

# KOJYHISOAN

July 1<sup>st</sup> 2015, Issue No.228

## **ATTENDING the COMMEMORATIVE SERVICES of the 1200th YEAR of the FOUNDING of KOYASAN Bishop Junkun Imamura**

This year marks the 1200th year since our founder, Kobo Daishi was granted Mount Koya and a land space of about 27.3 kilometer square area by Emperor Saga (July 7, 816, the 7th year of the Kounin era). The Commemorative Services of the 1200th Year of the Founding of Mount Koya were held from April 2nd to May 20th for about 50 days at temples of the Shingon denomination and the Mount Koya Kongobuji Headquarters. There were about 150 different services in locations such as the Daigaran, Okuno-in, Kongobuji, Daishi Kyokai, Jison-in Temple and the Amano Taisha.



On April 21st at 2PM, I served as the North American Head Minister at the Memorial Services for Ministers and Followers at the KONPON-DAITO. I was grateful to have experienced such great responsibility and immeasurably deep emotion.

There was a major service that is held only once every 50 years, which saw several events that included the showing of a secret Asuku Buddha statue in the KON-DO that serves as the Main Temple of the Koyasan; the showing of the secret Kobo Daishi statue of KONGOBU-JI; the completion of the rebuilt Four Guardian Kings at the Central Gate of the GA-RAN; and a special exhibition in the REI-HO-KAN Museum (Multitude of treasures such as the Three Secret Treasures of Mount Koya; Eight Japanese National Treasures, 11 Japanese important cultural properties and secret treasures related to Myojin-sama, etc.) During these services—even during the weekdays—I felt that Mount Koya was full of tremendous activity due to the denomination of followers and tourists from foreign countries.

For the Memorial Service for Ministers and Followers of the North American, South American and Hawaiian Temples, with the rain ceasing from the previous day and the day being blessed by clear weather, a slow procession of 25 monks crossing the new BENZEITEN-IKE (pond) Bridge and proceeding through the recently constructed CHU-MON (central gate) to the DAI-TO (large pagoda) was such a solemn splendor. At this service, there were about 60 people from Hawaii and 20 from faraway Brazil.

I'm sure there were various memories when Kobo Daishi founded Mount Koya. The sacred ground on top of the mountain not only became a disciplined sanctuary where many great people were nurtured for the sake of the country and the people but it allowed for Mount Koya to enlighten people in this very life in this very world (May we attain Buddhahood in this very life in this esoteric realm of Mahavairocana); and finally, it also became a sanctuary that Kobo Daishi decided on for his eternal meditation but it also allowed for him to serve later as a guiding light for people for years to come...

## **OBON SERVICE, Sunday, July 19, 1:30 pm**

The traditional Obon service will be held on Sunday, July 19<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 p.m. Bishop Junkun Imamura will be the officiant and all ministers participating to pray for Koyasan member's ancestors and rite of hungry ghost offering (SEGAKI). During the service, Hatsubon (a deceased's first Obon) family will offer a candle. Temple will send a notice to Hatsubon families. The Obon service is the best time to visit the Temple and remember and thank our ancestors.

Obon application is enclosed with this Jiho. Please complete the form and send it back to the Temple.



## **HIROSHIMA/NAGASAKI MEMORIAL SERVICE, Sunday, August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2:00 pm**

The 70<sup>th</sup> commemorative service (*tsuitouki*) for the victims of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombs will be held on Sunday, August 2<sup>nd</sup> at 2:00 p.m. The American Society of Hiroshima/Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Survivors (ASA) and Koyasan Buddhist Temple will co-sponsor the memorial service in front of the Hiroshima peace flame.

## **JIZO-BON/OKURIBI SERVICE, Sunday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 10:00 am**

The Jizo-bon/Okuribi service will be held on Sunday, August 23<sup>rd</sup> at 10:00 a.m. At the time of Obon, ancestors return to visit their family. During OKURIBI service, we send our ancestors back to Nirvana. At the same time, we will burn *kyogi* (wooden tablet with the Buddhist title of the deceased) to send them off. The Hatsubon family should attend the service and pray for their family member.

