

Pure Land Life

The Pure Land Buddhism of Honen Shonin



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Year end and New Year Events



End of the Year Activities in Hawaii

By Bishop Kosen Ishikawa
Hawaii Council of Jodo Missions

December is called “Shiwasu” in old Japanese, which literally means “reverend (or teacher) running.” In Japan, it is said reverend should not run even if they are busy. However, the word Shiwasu indicates December is so busy that even priests have to run around the temple. Year ending month in Hawaii is always busy like the word “Shiwasu” although we never feel its winter season from the beautiful scenery in Hawaii.

Generally in December, Jodo Shu temples in Hawaii have “General Clean Up” which is called “O-Souji (Big Cleaning)” in Japanese, Mochitsuki or pounding Mochi as a fundraiser, and end the year with New Year’s Eve Service. Plus here in the United States, the entire country celebrates Christmas Season after Thanksgiving weekend. People get together and do various events under the name of Christmas. In a sense, December is a time when all the generations- the children, adults and the elderly get together for reunion and fellowship. In Hawaii, influenced by Japanese immigrants, tradition to prepare for welcoming new year is well-practiced.

Several years ago, Hilo Meishoin started making huge Kadomatsu. This year members formed a team to harvest bamboo and made various sizes of the Kadomatsu to sell as a fundraiser. Hilo Meishoin’s social hall became a “Kadomatsu factory”. At the same time, two huge Kadomatsu were made and placed at the temple entrance.

This year, Jodo Mission of Hawaii made two kinds of mochi, using 635 pounds of mochi rice on December 28.



Blessing by Rev. John Hara before Mochitsuki at Wailuku Jodo Mission



Mochitsuki with special lava-rock mortar at Heleiwa Jodo Mission

One is called “O-kasane” which is offering to Buddha or Deities and another one is called “Ko-mochi” which is smaller size of mochi to eat on New Year’s Day. It took a lot of preparation, time and people (temple members, relatives and friends) to make mochi to fulfill the many orders received. What was interesting this year was a Japanese language class from Kalani High School participated as part of cultural information. They learned that it is not so easy making mochi and that it takes a lot of people. The highlight of the day is when the Usu is brought out and the children get to pound the mochi.

On December 31st, almost all Jodo Shu temples in Hawaii conducted New Year’s Eve service, which is to dispel evil passions and to purify our body and mind to welcome new year. This was also a time to reflect on the year and to appreciate the countless blessings we had received from Amida Buddha. Among our temples, Lahaina Jodo Mission has kept attracting many people to spend a dramatic night to celebrate the brand-new year from 10:00 pm to 2:00 am! There was a Jobon-e or Discarding ceremony which is to burn old Buddhist items such as Omamori in front



“Kadomatsu” Sale at Hilo Meishoin



Gorgeous Kadomatsu in pairs at Hilo Meishoin

of the Great Buddha Statue, followed by blessing by Rev. Gensho Hara at the temple. Also their temple bell was rung 108 times by participants, followed by the fireworks and delicious food including “Toshikoshi Soba” noodles.

Yes, here in Hawaii, December has many opportunities to eat lots of good food and very dangerous time, too for gaining weight. Recently, one of our visitors at Koloa Jodo Mission told me every time he comes to the temple, the wiser he gets to be! Very honored to hear it but I think we have to be careful about getting to be wider in December.

Last but not least, I sincerely extend Aloha and Happy New Year to you and your family. When you come to Hawaii, please stop by our Jodo Shu temples where we will welcome you, like Ohana (family).



Ringin a temple bell at Lahaina Jodo Mission



Lahaina's famous New Year's firecrackers after the service

The 10th NYE 1-hr Nembutsu Retreat

By Rev. Kodo Tanaka
Jodo Shu North America Buddhist Missions

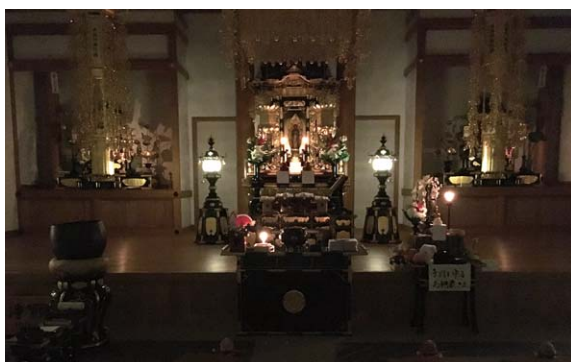
For the past 10 years we have been hosting a special service on the New Year's Eve, called “1-hr Nembutsu Retreat. It is an intensive Nembutsu retreat where attendees engage themselves in the recitations of “Namu Amida Butsu” for an hour in the dark of the NYE, facing Amida Buddha shone only by the light of candles. 10 years ago, “Goju Soden,” 3-day Special Buddhist Practice took place and our congregation was exposed to special rituals including the Nembutsu recitations with

mokugyo (wooden drum) and prostrations to Amida Buddha performed in the dark sanctuary. Requested by the attendees of Goju Soden, we held this Nembutsu retreat on the NYE of 2010.

