

History

Hongwanji is the head temple and headquarters of Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha. The official name is Ryukoku-zan Hongwanji, and is commonly referred as Nishi Hongwanji.

The Jodo Shinshu teaching was established by Shinran Shonin (1173-1263) during the middle of Kamakura Period (c. 1185-1333).

Shinran Shonin was born in 1173 at Hino in the southeast of Kyoto, received ordination and entered the priesthood at the age of 9 at Shoren-in Temple. He underwent training and studied at Enryakuji on Mount Hiei for twenty years. At the age of 29, he left the mountain to seek Genku (Honen) Shonin and under his guidance, he came to entrust himself to Amida Tathagata's Primal Vow that pledges to save every living being by guiding them to the Buddha's Pure Land. The working of the Vow is expressed by the Nembutsu, that is, our own recitation of the Buddha's Name "Namo Amida Butsu." This Nembutsu teaching was prohibited by Imperial Edict and he was banished to Echigo at the age of 35. Pardoned in 1211, he and his wife, Eshinni, chose to go to the Kanto region to spread the Nembutsu teaching. In his latter years, he returned to Kyoto to complete his major work, *The True Teaching, Practice, and Realization of the Pure Land Way (Kyōgyōshinshō)*, which elucidates the Nembutsu of Other Power and thereby forms the foundation for the Shin Buddhist Tradition. He passed away on January 16, 1263 at the age of 90.

Kakushinni, Shinran Shonin's daughter, together with his disciples, erected a mausoleum in his memory at Otani, Higashiyama, Kyoto and this became the foundation for the Hongwanji.

The 8th *shushu* (head priest) of Hongwanji, Rennyo Shonin (1415-1499), greatly expanded the circle of propagation. During the era of the 11th *shushu* Kenryo Shonin (1543-1592), the Hongwanji returned to Kyoto and was reestablished at Horikawa Rokujo where it remains today.

On the precincts of Hongwanji are the Amidado (Hall of Amida Buddha), Goeido (Founder's Hall), Karamon, Shoin, Hiunkaku and other structures, many of which have been designated as National Treasures and Important Cultural Properties of Japan. In addition, the Hongwanji received the designation as a UNESCO World Heritage in 1994 as part of the Historic Monuments of Ancient Kyoto.

Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha (Nishi Hongwanji)

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Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha Overseas District Headquarters

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Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii

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英語 · English

Nishi Hongwanji



The Pure Land teaching established by Shinran Shonin (1173-1263) tells us that all are embraced by the power of Amida Buddha's Primal Vow. Entrusting in this Vow enables all to live in the present with confidence and peace of mind and assures them that they will be born in the Pure Land where they will attain Enlightenment.

The purpose of this teaching is to enable all to live lives to the fullest, becoming aware of both potentials and limitations in this world. Through this Teaching, all may be able to overcome difficulties, thus realizing true happiness within this lifetime.

Excerpts from *Jodo Shinshu - A Guide*

The Essentials of Jodo Shinshu—My Path

Name of Teaching: Jodo Shinshu (The True Essence of Pure Land Buddhist Teaching)

Founder: Shinran Shonin
Date of birth: May 21, 1173
Date of death: January 16, 1263

Name of School: Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha

Head Temple: Ryukoku-zan Hongwanji (Nishi Hongwanji)

Object of Reverence: Amida Tathagata (Namo Amida Butsu)

Scriptures:

Sutras:

The Three Pure Land Sutras Delivered by Shakyamuni Buddha

1. *Bussetsu Muryōju Kyō* [The Sutra of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life]
2. *Bussetsu Kammuryōju Kyō* [The Sutra of Contemplation of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life]
3. *Bussetsu Amida Kyō* [The Sutra on Amida Buddha]

Shinran Shonin's writings

1. *Shōshin Nembutsuge* [Hymn of True Entrusting Heart and the Nembutsu], excerpt from the "Chapter on Practice" of *Kyōgyōshinshō*
 2. *Jōdo Wasan* [Hymns of the Pure Land]
 3. *Kōsō Wasan* [Hymns of the Pure Land Masters]
 4. *Shōzōmatsu Wasan* [Hymns of the Dharma-Ages]
- Rennyo Shonin's *Gobunshō Letters*

Teaching:

Attaining the "entrusting heart" – awakening to the compassion of Amida Tathagata (Buddha) through the working of the Primal Vow – we shall walk the path of life reciting Amida's Name (Nembutsu). At the end of life, we will be born in the Pure Land and attain Buddhahood, returning at once to this delusional world to guide people to awakening.

Way of Life:

Guided by the teaching of Shinran Shonin, we shall listen to the compassionate calling of Amida Tathagata and recite the Nembutsu. While always reflecting on ourselves, amidst our feelings of regret and joy, we shall live expressing our gratitude without depending on petitionary prayer and superstition.

Purpose:

The Hongwanji school is a community of people joined together revering the teaching of Shinran Shonin and saying the Nembutsu. We seek to share with others the wisdom and compassion of Amida Tathagata. By doing so, we shall work toward the realization of a society in which everyone is able to live a life of spiritual fulfillment.

