

KOYASAN

December 2017 · Issue No. 232

GREETINGS FROM THE NEW MINISTER

Reverend Daichi Kihara

When I landed at the airport and the dry air hit my body, I immediately felt like I had returned to Los Angeles. When I arrived in Little Tokyo, I was surprised to see it bustling with many people, much more so than the last time I was here. Stores previously under construction were all firmly established as a part of the community, and I felt that time had indeed progressed.

Two years ago, I spent my time at Koyasan Beikoku Betsuin as a trainee for 3 months. The three months were short, but I learned to not only have a more than a whole-hearted attitude toward Buddhism but also gained valuable advice through various conversations with my seniors. Some members of the temple also took me on tours and it became a time of completeness where I had experienced many things. I believe that experience became nourishment for the last two years.

This time, having received a visa as a minister officially, I have started a new position. Already a month has passed and I have become accustomed to daily life, but as I still cannot speak English well, there may be times when I cause problems. I am deeply sorry that I cannot carry on a conversation with the temple members or visitors who come to speak with me. I would like to become accustomed to speaking good English without losing heart or worry. When you come to the temple, please come and speak with me. These types of conversation will help me mature.

Because it took quite a bit of time to receive my visa, I felt as though I had no chance for the overseas position. However, the fact that I was able to return to Beikoku Betsuin makes me believe that I do have a strong connection. I am very happy that people welcomed me – those whom I met two years ago and those whom I meet for the first time. Moving forward, whenever I have the precious opportunity to meet with someone, I will deepen my connection. Finally, I would also like to put my best efforts forward into allowing people who come to the temple for the first time to believe, “I am saved, I became happy” because they were touched by Buddha. For this reason alone, above everything else, I will face Buddhism earnestly and work as hard as possible to help others within my power.

With Gassho.



NEW YEAR'S DAY SERVICE, Monday, January 1st, 10:00 a.m.

Perhaps the largest event of the year, the Buddhist temples in Los Angeles are offering Oshogatsu on New Year's Day. Koyasan Buddhist Temple will hold its Fire Rite on January 1st, 2018 at 10:00 a.m. Bishop Junkun Imamura will officiate. The Traditional Shingon Fire Ritual Service begins with chanting mantras and beating of the drum with the goal of brining joy, enlightenment, good health and peace of mind. The year 2018 is the “Year of the Dog” (1922, 1934, 1946, 1958, 1970, 1982, 1994, 2006, 2018). Ema (wish tablet), Omamori (amulet), Omikuji (fortunes), Hamaya (Lucky arrows) and consecrated Ofuda (talisman) will be available. The temple is opened from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., January 1st through January 3rd (Hatsumode).

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING, Sunday, January 28th, 10:00 a.m.

The annual General Membership Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 28th, 2018 at 10:00 a.m. Past events will be reviewed and future events presented. Overview of the 2017 finances and 2018 budget will also be presented. This meeting is open only to temple members, ministers and staff. Please remember to pay your membership dues. 2018 Membership notices will be sent in April. If you are interested in becoming a member, please visit the temple office or Koyasan website (www.koyasanbetsuin.org). Fujinkai Meeting will be held after the General Membership Meeting.

KOYASAN NEW YEAR GATHERING, Sunday, January 28th, 12:00 p.m.

The annual New Year's potluck gathering will be held on Sunday, January 28th, 12:00 p.m. after the General Membership and Fujinkai Meetings. Please RSVP by January 24th and make reservations by contacting the temple office (213-624-1267) or email (regina@koyasanbetsuin.org). For potluck, please inform the temple as to the dish that you will be bringing. The dish should serve 10 people. In lieu of bringing a dish, donations are accepted. There will be games, bingo, and more. Bring the family, invite your friends and join us in our New Year's gathering.

SETSUBUN HOSHIMATSURI SERVICE, Sunday, February 4th, 1:30 p.m.

The Setsubun Hoshimatsuri Service will be held on Sunday, February 4th, 1:30 p.m. Bishop Junkun Imamura and assistant priests will conduct the Goma Fire Ritual and pray for happiness, good health and warding-off misfortune. According to the lunar calendar, this service usually falls in February and is referred to as the Hoshimatsuri Prayer Service. Hoshimatsuri literally means "Star Festival". The movements of the heavenly bodies influence all life. The ancient horoscope using the Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn, Sun, and Constellations, is integral to this unique Shingon Esoteric Service. Ofudas based on birth year and lunar calendar will be available after the ritual to those who submit the Hoshimatsuri application form to the temple by Sunday, January 28th, 2018.

PAST EVENTS

FALL FUNDRAISER, Sunday, September 17th

The annual fall fundraiser drawing was held after Fall Higan Service on September 17th. The temple thanks all who participated and contributed to the drawing, which raised monies to help fund the temple's operations.

