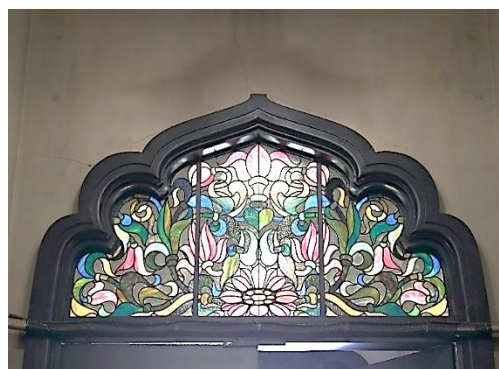


# Welcome to Tsukiji Hongwanji Buddhist Temple

Tsukiji Hongwanji Temple is located in the middle of Tokyo.  
It is near the Ginza shopping area, and next to the Tsukiji fish market.



## ◆ History of Tsukiji Hongwanji

Tsukiji Hongwanji is a temple of the Jodo Shinshu Buddhist tradition which was established by a priest called Shinran in the 13th century. The original temple was built in 1617 in Asakusa and was known as the *Asakusa Gobo*. It was destroyed by fire in 1657 and a new temple was rebuilt at the present site. At that time, however, Tsukiji was still a part of the sea. A group of people, many of whom were Jodo Shinshu followers, worked to reclaim the land, and a new temple was built and completed on it in 1679 facing southwest, in the direction of the present Tsukiji Market.

The temple was again destroyed during the Great Kanto Earthquake in 1923. A famous architect Ito Chuta, designed the present Tsukiji Hongwanji, rearranging the direction of the new temple by 90 degrees to face northwest, in the direction of Ginza. In 2014, many of the temple structures: main hall, gates (central, north and south), and stone walls were designated as Important Cultural Assets by the Japanese government. The temple name, "Tsukiji" consists of two Chinese characters: 築 (*tsuki*) and 地 (*ji*), which mean "build" and "land" respectively. Since being land reclaimed from the sea, the name "Tsukiji" was given.

## ◆ Unique Architecture

The appearance of the temple is influenced by ancient Indian and Asian Buddhist architecture and was designed by architect Ito Chuta. Ito was known for his liking of peculiar and bizarre creatures. Reflecting his taste, the stairway contains many sculptures of animals, such as winged lions, oxen, horses, elephants, peacocks, monkeys, phoenixes and an imaginary creature called "grotesque". Some pillars in the Main Hall are also decorated with the four Chinese legendary animals: Blue Dragon, Red Peacock, White Tiger and Black Tortoise.

The roundish roof of the temple is designed in the form of a Bodhi tree leaf and has an embossed carving of a lotus flower in its center. A huge pipe organ and stained-glass windows above the exit are other unique features of the temple.

## ◆ Pipe organ concert (Free Admission/Prior registration required)

A pipe organ concert is conducted in the temple hall on the last Thursday of every month from 6:10pm. Preceding the concert is a short 10-minute Japanese Dharma talk. Classical music and Buddhist hymns are played by professional organists. You can also watch it live via Tsukiji Hongwanji's official Japanese YouTube channel:

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1XCodrEKT1QzJ\\_hYf5DKaQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1XCodrEKT1QzJ_hYf5DKaQ)



## ◆ Activities calendar

### **Ho-onko - Memorial of Shinran Shonin Nov 11 to 16** (Livestream with English subtitles – Please scan the QR code on the right)



January 16 marks the memorial day of Shinran Shonin, the founder of Shin Buddhism. Tsukiji Hongwanji holds its *Ho-onko* services in November in order to avoid overlapping with the *Ho-onko* services held at the Hongwanji, the head temple of the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha denomination in Kyoto from January 9 to 16. The *Ho-onko* services are the most important services conducted in Shin Buddhism and memorializes the virtues of Shinran Shonin. The impressive event includes Buddhist chants and *gagaku* music performances conducted by large numbers of people.

※ Please note that there may be changes in schedule due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



### **Joya-e & Gantan-e - New Year's Eve and New Year's Services Dec 31 and Jan 1**

A New Year's Eve Service called *Joya-e* is held in the main worship hall to let us reflect on the passing year. Visitors may enter Tsukiji Hongwanji's bell tower, normally closed to the general public, and ring the traditional New Year's Eve bell. Additional events include a countdown, pipe organ and traditional *gagaku* music performances conducted in the main worship hall, comedic performances conducted by priests, and the handing out of free cups of *amazake* (sweet low-alcohol sake).

On New Year's Day, a service called *Gantan-e* is held in the Hondo to welcome in the new year. *Mikan* oranges and large pounded *mochi* rice cakes, called *kagami mochi*, are offered to Amida Buddha. Many people come to Tsukiji Hongwanji to make their first temple visit of the year and form a line to make an offering at the incense burner.



※ Please note that there may be changes in schedule due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Seijin-shiki – Coming of Age ceremony 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of January**

In Japan, it is customary to celebrate being deemed an adult at the age of 20. During the ceremony, those who have turned or will turn 20 between April 1 of the previous year and March 31 of the current year stand in front of Amida Buddha to give thanks for the growth and development they have made, and to make a renewed vow to treasure their lives moving forward.

