



# Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii

## HEADQUARTERS UPDATE

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### REFLECTIONS ON THE ACCESSION CEREMONY AND PILGRIMAGE TOUR



#### **Bishop Eric Matsumoto's Report**

It was Spring, but fluctuating temperatures made it an unusual year. On March 31, 2017, 2PM, the temperature was a very brisk 45 degrees and it was raining. The temple precinct was filled with a colorful sea of red, blue, lavender and light green umbrellas with the wisteria crests on them. However, the chilly weather did not dampen the enthusiasm of the 47 participants from or related to Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii including PBA who were attending the Accession Ceremony of His Eminence Kojun Ohtani, the 25<sup>th</sup> Spiritual Leader Gomonsu Sennyō Shonin being held at the Honzan (Nishi Hongwanji) in the ancient capital of Kyoto.

After the honor of having an audience and a special photo opportunity with His Eminence in the morning with fellow Sangha members from Buddhist Churches of America and Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temples of Canada, our group hurried into the Buddha Hall to await the beginning of the Ceremony. The magnificently decorated altars dedicated to Amida Buddha and Shinran Shonin with richly brocaded altar cloths together with the beautiful music and melodic chanting soon mesmerized the congregation from Overseas and Japan which filled the two Main Halls of the Main Temple. One of the highlights of the Accession Ceremony was the special appearance of 3 generations of the Ohtani Family from His Eminence Koshin Ohtani, Monshu Emeritus and Lady Noriko Ohtani, Urakata Emeritus, Gomonsu His Eminence Kojun Ohtani and Urakatasama Lady Ruzumi Ohtani and the children of the current Gomonsu and Urakatasama Takashi-sama and Akiko-sama towards the end of the Ceremony. They entered the spacious Halls together as a family and warmly greeted the congregation with smiles and such cordiality. It was especially touching to see Takashi-sama sitting next to his mother Lady Ruzumi Ohtani throughout the Service even chanting, to see Gomonsu Kojun Ohtani carry his children and Takashi-sama helping his little sister Akiko-sama by holding her hand. A feeling of warmth, joy and togetherness pervaded and for a moment everyone forgot the cold.

The warmth of Amida Buddha's Compassion and the feeling of Sangha manifested by the Ohtani Family made the once-in-a-life time opportunity Accession Ceremony, a most memorable experience which will truly last a life time. The Accession Ceremony tells of a new era, a new beginning for Hongwanji.

### **Rev. Yuika Hasebe's Report**

After the wonderful accession ceremony which was held at Nishi Hongwanji, our pilgrimage tour started. This tour's theme was following Shinran Shonin's step. We often learn about Shinran Shonin through scrolls, books or minister's messages but those places powerfully told us about Shinran Shonin as a real human. Through it, we were able to encounter new Shinran Shonin whom we had never known.



One of the most memorable place was Kotagahama Beach. Shinran Shonin was exile from Kyoto to Echigo Province (present Niigata Prefecture) and he reached to Kotagahama Beach by a boat. When we stepped off the bus, the bleak winds welcomed us. The area is known for strong gust and the climate of Niigata Prefecture forces local people to fight against snow and coldness even in present day. The ocean and sky were dark gray. It was a lonely beach. We couldn't help but imagine Shinran Shonin's feeling when he stepped on this lonely beach. His one and only master, Honen Shonin was exile to Tosa province (Present Kochi Prefecture in Shikoku Island) almost other side of Japan, and the teaching which he finally was able to encounter, was banned by the government of the era. The path ahead of him seem to dark and gray, like an ocean of Kotagahama.

Shinran Shonin's life was filled with difficulties and sufferings but yet, he never gave up the path of the Nembutsu. The Kotagahama Beach was lonely and covered by the dark clouds but they were not able to darken Shinran Shonin's heart. Shinran Shonin was illuminated by the light of Amida and always stood up again to take another step forward. Following his footsteps taught us that the life of Shinran Shonin, as a man and not only historical figure. It was great opportunity for us to reflect ourselves as Nembutsu Followers.