PRIZE	DONOR	WINNER	TICKET NUMBER
\$500		M. Fujimoto	0463
\$250		C. Ito	1140
\$100		H. Koyama	1776
\$100		T. Hulse	0846
\$100		J. Vuong	5050
\$100 Whole Foods Gift Card	Anonymous (RT)	J. Booth	5596
\$50 Trader Joe's Gift Card	Harbor Koyasan	K. Bunya	0299
\$50 Target Gift Card	Fujinkai	J. Kikuchi	1811
\$50 Macy's Gift Card	ABA	M. Kaneshiro	1450
\$50 Home Depot Gift Card	YABA	K. Miyamasu	2351
\$50 Nijiya Gift Card	L.A. Daishi-ko	M. Sugiura	4176
\$50 Best Buy Gift Card	L.A. Koyasan Taiko	F. Naka	2780
\$50 Chevron Gift Card	JPN Buddhist Class	W. Oune	3493
\$50 Master Gift Card	Anonymous (KI)	T. Miyata	2427
\$25 Marie Callender Gift Card	Scout Troop 379	M. Kanogawa	1491
\$25 Ralph Gift Card	Anonymous (KI)	D. Weiser	5218
\$25 Starbucks Gift Card	Anonymous (RS)	R. Averette	0210
\$25 Starbucks Gift Card	Anonymous (RS)	H. Umamoto	4995
\$25 Cheesecake Factory Gift Card	Anonymous (RS)	F. Mochizuki	2481
\$25 Cheesecake Factory Gift Card	Anonymous (RS)	E. Ukkestad	4978

DAIKOKUTEN “EYE OPENING” CEREMONY, October 1st

The Temple held an unveiling ceremony and consecration service on October 1st. The Nanzo-in Temple in Fukuoka Prefecture, Kyushu, Japan, has gifted a statue of the revered Daikokuten, known as the god of wealth and business success. Business owners of Little Tokyo were invited to the service. The temple thanks those who made donations for the altar that now houses the statue in the main hall. We welcome you to visit and pray to Daikokuten for good fortune and happiness.



SHICHI-GO-SAN PRAYER SERVICE, November 12th

On Sunday, November 12th, the temple held the Shichi-Go-San Goma Service to pray for the children's happiness, health and growth. About 80 boys and girls with their families, totaling 300 people, attended this prayer service. Children were each blessed by the ministers. Toyo Miyatake Studio was present for family photos and portraits.

SPECIAL ARTICLE



MY FIRST EXPERIENCES AT KOYASAN

Mr. Tony Truong

A few months ago, I was fortunate enough to endeavor on my first ever journey to Koyasan in Japan, specifically for the annual Jukai (receiving precepts) ceremony, held for three days at Shinbessho Entsuritsu-ji Temple. It is required for all priests to participate in this ceremony during their training before receiving Dembo Kanjo (initiation rite for Dharma transmission). Located away from the local town in Koyasan, Shinbessho is a remote temple complex that was constructed many centuries ago for the purpose of training priests. The temple has a long history, but despite the modern furnishings inside the buildings, Shinbessho maintains its historicity.

To access the temple, all participants of the Jukai must trek through an uphill forest trail that separates Shinbessho from the main town area. One is forbidden to take any forms of transportation or take a shorter route to the temple other than the forest trail. When embarking on the hike, however, one cannot help but marvel at being surrounded by the natural beauty of the tall trees, wild plants, and moss-covered stone statues.

During the Jukai ceremony, all candidates completed a set of prostrations. On the first day, we all bowed a total of 335 times (35 for the Buddhas of repentance and confession) and 100 each for the thousand Buddhas of the past, present, and future. It was quite an intensive spiritual exercise, for there is no time to catch your breath. You make these prostrations single mindedly, with the intent to cleanse ones past and present karma. This was followed by a series of instructions, all read in archaic Japanese, from the officiant. At the end of each day, we received documents, which contained a certification and exhortation to not forget the vows we took. We were all told that the intent was for all of us in Jukai to simply put practice into action, behave as a priest ought to, and not slip into indolent action.

The experience I had at Koyasan was one that strengthened my spiritual goals and aspirations, and certainly one that I won't soon forget. If I had a day to visit Japan again, this is definitely a place I would come. It breathes power and beauty, and simply put the best of classical Japan.

Tony Shinjo Truong is a student minister under the tutelage of Bishop Emeritus Taisen Miyata. Currently, along with assisting the ministers during services, he is co-instructor of the monthly English Buddhist Study Class, along with fellow student minister David Jakuho Weiser. He plans to visit Japan again to complete his training as a Shingon priest with the goal to become a minister of the Betsuin in the future.

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

TEMPLE IMPROVEMENT FUND

Koyasan Beikoku Betsuin of Los Angeles thanks all who contributed to the Temple Improvement. The funds are to help maintain and renovate the Temple's building and property. Monies from the Fund are currently being used to repair the Temple's roof and basement.

Aside from the roof and basement projects, the Temple has a wish list of repairs, renovations and improvements. The Temple hopes to raise \$500,000 to cover the cost and asks for your continual support in contributing to the Temple Improvement Fund.



CPR & FIRST AID TRAINING, JULY 29th



Heimlich Maneuver



Bandaging



CPR & AED Trained