For the first couple of years, only 7 – 10 volunteers attended because it was almost impossible for our congregation to drive in the evening of NYE to downtown Los Angeles. Then, we began advertising this service as “NYE Petit-Buddhist Training” and Japanese families in our community, who wish to spend time in the sacred place on NYE, started to join us. Gradually the number of attendees increased to 15, 25, 33 and lately on NYE 2019, the record breaking 47 people gathered. Besides our temple members, most of attendees are newcomers and returnees from the public who do not belong to any specific church/temple but visit our temple once a year for this



Procession to receive “Petit-Buddhist training”



Jodo shu North America Buddhist Mission Hondo

retreat. Although acquiring temple membership is always difficult, we hope this retreat will become an opportunity for people in our community to become familiar with our temple as a place to worship. We also hope that the Nembutsu experience will last long in their hearts and remind them to say “Namu Amida Butsu” in their daily lives. We wish to share some impressions from the attendees as follows:



Incense offering

“My father died in Japan this year and I became aware that my family’s temple is Jodo Shu. After coming back to LA, I wanted to do something for my father and searched the web, and found this temple. It was a wonderful experience for me, Thank you!”



Oriention before the retreat

“This was a great chance for meditation and reflection on the previous year while preparing for the new year as well.”

“In the shower of the sound of Nembutsu and mokuugo, my mind was empty. It felt that worries and concerns faded away from my mind, and I was comfortable for welcoming the new year.”

“While reciting Nembutsu, there were moments I felt the word “Namu Amida Butsu” slipped away from my mouth and I couldn’t pronounce the word right. But while I was making my effort to concentrate, the word suddenly comes back to me. I felt this was like our life itself. In my daily life, sometimes I feel I’m lost, but continuing my effort both at work and home, and all of a sudden the right track appears before me. I felt reciting Nembutsu is like living this life.”



Group photo before the retreat

SPECIAL 2

Hanamatsuri (Buddha's Birthday)

Bukkyo no Tsudoi Hanamatsuri

By Rev. Koryu Koso
Jodo Shu European Buddhism Center

In 2020, Jodo Shu European Buddhism Center in France is celebrating its 13th year.

For the establishment and activities of the center, we owe a lot of gratitude to the initiators, the late Archbishop Yukô Narita who had great trust and faith in Hônen Shônin, and the late Archbishop Ryukai Mano who made the wind of Dharma blow over to Europe with a beautiful scent.

We also greatly appreciate Jodo Shu’s understanding and its kind support. It is very interesting and meaningful

to experience the efforts to spread Buddhism in Europe where there are many countries, different ethnic groups, various cultures and a long history.

Today, there is a growing interest in Buddhism around the world. In Europe as well, we are receiving many inquiries and interests about Buddhism. Actually, these contacts are great opportunities for us to learn about Buddhism with its long and diverse history of teachings.

Currently, Jodo Shu European Buddhism Center holds a study session on Buddhism and a Buddhist event once a



Hanamatsuri held at the Kiso House in Paris

month, which is called “Bukkyô no Tsudoi”. Our members are not only Jodo Shu but also those who are generally interested in Buddhism and Japanese culture. Recently, we have worked on the Nenbutsu practice taught by Honen Shonin, the founder of the Jodo Shu.

As a Japanese Buddhist event, we hold several Buddhist ceremonies such as the Hanamatsuri, O-bon, and the O-Juya hōyoe.

Let me introduce one of our big events, “Hanamatsuri” which literally means “Flower Festival” to celebrate the birth of Buddha. This is indeed a cheerful and fun event that is quite different from other Buddhist events.

Originally, our flower festival was held at an old Japanese house in the park of the Bois de la Boulogne in Paris. It is a famous park that is frequently visited by families. Therefore, we had many participants of parents and children who came to visit this Japanese house with their interests in our event. It was very peaceful to see children in France pouring Amacha or sweet tea on an Infant Buddha statue. This image also illustrates Japanese culture in Buddhism.

Unfortunately, since this house was demolished two years ago, we started using a meeting room at a hotel in central Paris to do this event. This hotel is very thoughtful for our religious and cultural event and we are very grateful for their kindness and support.



Rev. Koso offers invocation and prayer during Hanamatsuri

In this conference room at the hotel, we prepare and decorate the altar for Amida Buddha and a Hanamido. Then after offering flowers to the Hanamido, we stand before the Hanamido one by one, offering incense and pouring Amacha to the Infant Buddha. After prayer, we have a round-table discussion while tasting Amacha.

We always feel like Buddha's birthday is our own birthday, because Buddha preaches the equality and peace of all living things.

