

Shioya Betsuin and its history with Symphony No. 9



Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 second movement, a Japanese New Year tradition performed Dec. 9 at Shioya Betsuin (Kagawa prefecture).



Band of German soldiers at Marugame POW camp conducted by Paul Engel (middle).



Shioya Betsuin as a POW camp housing 333 German POWs.

From November 1914 at the beginning of WWI, Shioya Betsuin served as the Marugame German prisoner-of-war camp for two and a half years. While imprisoned, soldiers formed a band under the direction of violinist-soldier, Paul Engel. The soldiers were later transferred to the Bando POW camp in Naruto, Tokushima prefecture, where the first performance of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 in Japan was conducted in 1918.

Preceding the concert this year, a lecture was given by Keizo Tamura, of the Marugame German Soldiers' Internment Camps Research Society, during which he explained "Japan, aiming to join the ranks of other modern and industrially advanced countries, in compliance with international laws treated the POWs as humanely as possible. It has been said that this way of thinking influenced the local residents as well, that the people of Marugame went to the extent of making welcome banners to post alongside the road reading We welcome you with great compassion in German." Tamura also shared the history of how the soldiers shared their skills with the Japanese. With many of the soldiers being experienced engineers and craftsmen, the German culture including food and arts, and the western techniques of agriculture and civil engineering were acquired by the local people.

The only existing information on the Marugame internment camp are a daily log from the internment camp which was kept by the then Army Ministry of Japan and approximately 60 photos that are being kept at the Naruto German House in Tokushima prefecture. In the daily log, it was recorded that 333 German soldiers were imprisoned at the camp, with them sleeping side-by-side in the temple hall and living quarters. The soldiers were not assigned to do labor and in fact were allowed to take part in music and sporting activities including baseball and exercise. In a book written by Engel himself, he mentions that twenty-six concerts were held at the Marugame internment camp by an orchestra comprised of ten-plus musicians.

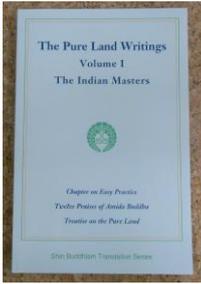
Although very limited, there were also records in the daily log mentioning "POWs who fail to behave in an orderly fashion shall be locked-up in the drum tower detention barracks" and "floor panel damaged and altar room broken into by a POW interested in Buddhist artifacts. Disciplinary action taken."

Shinji Shimada (52), president of Shioya Betsuin's Men's club and event chair mentioned, "When I was a child, we had furniture in our home made by German POWs. It is the job of future generations that a conscious effort be made to avoid the weakening of history."

Next year marks the centennial of the German POW internment camps. Carving the history of war into our hearts and minds, and opening our ears to Beethoven's 9th Symphony is also a learning opportunity.

(Hongwanji Journal, January 10, 2013, p. 8)

English series of The Pure Land Writings under way by Hongwanji International Center Shin Buddhism Translation Series on the writings of the Seven Patriarchs



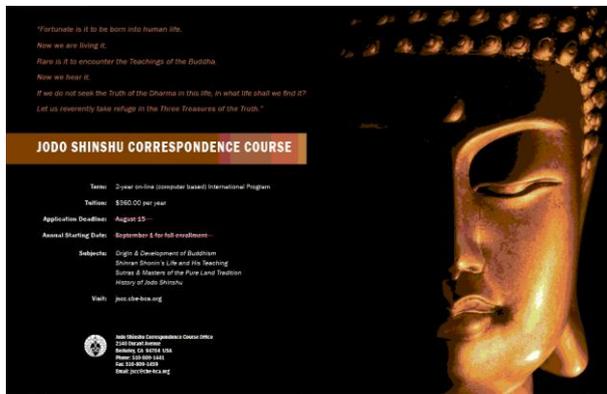
The first volume of *The Pure Land Writings, The Indian Masters*, is the English series of the Seven Patriarchs from India, China, and Japan which Shinran Shonin highly revered.

The series is part of the operations of the Jodo Shinshu Seiten English Translation and Editorial Committee headed by

Rev. Michio Tokunaga (General Editor) and Wayne Yokoyama.

Currently, the Committee is working on The Commentary on Vasubandhu's *Treatise on the Pure Land*.

The Pure Land Writings (Vol. I) The Indian Masters is available for 1260 Yen through the Hongwanji International Center at (075) 371-5547 or kokusai@hongwanji.or.jp.



Overseas aspirants take part in Kyoshi training becoming kyoshi ministers

In hopes to help propagate the teaching overseas, a total of nine tokudo ordained priests from the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) and Canada joined the Japanese candidates for a 10-day Kyoshi program beginning December 5 to complete the required courses and certifications.

During the training session, lectures in English were arranged and translators were on-duty so that the candidates could learn about the various rituals and liturgy.

Christina Yanko (38) of the Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temples of Canada enthusiastically expressed that “fifteen years ago, when I was feeling alone and uncertain, I met Rev. Dr. Leslie Kawamura, who was a Jodo Shinshu priest and professor at the University of Calgary. He taught me that we are not living alone, but rather, that we are able to live due to the support of one another. Becoming an ordained minister and working to propagate the Nembutsu teaching in Canada is a promise I made with the late Rev. Dr. Kawamura.”

(Hongwanji Journal, January 20, 2013, p. 2.)



Back, l. to r.: Mieko Majima (Ryukoku Univ.), Roy Mayhugh, Christine Marr, Glenn Kenji Akahoshi, Ungyo Lynn Sugiyama. Front, l. to r.: Christina Yanko-Ringle (Canada), Jon Turner, Diana Thompson, and Bill Dearth

Coffinman author and Chinese translator meet Ho Sai Yiu Representative of the Hong Kong Horai Association

Visiting from Hong Kong, Ho Sai Yiu, who produced the Chinese translation of Coffinman, met with the author of Coffinman, Shimmon Aoki at Hongwanji's Monbou Kaikan. Meeting face-to-face for the first time, they expressed their feeling of joy with a firm handshake. Aoki, was in Kyoto scheduled to present a lecture sponsored by the Kyoto Prefectural Buddhist Association later that day.



Encountering Jodo Shinshu through a Dharma session conducted at the Hong Kong Horai Association, Ho decided to deepen his appreciation of the Nembutsu and became ordained as a Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha priest in 2002. While studying in London, he came across a copy of the English translation of Coffinman. Deeply moved by the book, he immediately contacted the English translator requesting permission to translate the text into Chinese and completed the translation in 2004. Finally having the opportunity to meet eight years later, “I am finally able to meet him. The Coffinman is filled with Buddhist messages that are shared through the experiences of Mr. Aoki. I was touched by Mr. Aoki's appreciation for Buddhism through his encounter in dealing with death. I hope we can have a lecture by Mr. Aoki in Hong Kong some day.” Ho remarked with a warm smile.

(Hongwanji Journal, January 20, 2013, p. 8.)



Kagami biraki (lit., “opening the mirror”) cutting of the new year's mochi offering at Hongwanji (Kyoto).