



Bishop Seytsu Takahashi
1933 - 1982

1932-1941

In 1931 a fresh graduate of Koyasan University became the temple's newest priest. It was appropriate that Bishop Seytsu Takahashi arrived in Los Angeles aboard the same ship that first brought Bishop Aoyama to America; aside from the revered founder of our mission, no one has contributed more to

its establishment and growth. In his 50-year association with Daishi Kyokai (later known as Beikoku Betsuin), Bishop Takahashi oversaw the realization of countless temple achievements and milestones. But to say that he merely "oversaw" them is to miss the essence of his greatness. The words "enthusiasm", "dedication",

and "tireless" come up again and again in the remembrances of those who knew Bishop Takahashi.

The singular monument to his remarkable indefatigability of spirit is, of course, Bishop Takahashi's successful campaign to construct a new temple. Completed in 1940 at a cost of more than \$100,000 – the equivalent over one and a half million dollars in today's money! – the beautiful and impressive structure had been a dream envisioned by Bishop Kitagawa as far back as 1929. While transforming that dream into a reality was the result of years of dedicated, painstaking effort by numerous followers of Shingon Buddhism here and in Japan, Abbot Taiken Kato could not help but single out Bishop Takahashi's extraordinary personal contribution to the great achievement, crediting him in his congratulatory address with "...devot[ing] his body and soul to this project without rest for a number of years."

The effects of Bishop Takahashi's powerful faith radiated outwards, inspiring generations inside and outside the temple to heed the Buddhist injunction to "be the best you can" at whatever you do.

Perhaps nothing captures this infectious quality of Bishop Takahashi's character better than the story of Boy Scout Troop 379. While the founding of the group took place during the stewardship of Bishop Kitagawa, its incredible history of success and worldwide fame was a direct result of Bishop Takahashi's passionate belief in the program's potential to impart the precept of personal excellence. Emulating the enthusiastic, determined spirit of Bishop Takahashi himself, 50% of the troop's members achieved Eagle Scout status during this period – an unprecedented number. The hard work and dedication behind such individual accomplishments was reflected in a legendary string of awards, accolades, and achievements for the troop, including many regional and national awards and honors, an invitation to the Roosevelt White House, and the troop's proud role as an international goodwill ambassador between Japan and the United States.

1933

- Lecture series on the life of Kobo Daishi is conducted at monthly Fujin-Kai meetings.

- Sunday school is revitalized with classes broken down by age groups.

- Monthly Henjo News is published.

- Reverend Seytsu Takahashi succeeds Bishop Taido Kitagawa.



1939

- Groundbreaking ceremony is held at the new location of the Koyasan Beikoku Betsuin in Japanese Town (Little Tokyo).



1940

- Honzon enshrining ceremony and Goma service are conducted by

Vice-Archbishop Jisho Matsubashi from Mount Koya for the dedication of the new temple.

- Koyasan Beikoku Betsuin Constitution is adopted and the Temple becomes a non-profit corporation under State of California law.



1935

- Koyasan Boy Scout Troop 379 attends the Jamboree to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the American Boy Scouts in Washington D.C. and under the auspices of President Franklin Roosevelt.

- Daishi Kyokai is elevated to the status of Koyasan Beikoku Betsuin and authorized by the Mount Koya Headquarters in Japan.

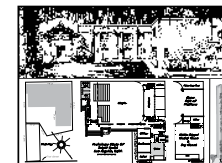
1932-1941

1934

- Memorial service commemorating 1,100th year of Kobo-Daishi's eternal meditation is held.

1936

- Service in celebration of the promotion to Koyasan Beikoku Betsuin is held. Fundraising for the construction of a new Temple is launched.



1941

- Many Temple officers are taken into custody after the declaration of war against Japan. Management of the Temple is changed over to Reverend Ryosho Sogabe and appointed Nisei followers.