## **WORDS by Reverend Ryuzen Hayashi**

In Japan, from ancient times, there has been an idea about the spirit of languages, and it is believed that spiritual power dwells within languages. Exchanging greetings to one another is primarily, of course, words of gratitude and words of encouragement, leading to an enjoyable life, which makes it all the more important. Whether one says it or one receives it, exchanging words like "Good morning," "Thank you," "Thank you for your efforts" will make one feel good and gives one a refreshed feeling.

In front of the Buddha, we recite sutras. Many people are apt to think that services performed in front of the Buddha are strictly for those who are deceased, but actually the sutras are for those family members and friends who have been left behind in this current world. There are varieties of sutras such as the Hannya Shingyo and the Rishukyo, but each and every one of them explain the truth of the universe, the significance of life, the path to enlightenment and how to walk a virtuous and strong, bright happy life by having religious piety.

Moreover, there are the 10 Precepts that monks should preserve. Among the 10 Precepts, there are actually four lessons that pertain to words: *fumougo*; *fukigo*; *fuakku*; and *furyouzetsu*. These precepts show just how important spoken words are. *Fumougo* means "Do not lie." For example, it is perfectly fine to describe the way one sees and hears an event happen, but the precept sermonizes to not exaggerate and speak as though one actually attended the event when he/she did not go at all. Humans who have a guilty conscience and fabricate eventually are torturing themselves. *Fukigo* points out "behavior that gives glory to only appearances." When one goes to the

extreme of trying to elevate somebody unnecessarily, there are instances where it becomes very unpleasant for the person being talked about conversely. In modern ages, this can be called a “canard,” but when false information is announced and goes around, it will bear bad results.

Next is Fuakku, which is the teaching concerning “Not talking ill of others.” Since one is apt to use rough language when talking bad about others, how one speaks or acts reveals how vile human beings can be.

In regards to the last mentioned precept, Furyozetsu, it deals with a person amongst a group of friends that exchange smooth-tongued conversations with each other or talk ill of someone else and ultimately creating bad relationships. Even if it is something small and silly in the beginning, when doubts beget doubts for humans, the relationship that was built previously is easily crushed.

The other day, a group of 20 elementary school students who attend Japanese school came to visit the temple. When I explained what Koyasan is in English, all the students thanked me and said “Thank you very much” in Japanese at the end. To hear these words gave me a good refreshed feeling.

At the temple, we recite many sutras and mantras during our Buddhist services. There are many meanings, but to recite is something very important. Even if it is one word, it is fine. To customarily use good words will bring happiness.

### **KOYASAN TEMPLE REMEMBERED by Jack Masaru Wada (1925-2015)**

As far back as I could remember, it all started in 1932 on Central Ave with the Ficus (rubber tree) in front of the Daishido; Saturday, the only day that the farmers had a day off. About 7 years old at the time, hung out on the porch waiting for the ice cream cart to come around to buy our ice cream.

As my mother told me, our relations with Koyasan started in 1920 or 1922 when mother came to the USA as a new bride married to my father. She met Mrs. Satoko Kazahaya (Kiichi’s mother) on the ship and thus our relations with Kobo Daishi started. As a new bride knowing very little, Mrs. Kazahaya helped her through the early part of her married life. I’m guessing that’s how we came to be Koyasan members.

In 1933, Dad decided to go back to Japan. We went back to Japan with the former priest Rev. Kitagawa and his family (I remember the ship’s name, Tatsuta Maru NYK Line). 22 days to Yokohama via stop in Honolulu and to Kobe. Mother always told me that we were greeted by Osumi Kaigun Daijin (Secretary of the Navy) because of the Koyasan Temple’s affiliation with the visiting sailors from Japan. I met my grandfather in Kobe for the first time. He went with us to Mt. Koya (Koyasan). It was my first and only ride on a rickshaw with my grandfather. Gosh, it was cold in Mt. Koya; snow all over the place. Next 7 years were dull; 5 years grammar school, 2 years of high school (went to Wakayama Shogyo about the time they went to the Koshien high school baseball tournament and won the championship).

