

Report on the 21st Anniversary of the establishment of Hokkeji Temple

The 17th of February, 2019 marked the 21st establishment of Senmyozan Hokkeji Temple. In attendance were 613 members which comprised of: Ghana- 424, Togo- 151 and La Cote D'Ivoire- 36. The ceremony was in two parts; the main ceremony (Lectures and Ceremonial Gongyo) and cultural performances. Registration of arriving members took place at the forecourt of the temple. At exactly 8:50am all members were seated in the main hall and at exactly 9:00am together with the Chief Priest of Hokkeji Temple, Reverend Shindo Imafuku and Assistant Priest, Reverend Jozen Suenaga, we chanted one hour Diamoku. This was followed by ceremonial gongyo led by the Chief Priest.

After Gongyo, there was 8 Gojukai and 1 Gohonzon ~~1~~ acceptance ~~(no of gojukai and gohonzen acceptance?)~~. This was immediately followed by the first part of the ceremony. The introduction of the two emcees for the day; Ms. Efua Anim-Biney for English and Ms. Grace Attingnon de Souza for French translation. They gave a welcome and opening remarks and immediately followed with the acknowledgment of members from various districts. The emcees took members through the program for the day.

The program begun with the Chief Priest's 21st anniversary lecture on the establishment of the Senmyozan Hokkeji Temple, and this was translated into Twi and French by Mr. Kofi Addo Nakawa and ~~French translation by~~ Mr. Ayena Messan respectively. The lecture started with Rev. Imafuku offering his heartfelt gratitude to all Hokkeko members for participating in the anniversary. His lecture was based on a Japanese immunologist, Mr. Tasuku Honjo who was a co-winner of the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 2018. According to the Nobel organization, the prize motivation is for the discovery of cancer therapy by inhibition of negative immune regulation. This noble prize winner, Mr. Tasuko Honjo, said during his college days, the six C's – **curiosity, courage, challenge, confidence, concentration** and **continuation** were his driving force in research that led to the development of drugs that opened up new cancer treatments and according to chief priest, his attitude towards his research apply to our faith and practice.

Furthermore, he went on to explain each of the 6C's in relation to our Buddhist practice and faith. He ended his lecture by encouraging us to check these six (6) points and faithfully follow the basic practice. The basic practice he meant was, doing our daily morning and evening Gongyo, Shodai and doing lots of Shakubuku. In his concluding remarks, he urged members to do lots of Diamoku and Shakubuku with the spirit of itai doshin so that we can strongly advance towards African Kosen-rufu and achieve our Shakubuku target in 2019 by Oeshiki ceremony.

After chief priest's lecture, we had a message from the koto, Dr. Kwame Odame Boamah who expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the 68th High Priest for granting us the Hokkeji Temple and also went on to further express his appreciation to the Chief Priest and Assistant Priest for helping to propagate Buddhism in Africa. The focus of Koto's message was based on the

guidance given by the Honourable Retired Priest, Nikken Shonin during the opening of the Hokkeji Temple, 21 years ago which he related it to the celebration of the auspicious occasion of the 800th anniversary of the advent of our founder, Nichiren Daishonin in 2021 and the 25th anniversary of Hokkeji Temple in 2023.

Immediately after this, there were some songs by the “Lotus flowers of Ghana” and “Voice of Bodhisattvas from Togo” which brought the first part of the program to a close. A fifteen minutes’ break followed to prepare for the second part which was, the cultural performances.

The culture performance started in the afternoon with various districts performing, namely: Hokkeji, Accra-North, Accra-East, Accra-West, Kasoa, Accra-South, Legon, Tema North and South, Kumasi, Takoradi, Tarkwa, Sunyani, South Volta, Togo and La Cote D’Ivoire. All the districts performed with enthusiasm and passion and displayed the Buddhist spirit of itai doshin.

This was followed by vote of thanks and closing remarks by Mr. Kwame-Gazo Agbenyadzie. The meeting came to a close with evening Gongyo.