

# Pure Land Life

The Pure Land Buddhism of Honen Shonin



2021 No. 34

# 2020 International Kaikyo-ku Report

## Hawaii



### Hawaii Jodo Shu Temples' Report in 2020

By Bishop Kosen Ishikawa  
Hawaii Council of Jodo Missions

On March 23rd, 2020, Governor Ige of Hawaii issued a Stay-at-home order. This lockdown continued for over one month. The decree was strict, with punishments imposed on violators, and forced everyone except essential workers required to stay at home. Public facilities such as beaches and parks were also closed. Our temples needed to make difficult decisions but basically the following three have been our choices of our temples' activities throughout the year.

1. Hold online conferences and live streaming services, online by using more internet-based technologies.
2. Conduct events and services with a minimum number of people by paying attention to the infection prevention and complying with the CDC guidelines and orders by the state.
3. For the safety of the public, close the temple but make this time to study and plan for activities in the future and prepare for the new business for-post-COVID-19.

It is clear by the numbers how this pandemic greatly promoted the internet society. Online services and conferences have saved time and money for many people. During this time, I continued to deliver online services every week and succeeded in greatly growing the number of subscribers. However, the problem is the how to respond to elderly people who do not use the Internet. In Betsuin, Rev. Myoko Takano continued Sunday Services for elderly attendees while I was



Bazaar at Kohala Jodo Mission



Garage Sale at Haleiwa Jodo Mission

live streaming services for those who use the internet. The coronavirus pandemic is said to be sly by the elderly, children, and other socially vulnerable people.

On the other hand, in the first wave, many people pursued hobbies with real benefits, and there were activities of mutual aid based on aloha spirit in Hawaii, such as making handmade cloth

masks and sharing them with their relatives and friends. In particular, Haleiwa Jodo Mission and Kohala Jodo Mission became great outlets for accepting second-hand goods that had become non-goods due to cleaning during a stay-at-home order. Because there were no activities in the temple, the temple hall was substituted for the warehouse. The garage sale that had been going for several years



Farmers Market at Lahaina Jodo Mission



Maui Tri-temples joint service by Zoom. Bishop Ishikawa delivered his message from Kauai.

by Rev. Koji Ezaki was developed in a big way after the lockdown. Also Lahaina Jodo Mission continues to open the temple ground for the local community to have farmers' markets selling local foods and goods.

These are only examples, and I'm sure there are many other good ideas we could do in the future. But the best we could do during this pandemic can be expressed in Chinese four-letter idiom of "Seikou Udoku." It means "When it is fine weather, you should cultivate your land. When it is raining, you should enjoy reading books." I think this express an ideal way of life by following the natural weather. Instead of changing harsh realities, we can change ourselves to accept reality through trial and error. It is my thought that proverbs are the great wisdom that humankind has gathered through experiences over a long history. In other words, I believe this four-letter idiom shows facts and hints that humanity have overcome difficulties with nature. Of course, this is not all. While there are many people who have overcome this crisis, we must never forget that this pandemic has taken many lives and caused so many fatal damages to many people.

## North America



### Temple "to go"

By Rev. Kodo Tanaka  
Jodoshu North America Buddhist Missions

Last year, under the COVID-19 pandemic, we had to embark on a new ministry, which is so-called remote services. Looking back, there was a lot to learn about

live-streaming a service.

What is most fabulous about Jodo Shu services is that we recite Nembutsu “together” with the congregation. First, we thought it was possible even on a virtual screen to chant “Namu Amida Butsu” together like we always did at our temple. So, for some test runs, we tried with all participating devices “unmute” so that we may hear each participant saying “Namu Amida Butsu” at the same time. However, just like we cannot talk at the same time with a cellular phone, my voice from the temple and all other voices from the speaker did not synchronize at all. It showed me that a remote service would not better serve each viewer if I prioritize my desire to hear all say Nembustu “together.” A question stood before us was “What is best for each viewer who was going to say “Namu Amida Butsu” individually at their homes?”

Then, we asked viewers to “mute” their devices while the service would continue. By applying this arrangement, each participating device could deliver the voice and sound from the temple without being disturbed by other delayed voices. This arrangement made easy for each viewer to join in the Nembutsu recitations following the guide vocal from the temple, which is the only sound except their voices. We came to realize that a remote service consists of the collection of “individual” religious experiences of each viewer at home, in contrast to an atmosphere that arises when people physically gather is “mutual.” In short, if we were a restaurant, I thought that a remote service is a “temple to-go.”