This is how we observe Hanamatsuri in France. We are hoping to hold this kind of Buddhist event not only in Paris, but also in other cities and regions in France and in countries outside of France.

Two years ago, a German member who wishes to establish a Buddhist center with “Nenbutsu no kai (Group)”, etc in Germany, joined us in our center and events. We have hope for a bright future.



Hanamatsuri



Flyer of Hanamatsuri



Hanamatsuri held at meeting room at the hotel in Paris



Hanamatsuri

Hanamatsuri in Australia

By Rev. Tetsuyu Wilson
Jodo Shu Buddhist Community of Australia

It is a sunny day in Spring in the garden of Amidaji. The children and their parents are gathered around the little statue of the Buddha which is decorated with flowers. It is time for the Hanamatsuri to begin. I welcome everyone and after a few words of introduction to today's ceremony, I begin to recite the prayers. This is how we celebrate Hanamatsuri, the Buddha's Birthday in Australia.

Unlike temples in Japan where Hanamatsuri is held every year on April 8, temples here celebrate the Buddha's birthday, his day of reaching enlightenment and passing into Nirvana on a day calculated by the Lunar Calendar. This day is also designated by the United Nations as the International Day of Vesak. The date for this varies from year to year but usually falls in the months of April or May. In 2019, it fell on May 19. Since holding our first Hanamatsuri in 2017, we have had difficulty in holding it close to April 8 as Easter also occurs at this time. In addition, schools go on Spring vacation at this time and many families go on holidays to the beach and other destinations. So, in 2019 Amidaji decided to hold



Children wearing O-kesa



Children enjoyed pouring Amacha

our first Hanamatsuri in 2017, we have had difficulty in holding it close to April 8 as Easter also occurs at this time. In addition, schools go on Spring vacation at this time and many families go on holidays to the beach and other destinations. So, in 2019 Amidaji decided to hold



Explaining Hanamatsuri



Hanamatsuri held in the garden of Amidaji, Brisbane

Hanamatsuri close to the International Day of Vesak, Sunday May 12. However, I felt that this date somehow wasn't appropriate. As for 2020, I'm still unsure of the exact date but I'm hoping to hold Hanamatsuri closer to the Japanese date of April 8.

Hanamatsuri is an important event at Amidaji for the children. It is a time when they take centre stage in a ceremony. They sit in front of the group, closest to the statue of the new-born Buddha and after the prayers are said they excitedly line up waiting their turn to offer incense and pour sweet tea over it. Everyone watching them cannot help but be moved by the smiles of joy on their faces. This is truly the grace of the Buddha.



Fellowship after the Service



Children pouring Amacha over Baby Buddha

Hanamatsuri in Brazil

By Bishop Eduardo Ryoho Sasaki
Jodo Shu South American Missions

Even in Brazil, where the season and time are quite opposite to Japan, Hanamatsuri to celebrate Buddha's birth, is held in April at various places.

In Sao Paulo, Hanamatsuri organized by the Brazil Bukkyo Rengokai (Brazil Buddhist Association) which consists of 7 Japanese Buddhist sects, has been conducted in the first week of April, as an official annual event of the city for more than 50 years. Throughout the week, a Hanamido or the special altar for the infant Buddha with flowers is set up in the Japanese garden located in the oriental town "Liberdade" in the center of Sao Paulo city. It is open to the public, and lots of visitors and locals stop by to offer and pour sweet tea to the infant Buddha for blessing. People can also drink sweet tea prepared by the Buddhist council. On Saturday to fanfare this full week event, a musical memorial service is held with a Japanese kindergarten Chorus Group at the city's central Liberdade Square, where consul general, representatives of the city of Sao Paulo, and representatives of Japanese organizations attend. After the service, large white elephants, young children, and monks of the solemn robes parade around the Oriental town. Tourists and shoppers who are visitors to the town overflow along the roadside, taking pictures and becoming crowded with the exotic atmosphere of children and monks in glittering costumes.

At Ibiuna Nippakuji Temple, a procession of children with "Chigo" costumes on the temple grounds and a memorial service to commemorate Buddha's birth with colorful flowers donated by the local flower producers are observed. Then



Hanamatsuri held at the Liberdade Square, Sao Paulo

after the service, a talent show is held with large numbers of talented people to perform songs, dances, Taiko drumming and so on to celebrate the birth of the Buddha.

Curitiba Nippakuji Temple observes a Japanese cultural fair entitled "Flower Festival" for two days in conjunction with the local Nikkei Association and the city. Starting

from the procession parade by costumed children and an interfaith service together with Japanese Buddhist sects and Tibetan Buddhists is observed. There are gourmet stalls of Japanese food such as Yakisoba, calligraphy, anime, cultural booths such as JPOP, songs and dances on special stages, taiko shows, etc. It draws nearly 10,000 visitors in two days.