1932 1933 1934 1935 1936 1937 1938 1939 1940 1941

CONSTRUCTION OF KOYASAN BEIKOKU BETSUIN 1938 PROPOSAL

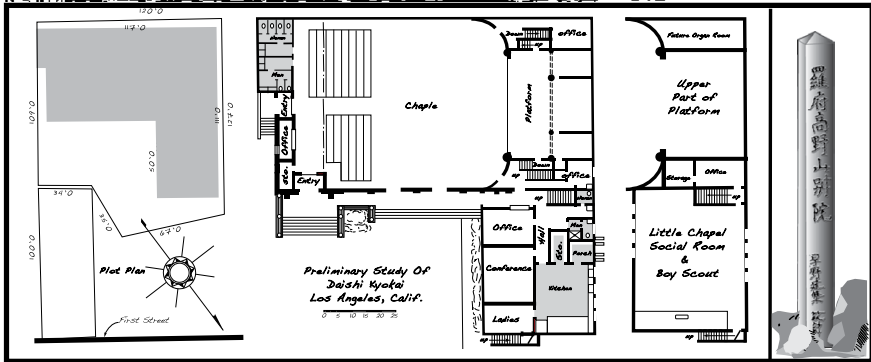
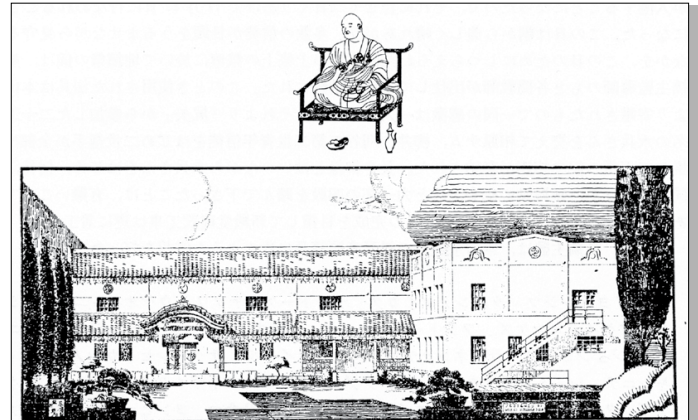


Illustration and Floor Plan of
the Koyasan Buddhist Temple

Donation Solicitation for Construction of New Temple - February 25, 1940



圖之堂殿新院別國米山野高の後成完

謹啓 時下新春の候貴下益々御清榮の段
奉賀候。
陳者今回定期大師信徒總會の決議に基き
貴殿を當別院今年度の役員として御推薦
仕候。今年は愈々各位の御信仰の力に淨
財喜捨に依つて、十數年待望の新殿堂
完成の年にて、恒例の大法會の外に、落慶
入佛大法會も御座候へば、何卒大師奉讃
の誠を表示する爲め、尙貴家の福德圓滿
功德積聚の爲に倍舊の淨業奉仕を願上候
別院新殿堂に一仙の借財も残さずして、
宗祖弘法大師御寶前に献堂致可く御努力
相成り、尙一人たりとも多く法縁を結ば
るゝ可く、貴殿より友人同胞各位に淨財
御寄附の程重ねて御願申上候。

皇紀二千六百年二月十五日

高野山米國別院

Groundbreaking Ceremony Service - November 17, 1939

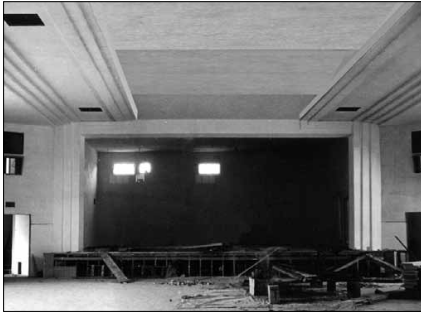


It is believed that these photos are of a groundbreaking service for retail rentals. The purpose of the rentals is to generate continuous income to help cover the expenses of the Temple.



From left, Reverend Shozen Yasui, Reverend Ryosho Sogabe and Bishop Seytsu Takahashi bless a sumo wrestling ring (dohyo) as part of the groundbreaking service. It was a common ritual to have visiting sailors of the Imperial Japanese Navy sumo wrestle before the Buddha as a type of blessing.

Koyasan Under Construction - 1940



Various phases of the construction. Bishop Seytsu Takahashi (lower right) examines the craftsmanship of the soon-to-be main entrance of the Temple.