Personally speaking, the biggest challenge in this “temple to-go” is that there is no live person in front of me, who officiates the service. Although there are faces on the screen, you could not get live responses from the audience, who are sharing the moment with you away from home. Also, a total atmosphere including the echoes of the sanctuary and the smell of the incense cannot be shared. All information available here is just sound and vision that are sent out from the sanctuary and delivered to the audience with a little delay. This means that you just cannot stop. Unlike the in-person service, if you take a breath, it merely is a moment of silence for the virtual viewers. So, it needs me to accelerate at all times, like driving at the top speed from the start to the goal.



Bon Segaki Service

Working on this remote ministry, we learned that it requires more effort and preparation than holding an in-person service. There were many

attempts that ended in failure. However, what motivates us most to tackle this challenge is the faith that there are viewers beyond the screen. It is those who would share the religious experience with us: the sangha of our temple. Without the sangha, neither teaching nor practice can be embodied. All the trials in ministry under the pandemic seems to be teaching us that nothing is more important than to foster trust between the congregation and their place of worship. While tackling the challenges, I came to realize that it is the same as saying “Namu Amida Butsu”. Because you have faith in Amida Buddha, you say “Namu Amida Butsu” and because you say “Namu Amida Butsu”, faith that Amida Buddha will receive you is cultivated.



Autumn Higan Service

## Brazil



### More Challenges

By Bishop Ryoho Sasaki  
Jodo Shu South America Missions

We are living in times here at Jodo Shu South America that one hardly would guess it could witness. In one hand the missionary work we develop is unfolding well while on the other hand the historical circumstances brought by the Covid-19 pandemics is imposing new ways and protocols to relate to each other that's hard to anticipate how long it would last and how it will be settled in the future.

In times like these, while we deal with reality the best way we can, we actually have resources to look at in our own history that can inspire us to take a proper attitude and overcome these difficult challenges life has brought before our eyes. Consider this: even after centuries, with scientific development and knowledge, the humankind has to deal and struggle against fear and ignorance for the sake of its own life and survival. Then one might ask: How Jodo Buddhism, with its history and legacy could help us to figure out the times we are going through and take the wise and proper steps for the sake of our own communities as well as our society?

Our Master Honen Shonin, by the time he spiritually woke



Online service during the pandemic

up for the assurance of birth at the Amida Buddha's Western Paradise he lived in a historical period where everything was out of place, out of order. A cold look at our modern times can bring striking parallels that make us think about our modern day Mappo Times, that is, our End of Dharma at the 21st Century.

Here in South America we are in the course to start a fundraising drive for a new temple at Curitiba city in southern Brazil. At the same time it comes historically as a natural consequence of missionary work done for decades, it takes lots of courage and foundation in our own belief system because the religious landscape send us a complex array of signals that demand a cautionary reading. While the Buddhist community is becoming larger and complex, the society as a whole send us a mixing signal of acceptance and intolerance, not to mention other issues that various religious minorities are being lately forced to face. The great lesson we are learning on these days is that, no matter what, one can simply recite the Nenbutsu where you are, the way you can, the way you are, wholeheartedly. As we say here in Brazil, the entire world can fall apart, but still you can do what you're supposed to do.

Despite all these structural challenges to survive on, each of our temple has been able to cope with its living demands and address its devotional work, taking into consideration all the restrictions and protocols for public health, thanks to the missionaries and their families and communities who take their tasks with devotion.

Sao Paulo, Ibiuna and Curitiba temples have managed to organize fundraising campaigns basically with take-out food system, while Maringá temple was locked down for meeting the sanitary ordeals at the Wajunkai Shelter for the Senior Citizen.

We all hope to overcome these unusually difficult times, taking care of our children, elderly, neighborhood, known and unknown people, sharing all resources available to us. One can notice how important it is to share with those in need, extending your hands with a compassionate heart, as well as being wise and knowledgeable in making your community calm and emotionally stable during this hardship. We are not scoring well as a nation, but

surely we are doing our share to overcome it as soon as possible. Namuamidabutsu.