In this way, Hanamatsuri in Brazil adopted some varieties of fun elements to convey Japanese culture and Buddhist teachings to the local society, while preserving the original ritual and its meaning in celebration of the Buddha's birth.



The 1st Talent Show Festival at Ibiun



Hanamatsuri Service at Ibiuna Nippakuji



Hanamatsuri Procession with children with "Chigo" costumes



Introduction Newest Bishop and Minister in Hawaii



by Bishop Kosen Ishikawa
Hawaii Concil of Jodo Missions

Master Honen said, "One who plans to jump over a moat ten feet wide must make every effort to jump fifteen feet."

We tend to hesitate to talk about dreams or goals which seemed to be hard to achieve, but if we can keep working hard toward a higher goal, we can always get closer to the goal. This is just like an English saying, "shoot for the star" or "shoot for the moon." By shooting for the star, which is far



Buddhist Wedding Ceremony at Koloa Jodo Mission

above the sky, even though it won't reach the star, but by having higher goals, it could reach the higher place.

As a new Bishop of Hawaii Jodo Shu, I will keep working hard toward higher goals and do my best to provide better and higher quality services to our members, friends, and people in our community and society.



Making sushi during New Year's party at Koloa



Dharma Talk during New Year's Eve service



by Rev. Myoko Takano
Jodo Mission of Hawaii

I am a new minister to Hawaii, Rev. Takano from Fukuoka, Japan.

I have been here six months since I arrived in Hawaii. I am learning everyday about Hawaiian culture, customs, and the temple policy, which are different from Japan.

In particular, Sunday service and Sunday school, which are not available in Japan, are a great opportunity to learn Hawaiian Buddhism and how to communicate with members.



Sunday School at Betsuin

A lot of members come to our temple, and they recite Nembutsu devotedly on every Sunday service.

I am impressed with their attitude that they have strong faith in Amida Buddha.

In Hawaii Betsuin, I would like to make Sunday School more active and work hard to invite younger generation members for our temple's prosperity.



Presentation of "Setsubun"

And also, I will try to improve intimate and natural communication with members, and work hard to support them as a Minister.

Gassho



Kakizome of the First Calligraphy of the New Year at Betsuin

2019 International Kaikyo-ku Report

Hawaii



The 125th Anniversary Celebration

By Bishop Kosen Ishikawa,
Hawaii Council of Jodo Missions

Jodo Shu in Hawaii began with the arrival of two young ministers from Japan in 1894. Supported by the Hawaii Senkyoshikai (Hawaii Missionary Association), Rev. Taijo Matsuo (26 years old) from Iida of Nagano Prefecture, followed by Rev. Gakuo Okabe (27) from Suo-Oshima of Yamaguchi Prefecture, were sent to Hawaii to visit sugar plantation camps where many Japanese immigrants worked as contract laborers. Their camp lives were incredibly severe and harsh. It is not difficult to imagine that they naturally sought spiritual guidance and protection.

Unfortunately, very little on our two pioneer ministers is known since detailed records have been lost. However, their sacrifices and dedication turned out to be establishing Jodo Shu temples in Hawaii and over 200 ministers and wives together with members have served the spiritual needs of the community for 125 years.

On June 9, 2019, the 125th commemorative ceremony was held at Jodo Mission of Hawaii with 70 local members and 60 guests from Japan. The service, officiated by our Jodo Shu Director Bishop Shunmyo Sugiyama with Bishop Kodo Tanaka, Bishop Shinko Kanda, Bishop Chogen Nakagawa, Rev. Shinei Kanda and Rev. Koji Ezaki, was solemnly observed with elegant Japanese court music. Also in attendance were Rev. Kodo Tanaka of Jodo Shu North America, Bishop Eduardo



Koto by Darin Miyashiro & Sophi Narashiba



English Rakugo by Rev. Jinko Suginochara from Japan



Hawaii Jodo Shu 125th Anniversary Celebration at Jodo Mission of Hawaii

Ryoho Sasaki of Jodo Shu South America and ministers from both Hawaii and Japan. During the service, people in attendance chanted Nenbutsu by sharing one huge prayer beads to turn around hand by hand. Speeches by representatives and commemorative

sermon by Rev. Kojun Ashima with English translation were delivered, followed by the commemorative lunch and entertainment in social hall. What a gorgeous program! There were musical performances by Shamisen, Koto, Shakuhachi with presentation of Japanese Dance, performance of Hula and English Rakugo from Japan and from Hawaii, Bon Dance!

The grand finale of the celebration was to participate in the parade of the Pan-Pacific Festival called "Matsuri in Hawaii" from 5:00pm on the same day. More than 50,000 spectators got together along the length of Kalakaua Avenue and we proudly walked through Waikiki with a banner of Hawaii Jodo Shu and posters of Jodo Shu, such as "co-existence in the world", and "prayer for world peace" accompanied by the ministers who played Gagaku music. It became a great presentation and peaceful action to raise awareness of our presence of Hawaii Jodo Shu, thanks to many ministers and members from Japan and Hawaii.

