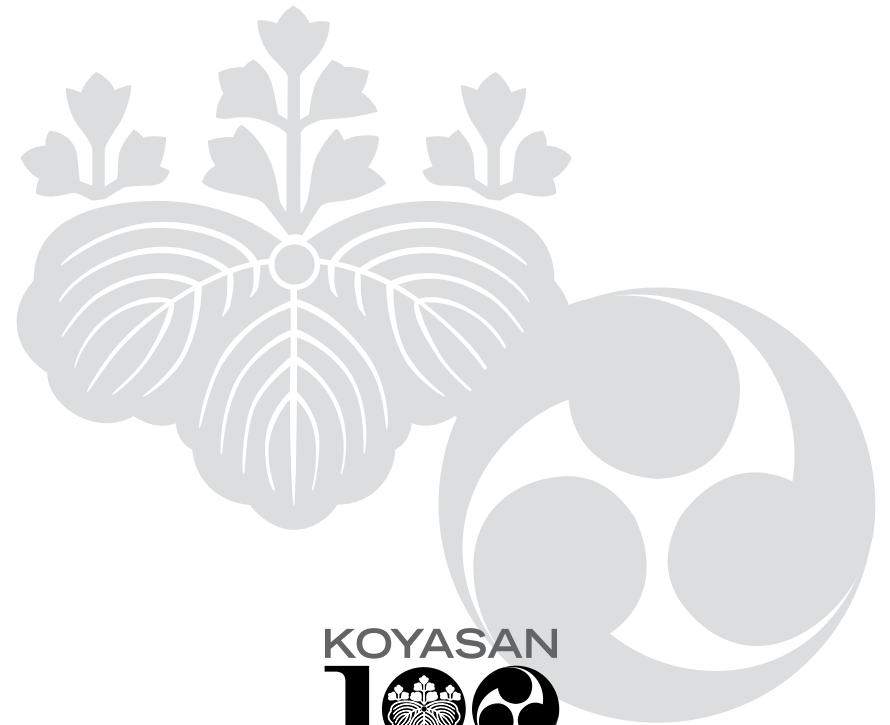


KOYASAN MISSION
LOS ANGELES MISSION
100TH ANNIVERSARY
高野山米國別院開創百周年1912-2012



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Inside front cover



高野山米國別院開創百周年 1912-2012
KOYASAN BUDDHIST TEMPLE LOS ANGELES

KOYASAN FROM 1912 THROUGH 2012

Daishi Kyokai - 1912



Daishi Kyokai - 1913



Daishi Kyokai - 1913



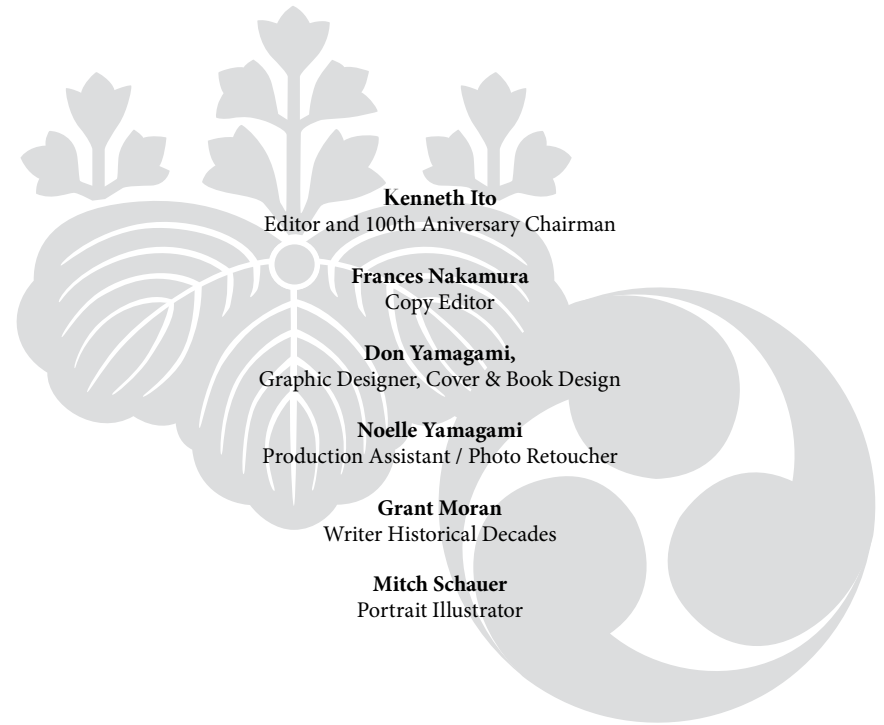
Daishi Kyokai - 1920



Koyasan Buddhist Temple - 2012



KOYASAN MISSION LOS ANGELES 100TH ANNIVERSARY 高野山米國別院開創百周年1912-2012



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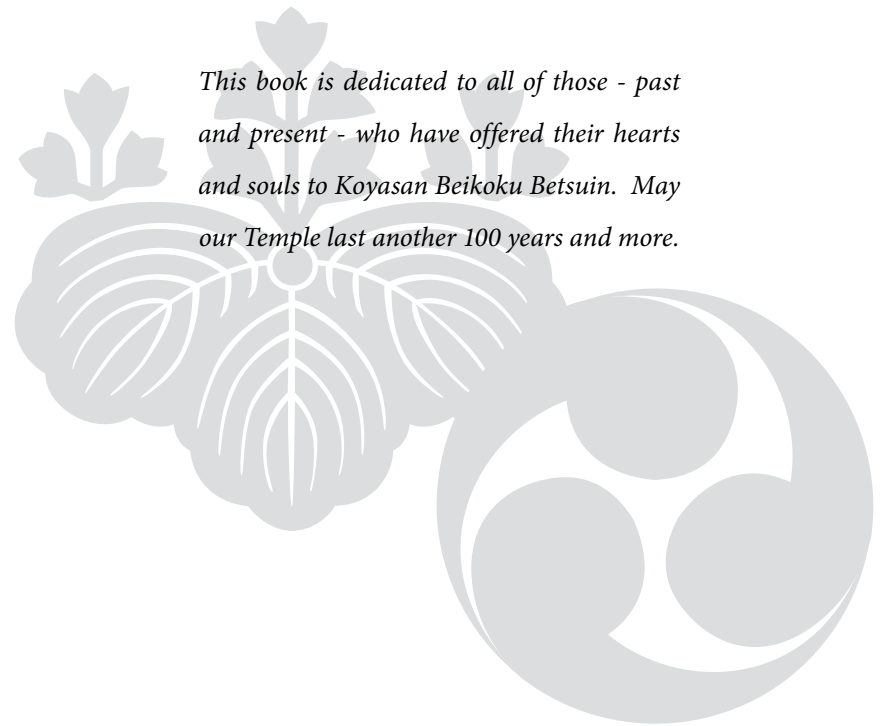
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DEDICATION

*This book is dedicated to all of those - past
and present - who have offered their hearts
and souls to Koyasan Beikoku Betsuin. May
our Temple last another 100 years and more.*



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This book is a herculean labor of love, and as I embarked on a quest to create a historically pictorial collection for the centennial celebration of the Koyasan Mission, I truly realized what a major undertaking it was. Researching Koyasan Temple's history—the red 50th Anniversary book really helped in a major way—I was staggered as to just how rich a history Koyasan has had. I thought I knew a lot about Koyasan, but boy, was I wrong... I never knew how painstaking it was for Reverend Aoyama to build up the Daishi Kyokai nor did I know what Bishop Takahashi had to go through to build our current Temple building. I never realized just what Mrs. Koko Furusawa and the Fujin-kai meant to the Koyasan Temple. Had it not been for all the past ministers, Issei pioneers, the Niseis, and today's generation, this Temple would not be celebrating its 100th Anniversary and this book would not exist.

So, first and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to all of those who have worked hard for the Temple and made this book possible.

I would like to thank Don Yamagami for putting together such a marvelous book. Kudos also goes to his wife, Shelley, and daughter, Noelle, for their support. I would also like to thank Frances Nakamura, our present Temple President, for proofreading all the text over and over again. I know proofreading is a thankless job.

Special, special thanks to Alan Miyatake of Toyo Miyatake Studio. This book would not have been as great (or as thick) had it not been for his generosity to allow us the use of the Miyatake archives.