Volunteers at fund rising drive in Curitiba

## Australia



### Coping with Covid-19 in 2020

By Rev. Tetsuyu Wilson  
Jodo Shu Buddhist Community of Australia

In the article that I submitted for Pure Land Life No.33, I spoke about my dilemma about when to hold Hanamatsuri. At that time, I assumed that in 2020, Hanamatsuri and other ceremonies



Shichi-go-san

would just go ahead as planned. But, two months after writing that article, things changed drastically. The world headed towards a pandemic. In March, Amidaji was still able to hold Ohigan as well as a memorial service for the victims of the Great Earthquake and Tsunami of Eastern Japan. But, in April, all temple activities ground to a halt. There was no Hanamatsuri.

Other activities also stopped. A family called to cancel their memorial service. Children could not attend our Terakoya. In August, Obon was cancelled and in September, Ohigan was cancelled. These cancellations had to happen because of restrictions imposed by our state government. To stop the spread of Covid-19 it was necessary to limit the number of people who could gather at one time and to restrict travel.

The threat of Covid-19 ebbed and flowed. This caused the states of Australia to implement their own restrictions. Queensland closed its borders with the other states preventing travel into it without special exemptions. In addition, Queensland was divided into two areas, north and south, and travel between them was restricted. This was of some concern to me as every year in August I travel to Thursday Island for Obon.



Obon ceremony at the Japanese Cemetery, Thursday Island



Memorial Service for the victims of the Great Earthquake and Tsunami of Eastern Japan

It is situated in the far north of Queensland and is considered a remote indigenous community. Access to indigenous communities had further restrictions. However, the threat of Covid-19 eased by the middle of July and fortunately I was able to travel to Thursday Island.

The easing of the threat of transmission of Covid-19 in Queensland meant that Amidaji could conduct activities

such as Shakyo, Hoji, funerals and Shichi-gosan. At these gatherings, social distancing and the rule of one person per 4 square metres could be maintained. The limiting of the number of people who can attend Amidaji at any one time has impacted our activities but not brought all of them to a stop. And, despite the challenges of Covid-19 our members have continued to maintain their connection to Amidaji.



Shakyo at Amidaji

## France



### Bukkyo no Tsudoi 2020 in the COVID-19 Pandemic

By Rev. Koryu Koso  
Jodo Shu European Buddhism Center

In the world we live in, there are countries with permanent wars and conflicts, and many people distressed by natural disasters and uncertainty about their lives because they are confronted with violence, poverty and hunger every day.

How should we live our lives? What does it mean to live as a human being? How does it feel to live a happy life? Gautama Buddha was a person who was troubled by these questions, and he searched for a way to become a better man, and finally found it.

We study his teachings and pray that they may be realized to build a better world and society in which more and more human beings can live happily in peace.

Now let me report about the activities of our “Jodo Shu European Center of Buddhism” located in France in 2020.

In early spring 2020, the Covid-19-crisis started in France, and the numbers of infected persons increased each day. The French government imposed lockdown for two months starting mid March.



Graveyard service by representatives of Kiso House Association (Maison de Kiso) in September



O-Bon ceremony in August

Therefore, our local community was not allowed to celebrate the Hanamatsuri ceremony for Buddha’s Birthday in April.

In May, we were invited to take part in the 24-hour-Nenbutsu at Zôjôji Temple in Tôkyô, however due to the ongoing lockdown, our community could not together, therefore I

participated alone in our Center in Acon.

Although lockdown ended in June, our community decided to postpone our traditional BBQ summer party to be held in Acon in June or July.

Finally, in August our members decided to hold the O-bon ceremony to pay respect and gratitude to our ancestors. On this occasion, some Japanese residents who were not able to return home to Japan also participated in the ceremony in addition to our members.

In September, we held the autumn equinox ceremony and participated in the 24-hour-Nenbutsu at Shôjôke-in Temple in Kyôto. Our community joined the Nenbutsu recitation for one hour by sitting and walking Nenbutsu practice, alternating every 15 minutes.

Furthermore, we dedicated one year memorial service for our great mentor of Jodo Shu European Center of Buddhism, Archbishop Ryukai Mano who passed away on September 9, 2019.



Participation in the Online 24-Hour Ceaseless Nenbutsu during the lockdown under Covid-19 pandemic in May

In October, the Covid-19 infections significantly increased again, so regrettably we had to cancel our Ojûya-ceremony. From the second half of October, France entered into a second lockdown.