Marker for Koyasan - 1940

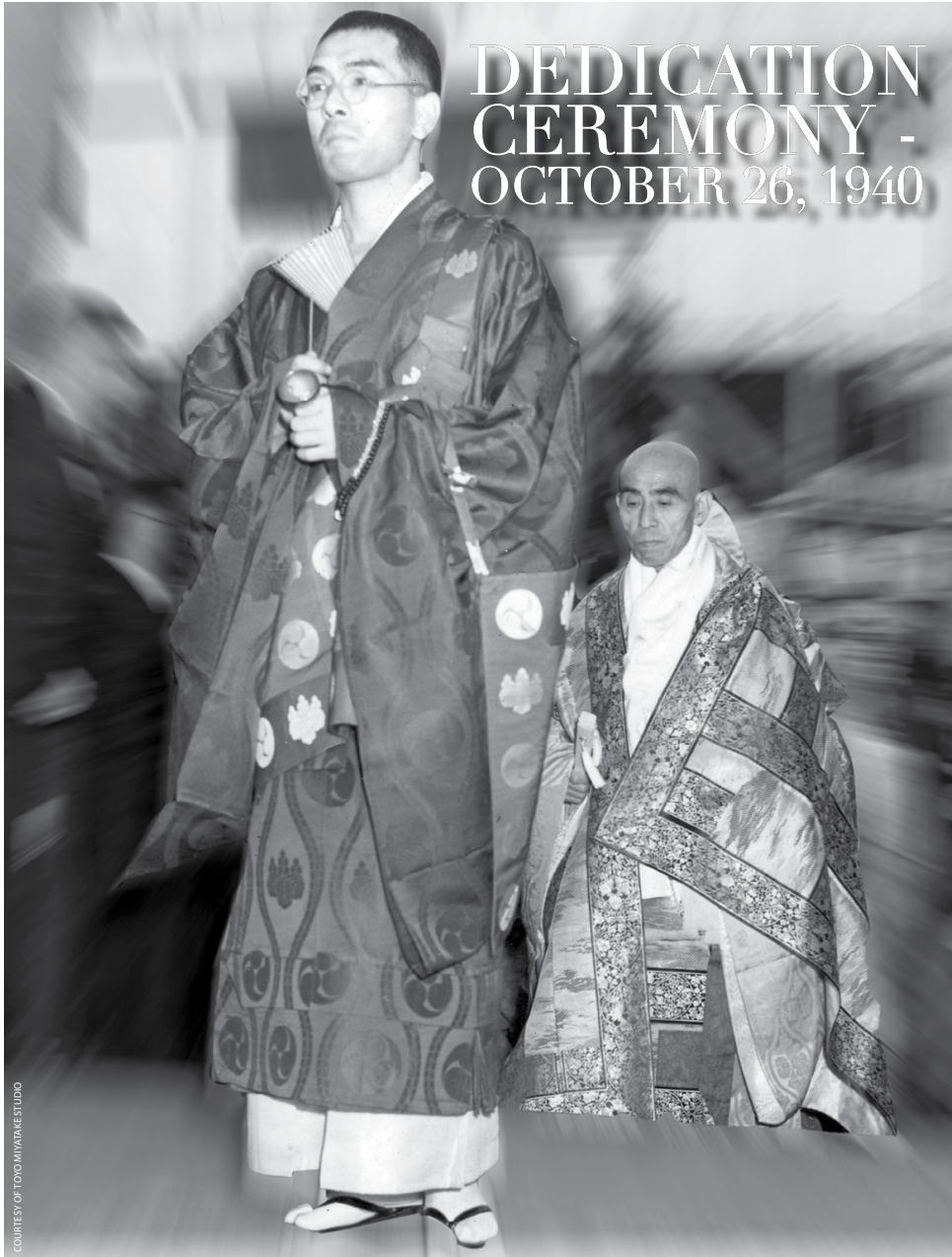
A marker announces the construction site of the new temple to be called Koyasan Beikoku Betsuin.

Construction Completed - August 1940

With the Temple courtyard behind him, Bishop Seytsu Takahashi kneels at the stairs to the entrance of the Temple, resting his hand on an incomplete stone lantern that exists to this day.



