

Name and Location

The Koyasan Buddhist Temple, formerly known as “Daishi Kyōkai”, is located on East 1st Street in Little Tokyo area near the Civic Center of Los Angeles. The Temple is officially known as “Koyasan Beikoku Betsuin of Los Angeles” and is a state recognized non-profit religious organization.

The Temple is opened daily to visitors from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.; however, closed during the time of private services. Japanese art and religious objects such as stone lanterns and Buddha statues are displayed by the entryway of the building. The altar inside the Temple contains many decorative objects of Buddhist symbols such as the twin mandalas, scrolls and banners.

Denomination

The Temple belongs to the Koyasan Shingon Mission founded by Kōbō Daishi (774-835 A.D.) and refers to one of the Mahāyāna Buddhist Schools. The Temple serves as the North American regional headquarters of the Koyasan Shingon Mission. A satellite of the Temple is located in Harbor City (CA). Other affiliated Shingon temples in the United States are located in Sacramento (CA), Fresno (CA), and Seattle (WA).



Kōbō Daishi

Teaching of Shingon Esoteric Buddhism

Shingon or “True Word” Buddhism shows the way of finding everlasting peace and harmony among people through the chanting of mantras (true mystical words). It is also called “Esoteric/Tantric Buddhism” in general.

According to the teaching of Kōbō Daishi, the religious way of Shingon Buddhist mission aims at enlightenment in this very life by transforming the human condition to cosmological terms through the acts of the Three Mysteries (San-mitsu); namely, forming a mudrā (body), chanting a mantra (speech), and meditating (mind). More precisely, it is the way of finding everlasting peace in this life and becoming the Enlightened One in this existence through the practice of San-mitsu.

Deities

The main Buddha (Honzon) in the main hall altar (Naijin) is Mahāvairocana, Cosmic Buddha/Dainichi-nyorai. The chief deity in the upstairs hall altar (Daishi-Dō) is Kōbō Daishi (Kūkai). The mantra to be chanted is “Namu Daishi Henjō Kongō” (Homage to the Imperishable, Shining One).

There are several other esoteric deities enshrined in the main hall of the Temple such as Fudō-myōō, Yakushi-nyorai, Mercy Bodhisattvas (Kannon and Jizō) and Kōbō Daishi.



Dainichi-nyorai

History

- 1912 In the fall, the Temple was formally organized as “Koyasan Daishi Kyōkai of Los Angeles” by Rev. Shutai Aoyama, a native priest of Toyama-ken, Japan. It was started as an association of Daishi members.
- 1913 A small altar of Daishi Kyōkai was installed inside a rented house near Elysian Park in Los Angeles.
- 1914 The Temple moved to Commercial Street in Downtown Los Angeles.
- 1920 An old building on Central Avenue, presently on the grounds of the Japanese-American National Museum, was purchased and remodeled for the missionary.

- 1931 Koyasan Boy Scout Troop 379 was officially formed.
- 1935 The Temple was elevated to the status of Koyasan Beikoku Betsuin and authorized by the Koyasan Headquarters of Japan.
- 1940 In keeping abreast with the growth of the Daishi mission, a new temple was constructed at the present site, 342 East 1st St., in Little Tokyo under the leadership of Bishop Seytsu Takahashi.
- 1942 With the breakout of war, the Temple was closed. All the Daishi members were incarcerated and relocated to Japanese internment camps in the U.S. for more than three years.
- 1946 The Temple mission restarted with Issei and Nisei Daishi members after returning from the camps.
- 1951 The Harbor City Koyasan Church was founded in the suburbs of Los Angeles under the direction of Rev. Ryosho Sogabe.
- 1962 In November, the 50th anniversary was celebrated. From 1950s to 1980s, the local Japanese communities and groups weekly used the main hall of the Temple for various performances of Japanese cultural programs.
- 1987 The 75th anniversary was celebrated with hundreds of Japanese delegates from Mt. Koya, Japan. An Abhiseka Ritual was performed for members of the Temple. Twin Mandalas were installed against the wall in the altar under the direction of Bishop Ryosho Sogabe.
- 1993 The Nokotsudō shrine (columbarium) was newly installed inside the main hall, located on the east rear side. Roof and altar renovation projects were completed under the guidance of Bishop Taisen Miyata.
- 1999 New air conditioning units and an outside walking ramp were installed. The renovation project was completed in September with an expenditure of a quarter of million dollars.
- 2012 The 100th anniversary was celebrated in the fall under the direction of Bishop Emeritus Taisen Miyata.



