

## Newly ordained priests from overseas take on new responsibility of spreading the Dharma

On September 15, fifteen Nembutsu followers from Buddhist Churches of America (BCA, North America), Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temples of Canada, and affiliates in Germany and the U.K. of the Hongwanji European regional district took part in the Tokudo ordination ceremony formally becoming ordained as Jodo Shinshu priests.

A candidate from Canada together with candidates from Europe joined the Japanese Tokudo training session which began on September 6. Lectures on rituals and liturgy, and the history and teaching of Jodo Shinshu were among the topics of study.

Beginning last year, candidates from North America and Canada completed 3 requisite seminar sessions as part of an independent program conducted by the Jodo Shinshu Center (Berkeley, California, U.S.A) sessions focusing on teaching of Jodo candidates joined session at Betsuin (Kyoto, seventh day of the and received on chanting (liturgy) successfully training program, all from overseas were candidates who took September Tokudo ceremony which Goeido (Founder's Hongwanji (Kyoto,



with seminar the history and Shinshu. The the training Nishiyama Japan) from the 11-day program intensive training and rituals. After completing the fifteen candidates among the ninety part in the ordination commenced at the Hall) at Japan).

David Pating (53), a candidate from BCA, has been a member of the Buddhist Church of San Francisco for 25 years as a devout listener of the Dharma and currently serves as the temple president while also contributing to the temple as a minister's assistant.

"It was difficult in memorizing the Ryogemon [in Japanese], which is recited during the Tokudo ceremony. However, in reading the English translation, I realized just how deep and meaningful the words were. From now on, I hope to truly live the meaning of the Ryogemon," shared Pating.

From Germany, Ilona Evers (57) commented, "I am coming to Japan for the first time, to become ordained in the Jodo Shinshu tradition. It [the session] was a difficult yet invaluable experience and I also had the opportunity to encounter the warmth of the people of Japan."

For the past sixteen years, Evers has been opening up her Berlin home each week to conduct Dharma study gatherings to which 4 or 5 others have been attending regularly.

"I've studied various Buddhist sects, but there has not been a teaching that has touched me as much as the teaching of Shinran Shonin. It is like the feeling of comfort that one gets when returning home. I am glad to have encountered the Shinshu teaching," expresses Evers.

(Excerpt from Hongwanji Journal, October 10, 2012)

## Muromachi era open-air stone bath uncovered at former site of Yamashina Hongwanji

The Kyoto City Archaeological Research Institute recently announced that the site to a sauna-style open-air stone bath from the Muromachi era (1138–1573) was discovered at the former site of Yamashina Hongwanji (present-day Yamashina Betsuin), which was built during the term of the eighth Hongwanji monshu\*, Rennyo Shonin (1415–1499).

Excavation on the temple site began earlier this July, in an area that is said to have been called *Gohonji*, which at the time was the center of the temple grounds. The bath, which is presumed to have been located behind the Goeido and Amidado temple halls is most likely the bath which was used by both Rennyo and the proceeding ninth monshu, Jitsunyo Shonin.

The bath was discovered approximately 1 meter below ground level in a 6 meter by 3 meter semi-underground area. The bathing area was further divided, with the bath being a sauna-style structure. After heating the bath by burning wood, salt-water was sprinkled in the area to produce steam in which the person would sit in and perspire. Archeologists found remains of clay and stones that were likely used in building the dome-structured bath. Coal for steaming the bath was also found in the excavation.



Remains of the open-air bath

Located next to the bath was a stove, which can infer that water was heated to wash down the perspiration from sitting in the steam bath. A 3-meter wide water well was also discovered, making it the largest well to have been discovered in Kyoto city. It has also been confirmed that remains from a pillar supporting the bath structure was found.

In addition to the open-air bath, a kitchen and garden area has also been located, shedding light to the details of Yamashina Hongwanji's original central grounds. Yuuka Kashiwada, a member of the research institute comments, "An open-air stone bath from the Muromachi period of this proportion is very rare. The way the stones have been aligned is very precise, depicting the energy of a flourishing Yamashina Hongwanji."

On September 24, the site was visited by Monshu Koshin Ohtani. From 10:00 am on November 25, a presentation on the history and recent findings of the original Yamashina Hongwanji will be conducted. The presentation will be in Japanese. For more information contact Yamashina Betsuin at (075) 581-0924.

Other information may be found on the Kyoto City Archaeological Research Institute website at <http://www.kyoto-arc.or.jp/index.html> or <http://www.kyoto-arc.or.jp/News/gensetsu/193hongwanji.pdf> for direct access to a research paper on Yamashina Hongwanji. (Japanese only)

\*Monshu: Hongwanji head and descendent of Shinran Shonin, founder of Jodo Shinshu teaching.

(Excerpt from Hongwanji Journal, October 10, 2012)