### **KIKYOSHIKI CONFIRMATION CEREMONY BY HIS EMINENCE GOMONSHU KOJUN OHTANI**

Confirmation Ceremony, or "*Kikyoshiki*", is a solemn ceremony performed before Amida Buddha and Shinran Shonin to officially confirm your entry into the Path of the Nembutsu. Participants will affirm their reverence toward the Three Treasures of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. "Buddha" is not simply in reference to Shakyamuni, but refers more importantly to Amida Buddha, the Buddha of Immeasurable Wisdom and Boundless Compassion. "Dharma" is the teaching of Amida's Compassionate working to embrace all beings without any discrimination. "Sangha" refers to the community of people who have entrusted themselves to Amida Buddha and its Nembutsu teaching.

By participating in the Confirmation Ceremony, you will receive a Dharma Buddhist Name (*Homyo*). These names are in the form of "*Shaku*" and two Buddhist terms which follow. The word "*Shaku*" means "disciple of Shakyamuni" and signifies that the person has joined the followers of the teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha, a community that transcends race or nationality.

His Eminence Gomonshu Kojun Ohtani, the Head Priest and the Spiritual Leader of the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha Organization, will be officiating the Confirmation Ceremony at the following three locations.

**Honpa Hongwanji Hilo Betsuin (398 Kilauea Ave., Hilo)  
Tuesday, September 5, 2017, 5:30pm**

**Wailuku Hongwanji Mission (1828 Vineyard Street, Wailuku)  
Wednesday, September 6, 2017, 5:30pm**

**Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin (1727 Pali Highway, Honolulu)  
Sunday, September 10, 2017, 2:00pm**

Please note that the Confirmation Ceremony is open to anyone throughout the State. There is no minimum or maximum age limit however the individual must be able to participate in the ceremony at the temple. We sincerely hope that you will take this wonderful opportunity and participate in the Confirmation Ceremony.

<http://hongwanjihawaii.com/blog/2017/04/10/confirmation-ceremonies-0917/>. Please contact your resident minister for application instruction. Application deadline is June 30, 2017.

## **YBICSE – YOUNG BUDDHIST INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL STUDY EXCHANGE**

**July 10-22, 2017**

### **Hongwanji-sponsored educational trip to Japan**

Visiting Jodo Shinshu historical sites including the Hongwanji (mother temple) in Kyoto  
Fellowship with new friends from US Mainland, Canada, South America, and Japan  
Homestay Program  
Learn & experience Japanese Culture  
Share joy of living in the Nembutsu Teachings  
Many other life-changing experiences  
Chaperones: Reverend Tomo Hojo & Ms. Elaine Saiki

**\*\*Go to <http://hongwanjihawaii.com/ybicse/> for more information and application. Application deadline is April 30, 2017.**

## **MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR THE LATE BDK CHAIRMAN TOSHIHIDE NUMATA**

**Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii will be holding a memorial service for the late BDK Chairman Rev. Toshihide Numata on Saturday, May 6, 2017 at 9:00am at the Hawaii Betsuin Annex Temple to express our appreciation and gratitude for the support and numerous contributions received from Numata Kaicho.**

Rev. Toshihide Numata and BDK made many contributions to Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, and their most recent contribution is the donation of the Buddhist altar for Pacific Buddhist Academy's new school building. Rev. Brian Nagata (a Director of BDK America) will be delivering a memorial Dharma message, and Dr. George Tanabe (President of BDK America), will share a message of remembrance. The service is open to anyone who wishes to honor the life of Rev. Toshihide Numata.

*We were deeply saddened to receive the news from BDK Japan that Rev. Toshihide Numata, Chairman of Bukkyō Dendō Kyōkai, passed away on February 16, 2017 in Tokyo. He was 84 years old. Rev. Numata was the son of Rev. Dr. Yehan Numata, the founder of Mitutoyo Corporation and Bukkyō Dendō Kyōkai. Like his father, Rev. Numata served as Mitutoyo President, and later as Chairman of BDK. Under his leadership, BDK increased the number of Numata Chair programs to universities throughout the world, and oversaw the development of innovative educational and charitable programs. His passing marks the end of an era for Bukkyō Dendō Kyōkai, but his legacy will live on in the work that BDK will continue to do. (From BDK America's Website; <http://www.bdkamerica.org/>)*