April 2008

**Amidado (Hall of Amida Buddha)
Goeido (Founder's Hall)**



The Amidado was constructed in 1760 and the Goeido was completed in 1636. Both of the halls were designated as National Treasures of Japan. The Goeido is one of the largest wooden structures in Japan, and went through great restoration since 1998 to April 1, 2009 when it became open to everyone again after 10 years.

Daily observances

- Morning service: 6:00 a.m.
- *Kikyoshiki* (Confirmation Ceremony): Conducted daily following morning service and again in the afternoon upon request.

Ryukoden

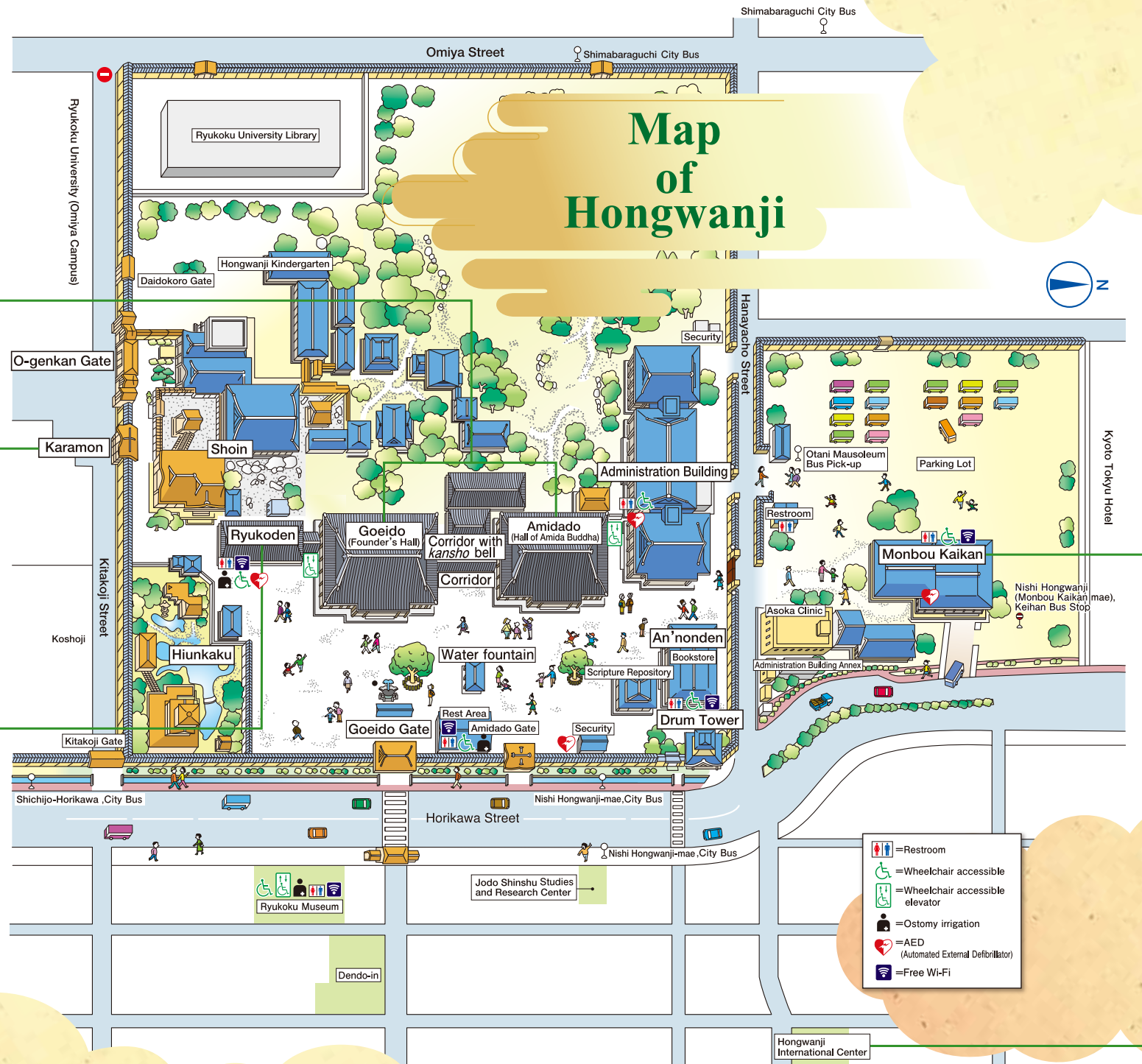


Reception department for memorial services and *Kikyoshiki* (Confirmation Ceremony)

Karamon National Treasure



The entire precinct of Hongwanji were designated a World Cultural Heritage site by UNESCO in 1994.



Monbou Kaikan



- Lodging
- Dharma talk sessions
- Gift shop
- Restaurant

Tel: (075) 342-1122
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English and Portuguese books on Jodo Shinshu are available at the Hongwanji bookstore and Hongwanji International Center.

Hongwanji International Center

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