Thank you to other individuals and families who shared their photos: Yone Amimoto, Shigeji and Fumie Ito, Frances Nakamura, Shoji and Masako Kanogawa, Edward and Minnie Takahashi, Scott Takahashi of Boy Scout Troop 379, Ryoko Takata, and Cindy Terakawa.

Thanks also go out to those who scanned non-digital photos for countless of hours, Noel Duer and Nicholas Duer; and those who helped with some of the captioning, Pat Murakami and Regina Sakurai.

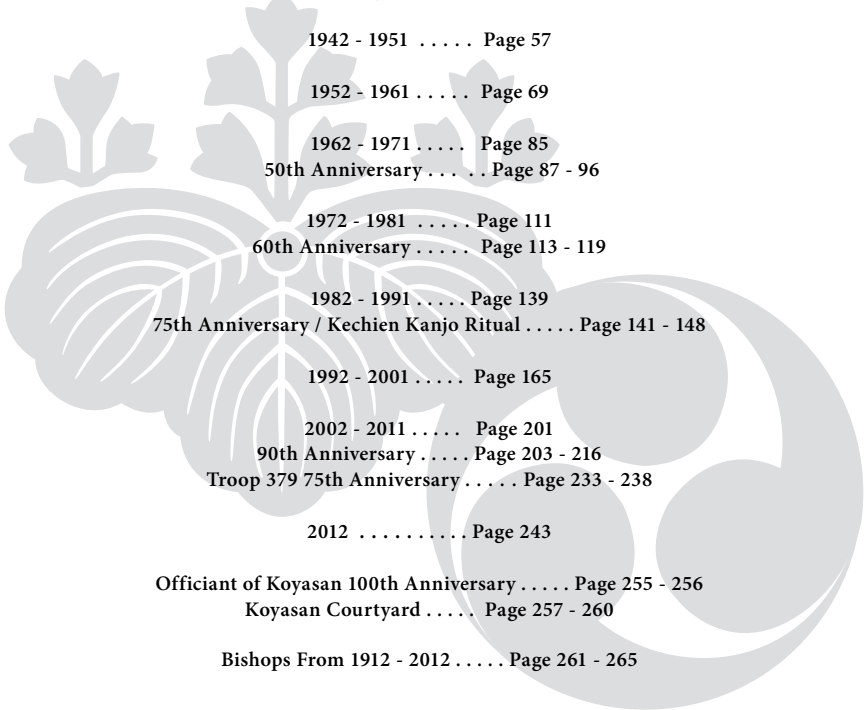
Special mention goes to my friend, Grant Moran, who gladly researched our Temple's history and wrote wonderful prose on each decade of the Temple. Another special mention goes to Mitch Schauer, a fabulous artist; he took on the challenge of creating a portrait of Bishop Hokai Takada that originated from a tiny, blurry photo. (This re-creation is my ode to Bishop Hokai Takada since no photos exist of him today).

I also thank Reverend Keishin Kako for the assistance with getting all the facts straight for the book. His task was truly an important cog for this book and my secret weapon.

And finally, words cannot express my sincere gratitude towards Bishop Emeritus Taisen Miyata. So vital to this book, Bishop Emeritus Miyata was my direct link to the past and helped me in so many ways. He truly made my life easier.

Kenneth T. Ito,
Editor and 100th Anniversary Chairman

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Foreword

November 18, 2012

In the early twentieth century, the Japanese immigrants from Japan were trying to adjust to a new culture here in Los Angeles. During the course of this adjustment of extreme hardship, language handicap, and financial difficulties, they persevered through the strong/pious Buddhist faith called Odaishi-san's Spirit and the warm support of one another. The Spirit means the faith of accompanying the Savior Kobo Daishi and it is religiously called the faith of Dogyo-Ninin in Japanese. This inner strength and commitment of Issei pioneers including priests and members continue to enhance the scope of Shingon Buddhist tradition to this day.

