His personality and charisma allowed the factory to grow, introducing new products and adapting some

of the most popular items available for his non-sugar and diet customers. He and his wife Edna, along with their kids, Beatriz Aya, who is in college majoring in Food Engineering and the high-school student Bruno Kenji, actively participate at the events in our temple always.

Last year, Mr.Yokomizu was elected vice-mayor of his hometown of Mairiporã in the northern suburbs of São Paulo. Although he is a very busy person, we are blessed for having such a person on our board that brings a balanced vision honoring the past, a precise assessment of the present, and the visionary perspective for the future.



FRANCE

Keiko Julia Tsujii

Member of Jodo Shu European Buddhism Center



I was born in Brasil and my family last name is Tsujii which includes the ideogram of Tsuji that signifies crossroads.

In my childhood village, there was a Buddhist temple, which can look quite paradoxical, in the

sense that Brasil is a country that is predominantly Catholic. But ultimately, Brasil has always been known for its many religions.

Buddhism is a part of me, my root like my Japanese side, which is a non-erasable part of my multiple identity.

Indeed, in today's actual world, made of a lot of uncertain events, Buddhism is the key to lead everyone in the path of peace. It helps me to have my own serenity because Buddhism respects nature, and all humans and living things in the world.

HAWAII

Leonard Chow

President of the Hawaii Council of Jodo Missions



Aloha! My name is Leonard Chow and I am an affirmed Buddhist. I joined Hilo Meishoin in 1976 after I graduated from the University of Hawaii with a degree in Sociology and Social work. As a teenager, many of my high school friends were members of Hilo Hongwanji's Jr. YBA so I naturally joined them and happily participated in temple-sanctioned social activities such as camp outs, picnics, Friday night dance socials, and Obon dances.

During this time, around 1972, I started attending Hilo Meishoin's Japanese services with my friend Calvin. His grandparents were members of Meishoin and it was his responsibility to drive them to temple on Sundays but he didn't want to sit through the service by himself so I would accompany him. As weeks turned into months, Rev. Dwight Nakamura, the resident minister at the time, asked me about my interest and knowledge of Jodo Shu Buddhism. I told him that my paternal

grandmother's family was Chinese Chingtu Buddhists, the counterpart of Japanese Jodo or Pure Land Buddhists. I further told him that our founder was St. Shantao, who is known as St. Zendo in Japanese. So it was a natural transition for me to join Hilo Meishoin.

I am grateful to have been initially accepted into the temple by Mr. Yoriyoshi Hara (whose father Rev. Tetsuyu Hara was the former resident minister of Hilo Meishoin), the Fujinkai ladies, and later on by the rest of the congregation who made me feel welcome and a part of the active Sangha. I served 2 terms as Senior YBA President and a term as Kyodan President.

I have enjoyed over 37 years of membership and active participation at Hilo Meishoin. It is my hope that I can continue to be an active, productive, and contributing member in the years to come. I consciously try to live by the rules of the Eight Fold Path laid down for us by the historical Buddha and fervently seek refuge in the Three Treasures in my daily life. I enjoy the fellowship of our universal Jodo Shu Sangha and it is my sincere wish that we can share the boundless love, compassion and wisdom of our Amida Buddha with everyone we meet. As the Hawaii Kyoku President, I humbly ask for your continued support. Namu Amida Butsu.

NORTH AMERICA

Yoshiko Ueda

Member of Jodo Shu North America Buddhist Missions



In winter 2010, I attended the Goju Soden retreat held at Jodo Shu, which is very close to my office. I decided to attend it as one of the 50 participants who were going to receive official rituals of the Five-Fold Transmission of Jodo Shu. Since then, the teaching of Nembutsu became familiar in my life.

I have been participating in the year-end one-hour Nembutsu service with my friend, who encouraged me to attend the Goju Soden, consecutively from 2010 to 2017. It is a wonderful experience to be engaged in this intensive Nembutsu service at the dusk of the New Year's Eve. It is good to see the number of my fellow practitioners increasing each year, and especially the last New Year's Eve, I was grateful that I could experience this intensive Nembutsu service with 33 people! I would like to renew my heart to live fully the year 2018 and am looking forward to attending this service again this year-end.

Thank you in Gassho

Bishop Yubun Narashiba
Hawaii Council of Jodo Missions



First of all, I would like to extend my heartfelt Aloha and Mahalo to the readers of Pure Land Life for your friendship and support to Jodo Shu in Hawaii.

Among the various events that took place in Hawaii during 2017, the biggest one was the 41st Biennial Convention of Hawaii Council of Jodo Missions on September 15, 16 and 17. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt appreciation to the Kyoku president Mr. Leonard Chow and other officers for their hard work to make the convention very meaningful and fruitful. I also would like to thank all other helpers for setting up the hall, taking care of transportation, cooking meals, etc.

I also want to thank Bishop Gensho Hara for the wonderful achievements made to build a friendly and peaceful organization. Because of his gentle smile and attitude, we were able to have meetings in harmony.

More than one century has passed since the noble teaching of O-Nembutsu was introduced to Hawaii. Pioneer ministers devoted their lives to spread O-Nembutsu among the Japanese immigrants in Hawaii, and many members supported those ministers. As you know, Jodo Shu temples in Hawaii have been providing peace and harmony to the people of Hawaii.

We should always recognize and be thankful for what has been done by those ministers and members in the past years.

Times are changing very fast. Now Jodo Shu temples in Hawaii are facing various challenges that they have never experienced before. The membership of Jodo Shu temples is much smaller than ten years ago. However, like any challenge, our response will determine whether the challenge becomes an opportunity or becomes a problem. We are now confronted with the dual aims of revitalizing our activities and rebuilding our membership.


I believe that no matter what challenges we may face, we must remain absolutely calm and steady, and committed to provide a bold and caring vision for a better tomorrow. Let's get together as often as we can and try to find ways good to solve the issues facing us. I am sure hard times and glad times will be ahead, but if we trust in the power of Amida Buddha and work together, our future will be very successful. Now is the time to understand the role that each one of us plays for the betterment of Jodo Shu in Hawaii.

In peace and harmony, my goals for the next two years will be "Crystal-clear Communication" and "Cooperation." Thanks to the new technologies, our communication can be on time or even live. Let's make the most of these technologies. If we all work together, our problems will surely be overcome.

Now, I am honored and humbled to have been appointed again to this important position as bishop. I will continue to serve with diligence and concern. I will work for the people of Jodo Shu and for the people of our community.

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