Main Hall

Building

The present building consists of a main hall, which measures 60 x 120 feet, and an annex that measures 40 x 50 feet. The main hall has a seating capacity of 600 persons, and a grand scale altar where the traditional esoteric rituals are performed.

The second floor of the annex has been designed for the purpose of religious gathering and study classes, especially for small groups, and accommodates a seating capacity of 100 persons. It is known as the "Daishi-Dō".

The Temple basement, located under the main altar, is used as an assembly room for scouting activities. In addition, an office, meeting room, reception room, kitchen, and several classrooms are provided for the purposes of the institution's operations.

Temple Activities and Services

Weekly

Morning Service: Sunday, 10:00 a.m.

Taiko Class: Sunday, 11:00 a.m.

Boy Scout Assemblies: Friday, 7:30 p.m.

Monthly

Goma Fire Ritual: last Sunday, 1:30 p.m.

Japanese Buddhist Class: last Sunday, 3:15 p.m.

English Buddhist Class: last Sunday, 3:15 p.m.

L.A. & Harbor Daishiko Services: designated Saturday

Adult Buddhist Assoc. Service: designated Saturday

Goeika Practices: designated day

Meditation Class: dates and times scheduled by the instructor

Yearly Calendar and Traditional Ritual Services

- Jan.** New Year's Day Service, Hatsu-Daishi Goma
- Feb.** Hoshi-matsuri Service
- Mar.** Spring Higan Service
- Apr.** Hana-matsuri Celebration (Buddha's Birth), Shomieku (Commemoration of Kōbō Daishi)
- May** Parent's Day Breakfast, Memorial Day Service
- Jun.** Aoba-matsuri (Celebration of Kōbō Daishi's Birth), Summer Fundraiser
- Jul.** Obon & Segaki Memorial Service
- Aug.** Hiroshima & Nagasaki Memorial Service, Jizo Bon (Memorial Service for Babies) & Okuribi rite
- Sep.** Autumn Higan Service, Fall Fundraiser
- Oct** Youth Day Service/Family Festival
- Nov.** Shichi-Go-San Service (Prayer for Children)
- Dec.** Bodhi Day Service, Osame Daishi Goma, Year-End Service

In addition to the traditional services and rites, the Temple holds funerals, memorials, gokitō (exorcizing prayers), blessing rituals, and weddings.

For recreational purposes, the Temple sponsors Japanese pilgrimage tours, domestic sightseeing trips, summer camping trips, and conferences.

Ministers and Staff

Presently, a head priest (Shukan) and associate ministers serve and administer the Shingon Buddhist mission at the Temple. In addition, staff members oversee the management and operations of the Temple. The ministers and staff members welcome visitors in both Japanese and English.

The Temple

The Koyasan Buddhist Temple provides services and education to its members and community. Omamori (amulets), ofuda (talismans) and omikuji (fortunes), ojuzu (rosaries) and hamaya (lucky arrows) are also available.

The Temple is a non-profit religious organization; financial and spiritual support from the public is welcome. Donations toward the Temple mission and activities will be greatly appreciated.

Winter 2016
Bishop Emeritus Taisen Miyata
Miyoko Komori Memorial Fund



KOYASAN BUDDHIST TEMPLE OF LOS ANGELES

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