In December, the lockdown was partially released, so the members and I decided to end the year with our ceremony of gratitude for the year and have a small (Bônenkai) Year-End-Party. We commemorated our family members, relatives and friends who had passed away and sent them our best wishes.

As an exceptional event in 2020, at the end of July I held the Eye-Opening-Consecration-Ceremony (Kaigen-Kuyô) at the new Iaidô-Dôjô of one of our members. Together with his diligent students, he had moved to a new location with his Dôjô. After the ceremony, there was a demonstration of Iaidô practice. It was very impressive.

In January 2021, we held a Sangha assembly and celebrated the New Year’s Ceremony together. We purified our hearts and welcomed the New Year with fresh spirit. This year, the gathering had to be limited in number due to Covid-19-regulations.

We sincerely hope that the Covid-19 crisis will soon be eradicated, and we pray for the health and happiness of each one of you.



Higan Service and one year memorial service for the late Archbishop Ryukai Mano

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



## NORTH AMERICA

### Kyle Matsumoto Burch

Member of Joso Shu North America Buddhist Missions

My name is Kyle Matsumoto Burch, I am a long distance member of Jodo Shu Los Angeles. I live in San Jose, CA. You might be wondering why a guy from Northern California is a member of the Jodo Shu L. A. Temple.

I am a hapa guy from Hawaii. My grandparents came from Yamaguchi Japan. My Grandfather came to Hawaii with his best friend, a Jodo Shu priest. When I was a child, Grandfather took us to Hamakua Jodo Mission and told us the story of how he and his friend came to Hawaii. This is a lovely memory.

My study of Buddhism led me to Rev. Taijun Kasahara in Japan. I took refuge and precepts at Rinkaian Temple, embracing the faith of my sofu. Rev. Kasahara said when I return to the U.S., I should join Jodo Shu L. A.



Rinkaian in Japan will always be my "Mother Temple" it is where I officially became Jodo Shu. I also support Bp. Ishikawa in Hawaii, which is my home. Even though L. A. is far, it is my "local" temple. I am grateful to Rev. Tanaka and Bp. Atone who make the temple feel close.

## SOUTH AMERICA

### Introducing Iwase Family

Member of Maringa Nippakuji

Sometime ago, when some enthusiasts gathered to practice Kendo martial art at the Maringa Nippakuji Temple, they could barely imagine that a local resident was actually a living legend. Mr. Shigeo Iwase and his brothers were national champions in his youth and they lived at Pirapozao District where a small community of Japanese immigrants settled to make a living growing coffee, ramie and grapes. Besides all civic dates, they used to participate in other cultural and sports leagues, but they became known nationwide through the Kendo practice.

Mr. Iwase shyly says that when he as young he

practiced just for fun and hang out with other friends. As he became adult he noticed how the practice gave him maturity to be righteous and responsible, handling diligently the family business.



He observed that all these aspects reflected upon his kids attitudes and behavior. The Iwase Family and many others around are Nenbutsu practitioners and follow Amida Buddha's teachings guided by Master Honen Shonin. The great satisfaction he and his wife Kimiko have in life is that their core values in respecting the ancestry and caring for each other is alive and make a lot of sense for the young generation of their children and grandchildren.

# HAWAII

**Daryl Y. Masaki**

**2021 President of Jodo Mission of Hawaii**

Grown up as a Buddhist all my life and having being a sansei (third-generation), I understand how important to honor your ancestors. My grandfather and grandmother have been a member of Jodo Mission way before coming to Hawaii.

At a very young age I was taught that being a Buddhist meant more than a religion. You honor your ancestors every day by the way you conduct yourself.

Always be thankful and learn to be compassionate to others.

I am honored to serve as the current President of the Jodo Mission.

The success of this temple and the organization is not done by one person it extends from our current Bishop, Reverend, the Membership and Board of Directors.

With this I am very thankful to all of you. Namu Amida Butsu.



