Soon after arriving at the relocation center in Poston, Arizona, in 1942, detainees set about irrigating the dusty desert grounds of the camp and sowing the seeds of flowering plants. In this same spirit, reverent and resourceful Buddhists throughout the far-flung camp system improvised numerous ways to “keep the flame of the Buddha alive” despite the often spartan conditions and unprecedented hardships imposed upon them. Rev. Ryosho Sogabe, charged with the management of the temple after the internment of Bishop Takahashi, saw this quality of stoic endurance and persistence as reflecting a fundamental tenet of the Buddhist faith. In an eloquent correspondence sermon to the Daishiko at the Manzanar Relocation Center, he wrote:

“Regardless of whether it is peacetime or wartime, we must continue to walk along the path of our ever-ending life… without pausing or lagging behind. When one wakes up in the morning, one will find the path of getting up. When one gets up, one will find the path of washing one’s face. Then, one will find the path of eating breakfast. When one receives a letter, one will take the path of writing a reply. This path and this step. All this common path is a path of faith protected by Daishi…”

Ironically, in the midst of darkness, the faith was made to shine ever more brightly: a gift by way of hard affliction, thanks to the grace and wisdom of Kobo Daishi.

Immediately upon returning to Little Tokyo from the relocation centers, temple members found a way to express their deep gratitude for this gift and indeed share it with others. People’s former homes had been rented to new families during the years of internment and so residents returned to face a severe housing shortage. The temple opened its doors to this displaced group, acting as a hostel and an indispensable source of security and community in a chaotic and confusing post-war world.
Bishop Seytsu Takahashi conducts Obon Service at Evergreen Cemetery in Boyle Heights in July 1948. Signature of Koyasan members who attend the Daishiko at the Federal internment camp in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Among the signatures are Bishop Seytsu Takahashi and past Temple presidents, Jutaro Narumi and Junichi Onishi.

Daishiko - Santa Fe, New Mexico
Internment Camp - January 21, 1944

Signature of Koyasan members who attend the Daishiko at the Federal internment camp in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Among the signatures are Bishop Seytsu Takahashi and past Temple presidents, Jutaro Narumi and Junichi Onishi.

Obon - 1948

Bishop Seytsu Takahashi conducts Obon Service at Evergreen Cemetery in Boyle Heights in July 1948.
Members of the YBA Girls are introduced and installed as officers of the cabinet at the second floor chapel.

From left, Yoshiye Yamane, Sachiko Yokota, Yae Aihara, Reverend Ryosho Sogabe, Bishop Seytsu Takahashi, Kiyoko Kanno, Toshie Okamoto, Shigeko Yokota.
On May 13, 1949, the Temple sponsors a dance with the Nisei Serenaders performing.

Considered one of the top five actresses of Japanese cinema, Kinuyo Tanaka (center) with Sachiko Furusawa (left), Shimae Kazahaya (right) and other Fujin-kai members prepare post-war care packages for the less fortunate in Japan.

Kinuyo Tanaka with the Fujin-kai at Evergreen Cemetery.
The Boy Scouts of Troop 379 have their 19th Reunion on November 12, 1950. In the early 1950's with the trauma caused by World War II subsiding, Little Tokyo begins to thrive. Troop 379 sees an influx of new recruits and many Scouts earn their Eagle Scout rank.
Famous Naniwa Bushi performer, Torazo Hirozawa, gives a concert at Koyasan Hall in 1950.

The Temple often sponsors Japanese-American community events during the 1950’s with the Nisei Veteran’s Appreciation Dinner, held in 1950, being just one example.

Torazo Performance - December 8, 1950

COURTESY OF TOYO MIYATAKE STUDIO

Nisei Veteran’s Appreciation Dinner - February 25, 1950

COURTESY OF TOYO MIYATAKE STUDIO

The Temple often sponsors Japanese-American community events during the 1950’s with the Nisei Veteran’s Appreciation Dinner, held in 1950, being just one example.