Came back to the USA in 1941, attended Narbonne High School until the war broke out. We went to Santa Anita, then on to Jerome, Arkansas, and then Cleveland, Ohio, to Seabrook Farms, New Jersey. At Seabrook Farms, they had Daishi-ko services now and then but only in the winter when there was no work on the farm. I recall taking Dad, Mom and some people from Sacramento to visit an antique store in Philadelphia to buy a gong. My wife Peggie’s parents were Koyasan members from Sacramento from way back.

For a few years nothing eventful happened, busy raising a family, until Harbor City Koyasan started. Rev.



Sogabe would come to pick up Elaine and Jack Jr. to go to Harbor Japanese School. Bishop Sogabe asked me join the LA YBA. I remember the first carnival at Koyasan. I purchased all the lumber to make the booths. It took us 3 to 4 nights of preparation for a 2-day carnival. The YBA had about 40 members, mostly couples; we had dancing lessons and outings. In the summer of 1955, I met Hap Sadamitsu's family and they became our life-long friends. The Koyasan Temple prospered during this time. Obon was a 2-day affair. We needed classrooms for Sunday School, so we built them downstairs. I bought all the lumber and about 10 of us YBA members built the rooms; we put the floor in and ceilings up. It was an amateurish effort but it did its job during that time. About that time, the Temple had its 50th anniversary. The YBA went to the Biltmore Hotel for a celebration banquet.

In the meantime, every summer, the ABA (formerly YBA) went on 2-night outings to places like Pismo Beach, Vacation Village in San Diego, Hotel Circle San Diego, and Santa Barbara. Times were good then; we sure had lots of fun with Rev. Sogabe. My biggest event was the 75th anniversary of our Koyasan Temple. Two years before, we were invited to Honolulu, Hawaii's 90th celebration. I was so impressed by the festivities that went on in Hawaii that I asked Rev. Sogabe how we were going to match such an elaborate program. He asked me to be the next Board President and that is how it all started; for me, those were hectic days for all of us. Mrs. Sadamitsu was the Fujinkai President. We had the 75th with help from all the members.

I grew up with Koyasan Temple. My saddest day with Koyasan was the day Bishop Sogabe passed away. He had always guided Peggie and me throughout our life. The Temple is important to me because all my life, I have gone to the Temple. Always had to take my father and mother to church and pick them up. The ABA and friends, that's been Peggie's and my life.

## **2015 TEMPLE BOARD AND CABINET**

On January 25, 2015, the general membership meeting and elections were held. Installation of Temple officers and announcement of Board and Cabinet members were held at Spring Higan Service in March. Appreciation for outgoing President, Mrs. Frances Nakamura, and past Fujinkai President, Mrs. Kiyoko Yanagisawa, were expressed at the service. The 2015-2016 **Temple officers** are Mr. Kenneth Ito (President), Mrs. Ryoko Takata (Vice President), Mr. Richard Narumi (Treasurer), Ms. Regina Sakurai (Corresponding Secretary) and Ms. Patricia Murakami (Recording Secretary). The 2015 **Board members** are Mr. Kenneth Ito, Mrs. Frances Nakamura, Mr. John Ohara, Mrs. Ryoko Takata, Mr. Jack M. Wada (dec'd.), Mrs. Kiyoko Yanagisawa, and Mr. Noboru Yonemoto. The 2015 **Cabinet members** are Mr. Kenneth Ito, Ms. Naomi Kariyama, Mr. Henry Koyama (Harbor), Mr. Victor Miyamoto, Ms. Patricia Murakami, Mrs. Frances Nakamura, Mrs. Beverly Narumi, Mr. Richard Narumi, Mr. Brandon Paris, Ms. Regina Sakurai, Mrs. Ryoko Takata, Mr. Scott Takahashi, Mr. Paul Tamae, and Mr. Noboru Yonemoto. The Temple lost a devoted and long-time member, Mr. Jack M. Wada, who served as a Temple President (1987-1988) and on the Board and Cabinet (-2015).