DEDICATION CEREMONY - OCTOBER 26, 1940



COURTESY OF TOYO MIYATAKE STUDIO

Dedication Procession - October 26, 1940



COURTESY OF TOYO MIYATAKE STUDIO



COURTESY OF TOYO MIYATAKE STUDIO



COURTESY OF TOYO MIYATAKE STUDIO

Vice-Archbishop Jisho Matsubashi of Koyasan Headquarters and Bishop Seytsu Takahashi lead the procession of officials of the congregation through the streets of Little Tokyo.

Dedication Procession - 1940



COURTESY OF TOYO MIYATAKE STUDIO



COURTESY OF TOYO MIYATAKE STUDIO

Members of the Fujin-kai and other officials of the congregation escort the chigo through First Street.



COURTESY OF TOYO MIYATAKE STUDIO

Vice-Archbishop Jisho Matsubashi approaches the Temple doors.



COURTESY OF TOYO MIYATAKE STUDIO

Leading the procession into the new Temple are Reverend Josen Kawashima and Vice-Archbishop Jisho Matsubashi.

Ministers of the Dedication Service - 1940



COURTESY OF TOYO MIYATAKE STUDIO

From left, Reverend Ryosho Sogabe, Reverend Shozen Yasui, Bishop Seytsu Takahashi, Bishop Chijo Ohira, Vice-Archbishop Jisho Matsubashi, Bishop Shinmyo Hasu, Reverend Josen Kawashima, Reverend Gikan Kimura.

Dedication Service - 1940



COURTESY OF TOYO MIYATAKE STUDIO

Officials of the congregation sit on stage as the dedication service commences.

Opening of Koyasan - October 26, 1940



COURTESY OF TOYO MIYATAKE STUDIO



COURTESY OF TOYO MIYATAKE STUDIO



COURTESY OF TOYO MIYATAKE STUDIO



COURTESY OF TOYO MIYATAKE STUDIO



COURTESY OF TOYO MIYATAKE STUDIO

Evergreen Cemetary Service - 1930's



The congregation, Sunday School students and Troop 379 gather at Evergreen Cemetary in Boyle Heights.

Shomieku - April 1934



Many children dress as chigo to commemorate Shomieku on March 1934. Bishop Seytsu Takahashi stands in the

center. It is the 1,100th Memorial of the passing of Kobo Daishi who entered eternal Samadhi in the year 835.

Little Tokyo Parade for the 1,100th Memorial of Kobo Daishi - April 21, 1934



COURTESY OF TOYO MIYATAKE STUDIO

A parade is held in honor of the 1,100th Memorial of Kobo Daishi entering into eternal meditation (Shomieku). Extending as long as one-hundred yards, the procession includes the Boy Scouts, celestial children (chigo), representatives of the Daishi Kyokai and Bishop Seytsu Takahashi.

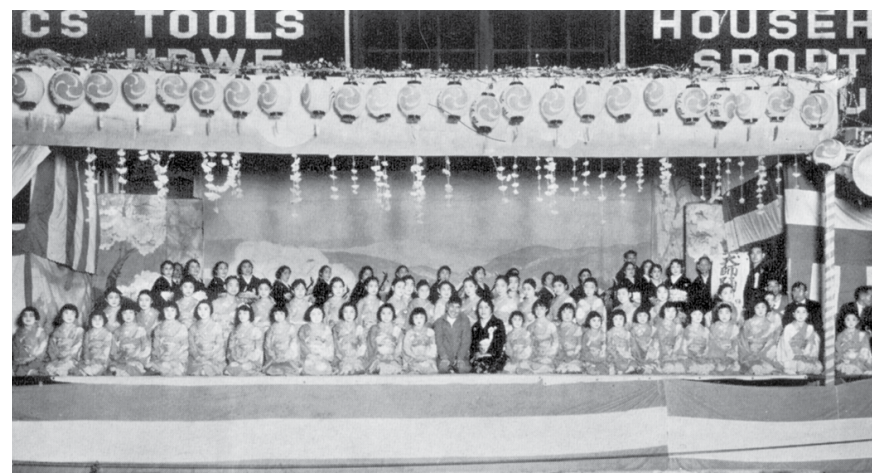
Shomieku - April 1934



COURTESY OF TOYO MIYATAKE STUDIO

The commemoration of the 1,100th Memorial of Kobo Daishi entering into eternal meditation continues on into the night. Members dance on Commercial Street with the Daishi Kyokai structure visible on the right.