In 1912, a 37-year-old Shingon priest from Japan, Rev. Shutai Aoyama, started the mission in a room of the old Miyako Hotel in downtown Los Angeles with Mr. Kiyotaro Nakano, the owner of the hotel, and several other Issei members. It was officially named Los Angeles Daishi Kyokai, a local Koyasan Daishi mission. By 1940, its geographical location changed four times: Elysian Park, Commercial Street, North Central Avenue, and East First Street of Little Tokyo. During the transitional period, the Daishi mission facilities were used for activities of young Nisei boys under the leadership of Bishop Taido Kitagawa resulting in the formation of the Koyasan Boy Scouts Troop 79 (later renamed 379) in 1931. In addition, before the outbreak of war in 1941, the Temple facilities were used frequently as an assembly hall for the Japanese Navy sailors while their tanker/ship was docked in Long Beach Port.

At the time of the 1,100th Commemorative ceremony for Kobo Daishi held in 1934, the Daishi Kyokai Mission was elevated to the Koyasan Betsuin Temple and

recognized officially by the Headquarters of Shingon Mission on Mt. Koya, Japan. Under the direction of Bishop Seytsu Takahashi, the Betsuin Temple moved to the present site in the Fall of 1940.

Soon after the outbreak of war, all the residential ministers and Japanese immigrants including Nisei Americans were forcefully incarcerated at several Japanese relocation camps located in the interior of the U.S. under Executive Order 9066 in 1942. Due to the war and the incarceration of the Japanese, the Temple was closed and became a warehouse for Japanese immigrants. It stood on the brink of a precipice for missionary work.

A few years after the end of the war, the Temple was gradually revived through the support of resilient Issei and Nisei members returning from the relocation camps. And because of the Temple's spacious main floor with a capacity of 600 people, it then became a local Japanese community center holding many cultural and sporting events, popularly called "Koyasan Hall" by the community. Various talent shows, Enka singing, modern and classical dances and indoor sport demonstrations such as karate, judo, kendo and aikido were held frequently.

In 1954, a branch mission named Harbor City Koyasan Church was built in the suburb of Los Angeles and a Japanese language school was operated there under the direction of Rev. Ryosho Sogabe. Thanks to the ability of Rev. Sogabe, the Church was highly successful.

At the ministerial level, many of the resident ministers

from Japan in the 1950's undertook advanced studies at the graduate level at major universities in America; namely, University of Southern California, Columbia University, Yale University, Pennsylvania University, California State University at San Jose and Sacramento. They not only earned the degrees of B.A., M.A., and Ph.D at major universities, but also contributed to the introduction of Shingon Buddhism and its tradition to American scholars in general through their academic participation.

A scholar said, "My intellectual understanding of the religions has been reinforced by an experiential knowledge of what are both a process and a state of being. The idea of awareness is not one that is simply thought about and understood, but must be experienced."

During 1967 through 2009, the Temple sponsored the traditional pilgrimage tours under the leadership/sendatsu of resident ministers to visit the 88 temples on Shikoku Island and the 33 temples in Western Japan. Totally, sixteen pilgrimage group tours were formed and enriched the Shingon faith of Dogyo-Ninin through a 15-day Henro experience. The religious significance of the Shingon tradition, the propagative contribution of scholastic ministers and the experience of the Henro pilgrimage tours are highlights in the history of Koyasan Betsuin Temple that should not be forgotten.

As you are aware, communities are drastically changing in Southern California. While modernization has quickly taken place, our Shingon Mission must

meet the needs of the younger generation. In other words, important creative changes in the propagation of our Mission for English-speaking people must be undertaken.

For example, Rev. Ekan Ikeguchi, head priest of Saifukuji Shingon Temple, Kagoshima, Japan, visited Los Angeles in 1968 to assist our mission and introduced the Goma ritual to our Temple for a powerful, energizing experience. Since its momentous introduction, the fire Goma ritual has continued on a monthly basis to this day, and many local members and others regularly attend the Goma sacred rite. Throughout the New Year holiday in recent years, more than three thousand visitors have come to visit the Temple to not only observe the fire rite, Hatsu-goma, of Shingon Buddhist tradition but to also purchase omamori, omikuji and such for a good year. It is truly an extraordinary service that one rarely sees here in Southern California.

With deepest gratitude, I would like to make a pledge to dedicate the rest of my life to our Savior Odaishi-san by magnifying the scope of my mind to be universal toward world peace and harmony.

With Gassho,
Bishop Emeritus Taisen Miyata