One of our purposes to celebrate our 125th Anniversary was to look back on history and specifically to update the last 25 years after our centennial celebration in 1994. After all, learning our history is an important key to understand the present and plan for the better future. We are very grateful to Rev. Koji Ezaki who took responsibility of acting Bishop and led this celebration project which was originally started by the late Bishop Yubun Narashiba. My sincerest Mahalo goes out to all those who made this event possible. Namu Amida Butsu.



Bon Dance by Hilo Meishoin
Tsukikage Odorikai from Hilo



elegant Japanese court music at the parade



From the troy in the parade of the Pan-Pacific Festival



The parade of "Matsuri in Hawaii" during the Pan-Pacific Festival

Brazil



In Memoriam of Bishop Yomei Sasaki Recognizing His Missionary and Achievements

Bishop Eduardo Ryoho Sasaki
Jodo Shu South American Missions

On July 18th of the First year of Reiwa (2019), the former Superintendent of Jodo Shu South America district, Bishop Yomei Sasaki passed away at the age of 83. The Buddhist title for the late Bishop Sasaki is

“Kannonshin-in Tokurenja Josojo Manyo Shonin Ryoa Kenpaku Yomei Daikasho.”

In 1957, while Rev. Sasaki was a college student, he accompanied the Bishop Ryoshin Hasegawa who was the first Bishop of Jodo Shu South America and started his missionary under the guidance of Bishop Hasegawa. Since then, he has dedicated himself to the missionary in Brazil and completed his missionary life for 62 years, serving as the second Bishop for many years.

It is not an exaggeration to say that almost the entire history of the Jodo Shu South America which celebrates its 67th anniversary this year, is synchronized with the missionary life of the late Bishop Yomei Sasaki.

The foundation of his missionary life was to realize the philosophy and principle of "The Trinity of Buddhism, Education, and Welfare" which was proposed by Bishop Ryoshin Hasegawa. Bishop Sasaki believed that this realization of the principle would be an essential spiritual pillar in Brazil. He also believed developing this social work would gain value and respect toward the Japanese community in Brazil. He worked hard to attain trust and support beyond barriers and differences among religious sects and moved forward the social projects as his missionary. As a result, Bishop Sasaki has founded four temples in Sao Paulo, Maringa, Ibiuna and Curitiba. He also established a stable management of the “Kodomo no sono (Garden for Children)” which was originally founded by Bishop Ryoshin Hasegawa.



Bishop Yomei Sasaki



Young Rev. Yomei Sasaki

This facility is now recognized as the first educational facility for the intellectually handicapped in Brazilian society. Also on the temple ground of the Maringa Nippakuji Temple, Bishop Sasaki founded the “Wajun Home” facility used by Japanese elderly people who find it difficult to be economically and socially independent in Maringa. Then he also organized “Wajunkai”, a welfare corporation supported by the Japanese Brazilian community. These two welfare organizations are still managed excellently with the support of various people from both Jodo Shu and other Buddhist sects.

Bishop Sasaki also served as President of the Brazil Bukkyo Rengokai (United Brazilian Buddhist Association) and a Board member of the Sao Paulo Cultural Welfare Association, where he actively engaged in the development of the Japanese community in Brazil.

Although Jodo Shu doesn't have many temples (4 temples and two welfare organizations) in Brazil as compared to other Buddhist sects, however Jodo Shu in Brazil is highly recognized as a valuable organization with significance, due to their dedicated social projects for education and welfare which contributes a lot to society. As for his personal achievement, he has been awarded the Imperial Order “Kyokujitsu Sokosho (The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays) for his long-standing efforts to the social welfare and has been awarded the Jodo Shu Life Time Achievement Award.

Today's recognition of Jodo Shu in South America, as described above, is thanks to the founding principle of Bishop Ryoshin Hasegawa who had a future vision of a society where everyone lives in harmony and peace. Also it cannot be possible without hardships and enormous efforts by the late Bishop Yomei Sasaki who worked hard together with joy and sorrow as pioneers of Brazil. His passion to realize the founding principle of “Buddhism, Education and Welfare” made a progressive success in Brazil.

On November 7th, the first year of Reiwa (2019), a memorial service for the Bishop Sasaki, officiated by the Jodo Shu Chief Abbot Yuishin Ito, was solemnly observed at Chionin, followed by the memorial get-together was held at the Hotel Okura Kyoto.