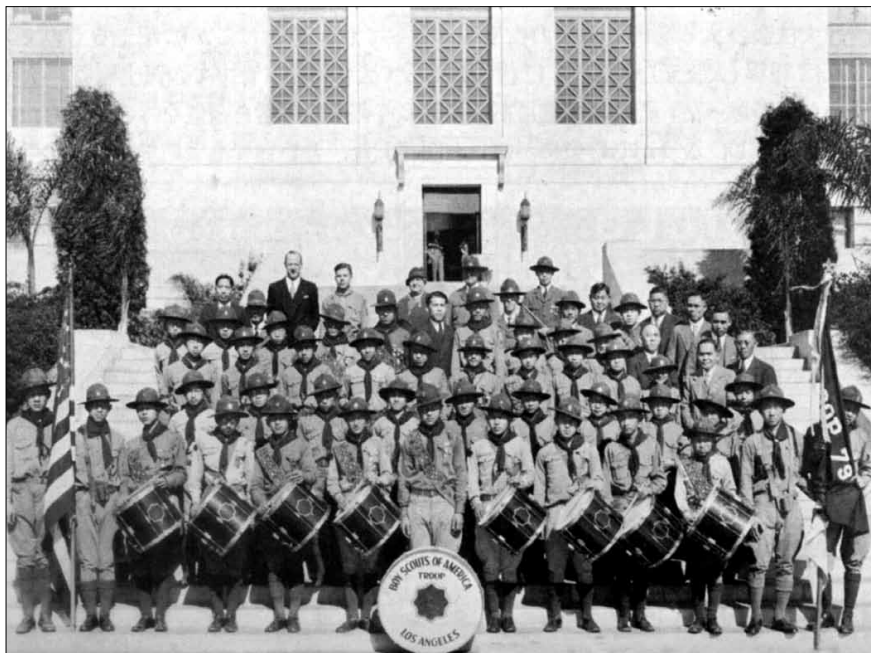
Obon - 1934



COURTESY OF TOYO MIYATAKE STUDIO

Due to the excitement of Shomieku in April still lingering, the Obon Festival in July is also a gala celebration. Japanese actor, Shiro Otsuji (center) participates in the festivities.

Ceremony of President Roosevelt Award and the Second Anniversary of Troop 79 Boy Scouts of America - February 11, 1934



COURTESY OF TOYO MIYATAKE STUDIO

Boy Scout Week 1934 - Troop 79 (later named 379) in front of Los Angeles City Hall, celebrate their second anniversary. The 170-member troop is awarded second place in uniform inspection and wins official commendation from the Boy Scouts of America Headquarters.

Boy Scout Troop 379 - 1937



Troop 379 in front of the Daishi Kyokai on Central Avenue. Top row (L to R): Yoneo Narumi, Hisao Hata, Henry Handa, Asaichi Hieshima. Second row (L to R): Ronnie Sugiyama, Toshio Tosaya, Shigeo Inamura, Takashi Yamada, George Ishihara, Soichi Fukui. Third row (L to R): George Narumi, Fred Narumi, K ei Murakami, Frank Matsuura, Kaname Kawamura, Kiichi Kazahaya. Bottom row: Scout Master Susumu Igauye and Troop Committeeman Jutaro Narumi.

Hoshimatsuri - 1940



COURTESY OF TOYO MIYATAKE STUDIO

Top row (L to R): Reverend Ryosho Sogabe, Bishop Seytsu Takahashi, Reverend Shozen Yasui. Bottom row (L to R): Bando Miharu (Japanese dance troop instructor), Yaemon Minami (rice grower), Fujima Kansuma (Japanese dance troop instructor).

Third Year Memorial and Commemorative Service of New Tombstone for Bishop Aoyama - March 24, 1936



On March 24, 1936, at Okuno-in, Mount Koya, Bishop Seytsu Takahashi (seated second from the left) attends the third year memorial service for Bishop Aoyama, which is also a service for his newly erected tombstone. Other high ranking priests, including Bishop Shinko Fujimoto, sitting to the left of Bishop Takahashi, participate in the service.

