

Fun at the temple~Toy library at Kumejima branch office

Having toys readily available at Hongwanji's Kumejima branch office, together will help in the nurturing and education of our children's bright future.

The *Jinjin Omocha Library* began its operations in conjunction with the monthly Kids Sangha gathering that was held on July 21. Gathered for its opening, children and parents enjoyed playing with the new toys and books. (photo) In Okinawan dialect, *Jinjin* refers to fireflies.

The Kumejima facility, along with the other 450-plus public play facilities referred to as *libraries*, operate throughout Japan provided with toys and supported by government-related organizations, schools, and child care groups. In Okinawa, sangha



member, Mr. Yasunori Ota, has been taking the leading role in supporting the Kids Sangha program which began last year, hoping to make the image of the temple more appealing. "Having the library (at the temple), we hope will let the children know that the temple is a place where they are always welcome to come and play." Ota's wife, Yumi, adds "Inviting other mothers and friends of my daughter, one person telling another person started a chain reaction and livened things up. In Kumejima, it is still common to see children playing in a common area" which is why it is anticipated that the temple will be able to serve as another community area for the children. The temple teaches children about the good and bad, as well as the importance of gratitude. This is also a valuable experience for myself, reminding me of the important things I had forgotten. I am happy to be able to bring my child here from now on." expresses Saori Itokazu, a parent visitor to the facility.

The day before the library opening, a special lecture on the inauguration of the library was hosted by Okinawa Betsuin in their Ameku Worship Hall with speaker, Ryukoku Junior College (Fukakusa Campus) Child Welfare Course Professor Makoto Nakane, who spoke about the foundation of how we as adults can support our children and youth particularly during summer vacation. Participant Hiromi Nagayama shared, "The temple is where we can hear an assortment of stories and our lives can be enriched. Although the temple is still not widely known in Okinawa, it is only after reflecting back on my own parents that I myself have started coming to the temple. If we come to the temple regularly, doing so, it is bound to be passed down to our children."

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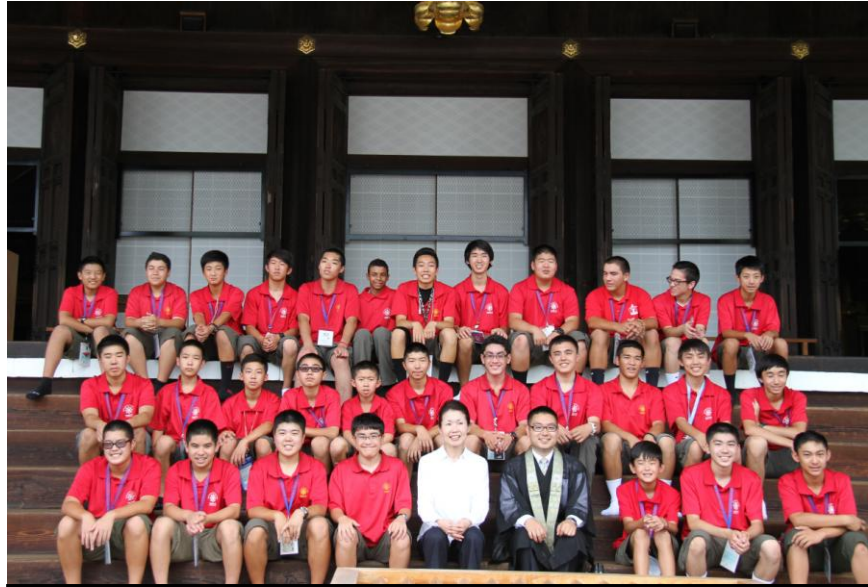
Sharing the Experience

By: **Riley Matsuda (16)**
OCBC Boy Scout

Boy Scout Troop 578 of Anaheim, California visited the Nishi Hongwanji Buddhist Temple in Kyoto on July 27, 2013. The main things that the scouts enjoyed seeing were the giant altar in the service hall, the outdoor [Noh] stages, the zen gardens, and the pavilion. Personally, I was just amazed at the sheer size of the place. It was far larger than any other temple I had seen before.

Additionally, it was neat getting a kind of VIP experience while we toured the temple, being allowed to take pictures and getting to see places not normally open to the public. It was also pretty cool that we had someone from California giving us the tour. Reverend Taka Miyaji and Reverend Mutsumi Wondra were both very good guides and were extremely knowledgeable.

Some of the interesting things we learned about included the creaking floors used to alert people of intruders and the story behind the humanoid looking tiger paintings.



Boy Scout Troop 578 (Anaheim, California)
Riley Matsuda, middle row far right

By: **Alyson Chang (11)**
OCBC Girl Scout

I went to Japan with my family to tour Japan before my brother went to the Boy Scout Japan Jamboree. We went to a temple called Nishi Hongwanji in Kyoto. After walking there from our hotel, we saw a huge and beautiful temple surrounded by lots of trees. Before we went inside we had to take off our shoes and put them in a plastic bag and carried them with us. We met our guide who was a Reverend and he turned out to be the nephew of Orange County Buddhist Church's Reverend.

OCBC is our church back home in the United States. It was nice to see someone who spoke English so we could understand him when we took our tour. He took us to places that most people weren't allowed to go to. One room had paintings of tigers on the walls, and our guide told us that someone dressed up in a tiger skin so the artist could paint them. In a restricted place that we got to go to, there was a pine tree that you could only see from the inside of the room. If you were outside looking in, the tree is not visible! Other things most don't get to see was a room where you could see a moon on the top of the wall from the painting in the room next to it.

After our tour, we went outside and took a group picture with our guide, Reverend Miyaji and Reverend Wondra from our own church who is studying in Japan right now! Before we went back to the hotel, we went to the temple gift shop where we bought special ojuzus for my brother and me. Overall, I enjoyed the tour of the temple and it made me want to learn more about our own temple at home.