Young Rev. Sasaki with Bishop Hasegawa & two young ministers



With members of Nippakuji Temple after Installation Ceremony at Chionin



With Rev. Zuikai Matsuno, Main Preacher of Gojusoden Ceremonies

The Memorial Gatherings to / Remember Bishop Yomei Sasaki

On November 7th of the first year of Reiwa (2019), a memorial service for the late Bishop Yomei Sasaki who closed his 83-year-old life at the Jodo Shu Nippakuji Betsuin in Sao Paulo on July 18, 2019 was solemnly observed at the Honen Shonin Hall at the Chionin, Jodo Shu



Receiving Jodo Shu Life Time Achievement Award

Grand Head Temple. Bishop Sasaki achieved his wish to be born in the Pure Land. The service officiated by Chief Abbot Yuishin Ito was started at 2:00pm and many friends, supporters, and acquaintances got together from various places both in and out of Japan. As we had this precious opportunity of gathering to remember Bishop Sasaki, I'd like to express my sincerest appreciation to all venerable priests who have willingly accepted to be sponsors.

Rev. Yomei Sasaki was one of three young ministers who accompanied the first Jodo Shu Bishop Ryoshin Hasegawa when he visited Brazil for his second time in 1957. Since then, Rev. Sasaki stayed and worked hard there and took over missionary in Brazil as the second Bishop.

Based on the principle philosophy of "Human Development and Social Development are possible through the Trinity of Religion, Education and Social Welfare," which was originally proposed by the first Bishop, Rev. Sasaki expanded his supporters and its local community, and asked for the support and cooperation from the Jodo sect and many temples to fund four temples of Nippakuji Betsuin in San Paulo, Marinaga, Ibiuna and Curitiba. While establishing a Japanese-Buddhist temple in Ibiuna and a branch mission in Curitiba, Rev. Sasaki was successful to respond to the local needs and spread the



Words of appreciation by Mrs. Sasaki



The late Bishop Sasaki's family at the Honen Shonin Hall



Memorial Service at Chionin

practice of Nenbutsu in the community, which is not seen in other sects. Thanks to his efforts, Jodo Shu in Brazil is highly recognized as an organization which contributes a lot to the society.

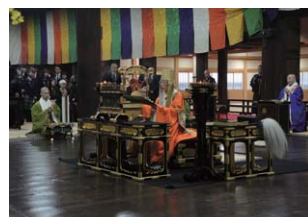
In addition, he focused on cooperation and partnership with "Daijo Shukutoku Gaikuen" and Shukutoku University, which is the foundation of the first Bishop Ryoshin Hasegawa. As a visiting professor, Bishop Sasaki has initiated and supervised exchange programs for Japanese students to stay, study and train in Brazil. For a quarter of a century, he was involved in the planning, operation, and teaching of a workshop for both students from Japan and Brazil.

As the Part II of the memorial gathering, a fellowship dinner to remember Bishop Sasaki was held at Kyoto Okura Hotel. We are grateful to have honorable guests, friends and relatives gathered at this party, too. Bishop Sasaki's favorite three theme-words to promote Nenbutsu as a Jodo Shu missionary were mentioned at the speech. They were "Pride, Wish and Responsibility." Pride is to spread the memorial site of Nenbutsu more in Brazil since Honen Shonin said his memorial site is a place where Nenbutsu is practiced. "Wish" is to have his successors who continue to maintain the pride to spread Nenbutsu. Then Bishop Sasaki felt great responsibility that he always has to set a good example for young ministers. It has been 62 years since Bishop Sasaki crossed the ocean to start missionary in Brazil and we are so grateful to share the fact that his passion has been passed to the next generation.

I'd very much appreciate your friendship and support you kindly gave to us. Your continued support to Jodo Shu South American Missions will be greatly appreciated.



Memorial Gathering at Kyoto Okura Hotel



The service officiated by Chief Abbot Yuishin Ito

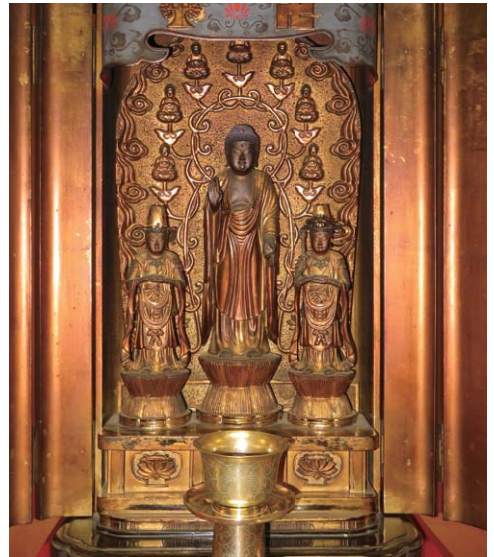
Zenkō-ji Daihongan, Head Temple in Nagano

By Rev. Shinri Hara



Zenkō-ji Daihongan (literally, the “Virtuous Light Temple of Amida’s Great Vow”) is a Jodo Shu *daihonzan* (head temple) in Nagano prefecture with a long and unique history. According to temple tradition, in 642 the nun Sonkō, the daughter of the powerful statesman Soga Umako, under the decree of Empress Kōgyoku, established this temple for nuns. Because of this history, the temple has always been a special place of spirituality, especially for women, and its spiritual head has successively been a nun. The current and 121th head of the temple is Abbess Takatsukasa Seigyoku, who is 91 years old and is quite the celebrity in Nagano city, which was built around the famous nearby pilgrimage site Zenkō-ji. Zenkō-ji Daihongan and Zenkō-ji are also closely connected and have a unique relation as Abbess Seigyoku oversees the latter together with the head of the Tendai temple Zenkō-ji Daikanjin.