Sunday School - 1935



COURTESY OF TOYO MIYATAKE STUDIO

Sunday School students in front of the Daishi Kyokai on Central Avenue in 1935. Formed in 1933, the Sunday School program flourishes under the guidance of Bishop Seytsu Takahashi.

Sunday School - Spring 1940



The children and teenagers of Sunday School gather on the front steps of the Daishi Kyokai on Central Avenue.



The Sunday School students hold a fundraiser, selling snow cones, candy and soda.

Daishi Kyokai Junior YWBA - September 1, 1938

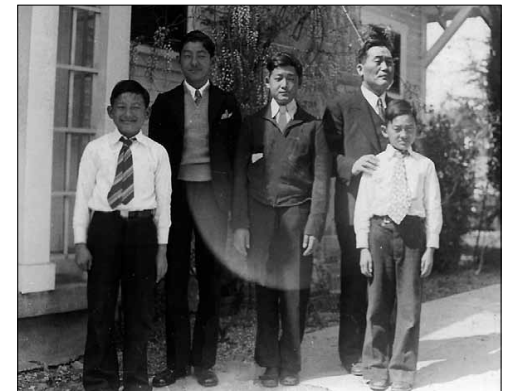


COURTESY OF TOYO MIYATAKE STUDIO

Members of the Daishi Kyokai Jr. YWBA (Young Women's Buddhist Association) – Top row (L to R): Yoko Magara, Chiyoko Fujinaka, Miyoko Yoshimura, Yoshiye Mitsumata, Suzuko Tamura, Alice Nakane, Teruko Kiyomura. Bottom row (L to R): Tomiko Inouye, Mary Wada, Michiko Kuriki, Bishop Seytsu Takahashi, Sachiko Hori, Kazuye Morishita, Minnie Oyama.

379's First Family: The Narumi Family - 1930's

From left, Tatsuo Frederick, Shigekazu August, Yoneo Junior, father Jutaro, and Michio George.



Koyasan Seinen-kai and Shojo-kai - 1941



COURTESY OF TOYO MIYAKE STUDIO

The Seinen-kai (Young Men's Group), mainly comprised of Kibei-Nisei males and the Shojo-kai (Young Girl's Group),

comprised of Nisei females, is believed to be the predecessor of the Young Buddhist Association.



Visit to Imperial Army Hospital in Nagoya, Japan - 1938



Sachiko Furusawa and the Fujin-kai - 1938

Above: Sachiko Furusawa (far right) leads female members of Koyasan, Miss Kiyomura, Miss Kuriki, and Mrs. Murase, to visit the Imperial army in Japan and China. The visit to Japanese-occupied China is the very first visit ever made by a women's group.

Left: Seen here as a young lady, Sachiko Furusawa is given the nickname, "Auntie of the Imperial Navy (Kaigun no obasan)" in her later years.



Top: From left, Mrs. Murase, Mrs. Furusawa, Miss Kuriki and Miss Kiyomura stand in front of the temporary military hospital in Nagoya. Above: The four ladies from the Temple give support to injured and sick soldiers of the Imperial Army at the hospital.

Welcoming Party for Admiral Osumi, Port of Los Angeles - 1939



Members including the Fujin-kai of the Temple gather at the Port of Los Angeles to greet Admiral Mineo Osumi. Pictured here is Bishop Seytsu Takahashi and Sachiko Furusawa who is holding the Imperial flag of Japan.

Koyasan Trip - April 7, 1933



Tour group in front of the Koyasan Headquarters, Wakayama prefecture. Tomokichi Wada (front row fourth from the right) serves as the tour group leader. Jack Wada stands to the left of his father. Tomokichi Wada was Temple President from 1959 - 1960.

Reverend Sogabe's Wedding - 1941



Reverend Ryosho Sogabe marries Shikako Uyeda in 1941 with Bishop Seytsu Takahashi officiating the ceremony.

First Wedding at Koyasan Buddhist Temple - 1941



In 1941, Kiyomi and Tsuyoshi Akazawa are the first couple to be married after the completion of the temple construction.