# FRANCE

**Manivet Family**

**Member of Jodo Shu European Buddhism Center**

Thanks to my wife Misao (美佐緒), since several years ago, I have the great pleasure to share moments of conviviality in Jodo shu European Buddhism Center in Paris. These meetings give me the opportunity to exchange points of view and experiences on our own respective lives, placed in the perspective of fundamental Buddhism spirit. It is a constantly renewed pleasure to discover new aspects of the Japanese

culture. Controlling his environment is the obsession of human beings. However, control is a false view of life, chaos is able to generate

order. As a scientist, I could realize that there is no contradiction between science and God, there are rather different languages to understand the beauty of life and communicate with our environment. Listening to Buddhism's parables and texts told by our Rev. Koso san, is a real beautiful way to dive inwards to find peace.



# AUSTRALIA

**Naomi Morimoto**

**Member of Joso Shu Buddhism Community of Australia**

I was so grateful that I still could practice Obon service here in Brisbane, thanks to Rev. Jim Wilson of Amida-Ji, the Jodoshu Buddhist Community of Australia.

My mother had decided to become a parishioner of Hogen Ji in my hometown, Nagasaki just a year before she passed away.

At her funeral Rev. Zuikai Matsuno and his son Rev. Zuiko Matsuno told us that there is a Jodoshu

temple in Australia, especially just one hour drive from my house on the Sunshine Coast in QLD!! I couldn't help thinking that it was my mother's cute plan and her very last thoughtful present for me.

I have had a great help from Rev. Jim to overcome my grief after I came back to Australia where I didn't have many people to talk about my loss except my daughter. I truly appreciate it.



## In Memoriam of Rev. Kanjun Nakano

Bishop Kosen Ishikawa  
Hawaii Council of Jodo Missions

There are times when we need to face reality that is painful. During those times, especially amid ongoing pandemic, we must support each other as we deal with many feelings that we might experience. It is with my great sorrow to report that Rev. Kanjun Nakano passed away at Kuakini Hospital on July 10, 2020. He was 68 years old.

He has suffered with cancer and hoped he could go back to Japan to fight the disease with his family. However, his body had become weak very quickly because of his malnutrition. When he was taken to ER on June 28, he was so skinny. Then I was notified he wouldn't survive till August. Rev. Nakano's son and his wife decided to come to Hawaii immediately. However, it was not easy for the family to come to Hawaii since there were no direct flights from Japan. Also, there was 14-day quarantine order, and the hospital had its own regulations to restrict visitors.

However, thanks to the compassionate staffs of the Kuakini Hospital, Rev. Nakano's last wish came true. With special permits, we were allowed to visit Rev. Nakano directly from the airport after their arrival by way of Guam on July 9.

When we arrived at ICU around 9:20 pm, Rev. Nakano could no longer speak. The doctor told us he could die any time. But at least he was able to hang on until we could see him. When we entered the room, his eyes were closed. But soon after we spoke to him, he



opened his eyes which continued until he took his last breath. The family was able to deliver their messages to their heart's content.

His daughter in Japan also talked to him on the facetime. This also encouraged me to chant Nenbutsu during the night. At 5:05 am, Rev. Nakano drew his last breath and left for the Pure Land.



Rev. Nakano were born in Osaka in 1952. After graduating from Osaka College of Music, he started to work at Kawai Musical Instruments where he met his wife, Miwako and they were married in 1984. Then he became a teacher at colleges including Kacho Jr. College where he met his master Rev. Junko Kozakai of Saiunji Temple in Kyoto. Rev. Kozakai was a conductor of Chorus group called "Mahayana Chorus." Under the guidance by Rev. Kozakai, Rev. Nakano was ordained as a Jodo Shu minister in December of 2006.

In March 2010, Rev. Nakano was officially assigned to Jodo Mission of Hawaii. Rev. Nakano contributed his musical talent associated with teaching of Jodo Shu and introduced musical meditation to our members and friends at various functions of our temple. Especially, his playing of piano before, during and after the services was greatly appreciated. He also led a Keiki chorus group called "Malama" as Sunday School activities. His presence and talent will be missed so much by all.

The funeral service was held on August 2, 2020 at Jodo Mission of Hawaii with minimum numbers of attendance amid this coronavirus pandemic. This became the first Live Kyoku funeral which was broadcasted by YouTube for those who were unable to attend.

Our sincere Namu Amida Butsu, Aloha and Mahalo to Rev. Kanjun Nakano. It is my hope he is now enjoying Pure Land which is also known as the place of playing constant heavenly music.

Namu Amida Butsu

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