As a spiritual center, this area has attracted many people from all over Japan for hundreds of years. Zenkō-ji Daihongan also shares the main image of Zenkō-ji, the *Ikkō Amida* (literally, “one light Amida”), which is legendarily said to be the oldest Buddha image brought from India to Japan via Korea in 552. The *Ikkō Amida* is unusual in that Amida Buddha is flanked by Kannon and Seishi Bosatsu within a single large halo. The original statue is a *zettai hibutsu* or “completely hidden Buddha,”



Zenkō-ji Daihongan's Ikkō Amida



Honzeiden Main Hall

so no one ever gets to see the image! However, you can see and offer prayers to the main image at Zenkō-ji Daihongan, which is in the style of the *Ikkō Amida*.

Equally impressive as its fascinating history is Zenkō-ji Daihongan's commitment to social welfare since 1962. Not only does the temple observe and perform services and ceremonies like other temples, it also offers both childcare and elder care. The infant care center looks after newborns to two-year-old babies, whose families have difficulty raising them due to various reasons, and also acts as a day care. The elder care involves an senior care center with classes and activities as well as a nursing home and retirement units. Today Zenkō-ji continues to be a spiritual and social center loved by many!



Oku-no-Shoin quarters



The Abbess engaging in social work



Kōmyō-kaku Sanctuary



At the Temple's Senior Center



Hanamatsuri (Buddha's Birthday) Celebration

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



NORTH AMERICA

Mr. Kohei Yamakawa Supporter of JNABM



My relationship with Jodoshu North America started in 2010, when I worked for a Japanese radio broadcasting company. It was also when a Buddhist retreat called "Goju Soden" took place at the temple. In order to encourage people in our community to participate in sermons of this

retreat, I was asked to advertise the event in my radio program. Because I myself am a great-grandson of a Jodo Shu minister and familiar with Jodo Shu tradition from my childhood, I recommended Rev. Tanaka to speak for himself by being interviewed in my program. Since then, every once in a while, I have been supporting such temple activities as Hanamatsuri and lectures, by serving as MC to accommodate the attendees and audience. It is my pleasure to see the audience feel at home at a Jodo Shu temple, where its tradition means much to my childhood. I wish to connect many who like myself, who resides in Los Angeles but unaware of this temple, with their ministry to get relief in their lives in Southern California.

SOUTH AMERICA

Lucas Galete Member of Curitiba

He was invited by his wife, Paula (at that time she was girlfriend), to a bazaar, where he met Rev. Oeda. And he became interested in Buddhism by participating in the first Buddhist memorial service in his life.

After that, he came to this temple regularly, and in July 2016, he had a Buddhist wedding ceremony under Rev. Oeda. The ceremony was a "handmade wedding," where he rented the event venue and decorated themselves. He was impressed by the invitee's ability to actively cooperate. Since this Buddhist wedding, the distance between him and the temple has shrunk, and he has actively participated in memorial services and events.

He also participated in the temple's first Fivefold Transmission Retreat held in 2018. At that time, his interest turned into religion, and he started on Buddhist paths in earnest. After the Fivefold Transmission Retreat,

he told Rev. Oeda that he would like to study the teachings of the Jodo Shu more and deepen his religion. Rev. Oeda held a training course for the supplementary training of aspirant minister (Kaikyōshiho). He began to practice with three same-minded members. Every time he trains, he realized that he is not live, but alive, and I am very grateful to Amitabha, my family, and the members of the temple. In the meantime, he has a strong desire to want to become a monk and give back to everyone.

In March of this year, He entered the Buddhist priesthood (Tokudo) at this temple. And after that, he will visit Japan and aim to be a Jodo monk. One year ago, He started going to a Japanese language school, and passed the Japanese Language Proficiency Test Level 5 at the end of last year.

"I want to return to Brazil as a Jodo Buddhist monk as a missionary and give back for Brazil."

His passion for himself was transmitted through these words.



FRANCE

Tatsuo Matsuda

Member of Jodo Shu European Buddhism Center



My name is Tatsuo MATSUDA.

I attend the gathering of Jodo Shu European Buddhism Center in Paris since 2008.

The religion of my parents' home in Tokyo is Jodo Shu sect. So, I used to hear the sutra and the lecture of Jodo Shu from my childhood.