## **DISCOVERY COLUMN**

Greetings by Mrs. Frances Nakamura (Past-President of Koyasan Buddhist Temple) and Mr. Kenneth Ito (New President of Koyasan Buddhist Temple)



### **WITH GRATITUDE ... by Mrs. Frances Kyoko Nakamura**

I appreciate and acknowledge the strong and supportive officers, members of the Cabinet, ministers, Temple staff and congregation during my tenure as President. Appreciation goes to Bishop Emeritus Taisen Miyata who, without hesitation, graciously came out of retirement to conduct major services and guided us to a successful 100th anniversary celebration.

We now have Bishop Junkun Imamura who returns to LA Koyasan Betsuin after going back to Japan 30 years ago. He was a Resident Minister here in LA for almost 15 years, from 1972 to 1986. He's an old friend returning to lead us as Head Minister at LA Koyasan Temple.

I hand off leadership of the Temple to our new President Kenneth Ito and his Cabinet. I am confident that the Temple is in capable hands. Please continue to support them as all of you have during my presidency.

I thank you for allowing me to serve the LA Koyasan Temple.

### **ASPIRATION by Mr. Kenneth Tatsuo Ito**

I don't know if there is a precedent for giving a speech by a Koyasan President at an installation, so forgive me if it seems a bit pompous. In his inaugural speech, John F. Kennedy said: ask not what your country can do for you — ask what you can do for your country. I see a parallel with our Temple today.

For over 100 years, Koyasan has been a main pillar in the community and, yes, it has been a place of comfort and salvation. But these days, with our membership dwindling and revenue decreasing, it is time that we start to give back to the temple. As president, my goal is bring Koyasan back to the fold. I would like to increase our membership, and I would like to have more events that help both Koyasan and the community. And by doing so, we can be successful and try to revive the glory days.

But none of this would be possible without your help. So I ask all of you for continuous support in rebuilding Koyasan. It won't happen overnight, but with help and concern from all of you for the Temple, I believe we are halfway there. Let's all work together and build up Koyasan!



### **MEMBERSHIP 2015**

The Temple thanks our members who have submitted the 2015 membership dues and welcomes the new members who joined this year. If you did not receive the membership letter sent in March or wish to become a member, please contact the Temple. The minimum fee for each member and/or spousal member is \$75.00. Children and dependent adults are covered as "dependent members" with certain restrictions. The dues can be paid in installments. Membership dues help fund the operations and maintenance of the Temple and its programs.

### **FOOD FUNDRAISER CANCELLED**

The annual food fundraiser held on Father's Day weekend was cancelled this year because of the shortage of help and decreasing orders. The Temple apologizes for not being able send notice about the cancellation. Calls were received from many who were looking forward to the chicken teriyaki, chirashi and saba sushi. The Temple appreciates all the past volunteers and supporters of the fundraiser. A committee was formed to plan the Temple's future fundraisers.



The Temple is continuing with its fundraisers through the community-contributing program as Ralphs, Food4Less and Amazon Smile. For information on the program with Ralphs, please see [www.ralphs.com](http://www.ralphs.com) or with Amazon Smile, <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/95-6055879>. The Temple thanks all those who have registered and are contributing to the program with their purchases.



### **SAFETY AND SECURITY**

When you enter and leave the Temple, you will notice the newly installed security mirrors at the entrance of the driveway. Because of the increase in traffic and pedestrians in Little Tokyo, it became more difficult for vehicles to exit the Temple. Mrs. Hideko Narumi, Miss Toshiko Narumi and Mr. Kiyoshi Narumi donated the mirrors.

With the increase of outside visitors, the Temple heightened its security with installation of outdoor and indoor cameras that were donated by Ms. Regina Sakurai. When you visit the Temple, "SMILE, YOUR'RE ON CAMERA".

### **KENSHUSEI, REVEREND DAICHI KIHARA**

Reverend Daichi Kihara arrived in Los Angeles on June 15<sup>th</sup>. He will be serving the Temple as Kenshusei until his return to Japan on August 29<sup>th</sup>. Rev. Kihara is 23 years old and comes from the Saga prefecture, Kyushu. He graduated from Senshu-Gakuen, Koyasan University, Mt. Koya. He likes to drive cars and travel. His message: "I would love to have a good time with everyone. I look forward to meeting the members of L.A. Koyasan". Please welcome Rev. Daichi Kihara.