I live in Paris for more than 40 years.

The way of thinking and expression are different

between Japanese and French. I am interested in this difference. But I also think there can be a good combination of Honen Shonins philosophy and the French way of life.

In the world we are getting more egoistic.

When I hear the sutra and the lecture of Jodo Shu in Paris, I feel nostalgic and relieved. But I don't just go there out of tradition or habit, but because I get a comfortable feeling and believe in the positive power of Nenbutsu. Especially in these last weeks, there is a lot of tension and excitement in French society, so I believe that Nenbutsu can give us power and good energy to calm down and be peaceful.

I hope our gathering of Jodo Shu develops and Nenbutsu Power can be introduced to more and more people across France and Europe.

HAWAII

Mark Daniel Seiler

Member of Koloa Jodo Mission

Aloha from the island of Kauai.

My wife Rebecca and I became members of the Koloa Jodo Mission by a happy accident. In 2012, we were passing the old temple and noticed a handyman on top of a ladder cleaning the eaves. We introduced ourselves and asked if it was possible to attend a service? "Yes," the handyman informed us.

The next Sunday, we were greeted by the Sensei in his robes. To our surprise, he called us by our names. Kosen, the handyman, it turned out, was Reverend Kosen Ishikawa.

Rev. Ishikawa's dharma talk was so interesting, we came for the next service and the next. For example, we learned that the word "consider" can be divided into "con" which means "with," and "sidus" which means "star." To consider something is to spend time with the stars.

Recently, Rev. Ishikawa has become Bishop for all of the Jodo Shu Temples in Hawaii. He is busier than ever, but he still finds time to make delicious sushi for lunch after his service. We hope he will still have time to bake—his cakes are famous. Sensei is also an amazing photographer, husband, and father of two wonderful children, Hugh and Sally.

Bishop Ishikawa also leads nature tours of Kauai, he is a card-carrying equity actor and has appeared in several

major motion pictures. Sensei reminds us that our lives are made up of tiny ordinary things that often go unnoticed. We learned how many grains of rice are in a bag of rice. One grain seems insignificant, but with many grains, you can make sushi. Sensei taught us how to add just the right amount of vinegar to the rice so the sushi has the right balance of flavors. Together with Sensei, his wife, Yayoi, who is a master calligrapher, we also practice *Shodo*. We enjoy learning the layers of meaning of the kanji, as well as how to balance the characters on the paper.



We are beginners at making sushi and Japanese calligraphy, but Sensei reminds us that being a beginner is a great way to learn something new. Bishop Ishikawa says his job is to help people to be happy. I think he is good at his job. I recommend watching his dharma talks on his website. <https://www.koloajodo.com/>

We've learned how Honen Shonin's teachings have helped people from all walks of life benefit by chanting Nenbutsu. It is hard to pick a favorite dharma talk. I enjoy Sensei's translations and exploring meanings of chants in the *Otsutome*, and of Honen Shonin's One Sheet Testament. My favorite chant is *Sanshorai*.

On Kauai, we say, "One island, many peoples, all Kauaians." We feel very lucky to be a part of the Sangha. It has made a big difference in our lives. We are reminded through Bishop Ishikawa's generosity, to work hard to become better people, to help others, and to find happiness.

You only live twice, once when you're born...

Kodo Tanaka
Jodo Shu North America Buddhist Missions



I love James Bond and was looking very much forward to its 25th film "No time to die". I now renew my mind that I can embrace this excitement till November. Let us all stay healthy physically and mentally with our private daily nembutsu. By the way, did you know there is one and only Bond movie filmed in Japan among the 25? It is "You only live twice" in 1967, which happens to be the year I was born. The author Ian Fleming composed the original title influenced by famous Japanese poet Basho Matsuo as: "You only live twice, once when you're born, once when you look death in the face." This can be appreciated as "a man truly lives his life only twice in his lifetime, once when he is born and once he is confronted by his own death." I think it describes our human nature that takes life always for granted.

Honen Shonin is said to have told his disciples

frequently, "While living, merit of daily nembutsu is accumulated. When death knocks, I will attain birth in the Pure Land owing to Amida Buddha's compassion. To me, there are no worries about life and death." We can neither overcome sufferings of aging, illness and death nor time-travel to the past to fix wrong conducts in order to remove on-going regrets. It seems these worries become bigger as we grow older. If so, living this life is like carrying a load of worries on our back, which keeps getting heavier. It feels that Honen Shonin's message tells not only about how meritorious nembutsu is but how important to internalize faith in nembutsu, which is the strength to live this life with worries. For us the nembutsu practitioners, faith has to be earned not given, and birth is not earned but given. The aforementioned words from Ian Fleming and Honen Shonin force me to examine if I have lived each day the fullest.

Jodo Shu Department of Social Affairs

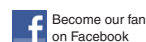
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