※ Please note that there may be changes in schedule due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



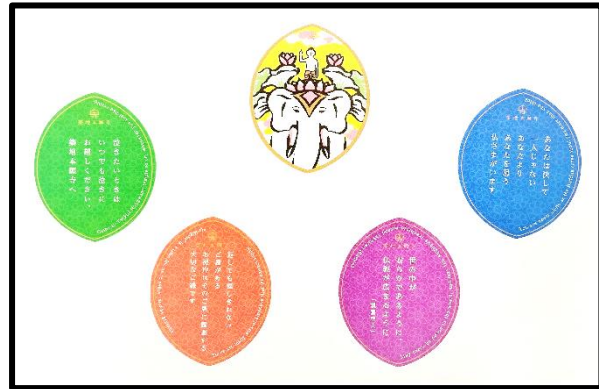
Please note that services and events may be cancelled or postponed due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Please check the website (<https://tsukijihongwanji.jp/>) for updates.



## ◆ Tsukiji Hongwanji souvenir card

Every month, Tsukiji Hongwanji prepares a free commemorative card as a souvenir for visitors to bring back. The card is called a *keha*, which is in the shape of a lotus petal and is used during Buddhist ceremonies. Printed on the card are Buddhist verses or drawings, with explanations provided in both Japanese and English.

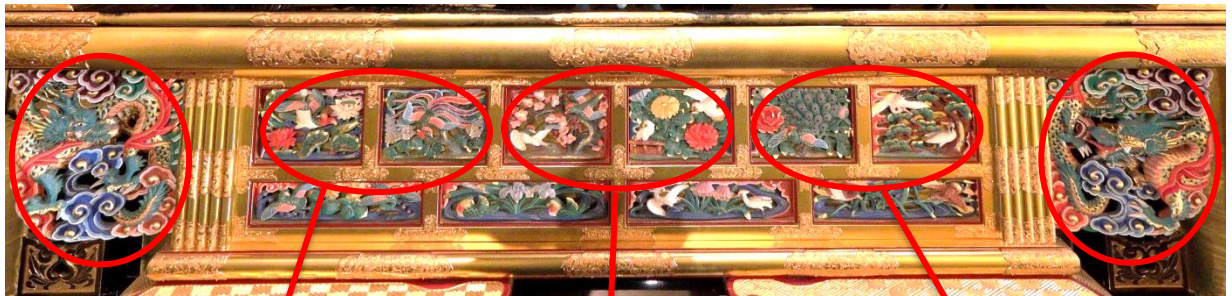
Please feel free to take one back when you visit the temple. A special souvenir is given to those who collect twelve different designs.



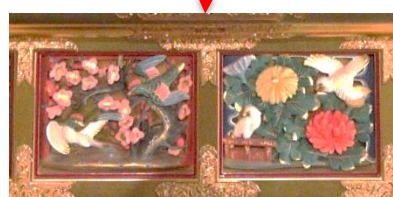
## ◆ Carvings on the altar table

Continued from our previous issue, we would like to introduce a brief significance behind the various types of adornments used in the Main Hall at Tsukiji Hongwanji Buddhist Temple. In this issue, we will introduce the carvings found on the altar table, which has six birds at the front and a pair of dragons on both sides. The six birds (from right) are swans, a peacock, parrots, a heron, a *kalavinka* and a two-headed bird. The *kalavinka* and two-headed bird known as “*gumyocho* 共命鳥” are found in Indian and Buddhist mythology, while the dragons are found in East Asian mythology.

These six birds are described in the “Amida Sutra” as helping to spread the teachings of the Buddha in the Pure Land.



Left: Two-headed bird “gumyocho”  
Right: *Kalavinka*



Left: Heron  
Right: Parrots



Left: Peacock  
Right: Swans

There is a famous story about the two-headed bird – a bird with one body and two heads. It is said that when one head sleeps, the other would be awake. One day, a delicious fruit fell near the head that was awake, and not wanting to disturb the sleeping head, ate the fruit. The sleeping head that woke up later found out about this, got angry and jealous and decided to eat a poisonous fruit to teach the other head a lesson. However, forgetting that they shared the same body, both heads died. This teaches us about the Buddhist teachings of interconnectedness and interdependence, and to be aware of our self-centredness which could lead to self-destruction.



A pair of dragons flank both sides of the altar table, the one on the left has its mouth closed, and the one on the right has its mouth open. Dragons are considered as protective deities in Buddhism, and as people in East Asia believed dragons lived in the sea and controlled rain, they represent water and are supposed to protect the temple from fires.

## ◆ English Dharma Service (Admission is free)



A monthly service consisting of sutra chanting, singing of Buddhist *gathas* (hymns) and a Dharma talk in English is conducted on the last Saturday of every month in the *Kodo* Hall. It is open to the public and anyone is welcome to join. The service starts at 5:30pm. After the service, a fellowship is held where participants can talk and know each other or ask the speaker questions over tea and snacks.

In May and November, there are special services: *Gotan-e* (Founder Shinran's birthday celebration) and *Ho-onko* (Annual memorial for Shinran). Meals are provided on both occasions. Website: <https://tsukijihongwanji.jp/lecture/saturday-english-service>

## ◆ Service Schedule (October 2021 ~ March 2022)

Date	Speaker	Topic
<b>2021</b>		
30 Oct	<b>Rev. NANJO Ryoei</b> Resident Minister, Hojyuji Temple, Tokyo	The Compassionate Heart of Amida Buddha
27 Nov (Ho-onko Service)	<b>Rev. Dr. Kenneth TANAKA</b> Prof. Emeritus, Musashino University, Tokyo	Shinjin is the "Satori" or Awakening in Shin Buddhism: How does it Work for us Ordinary People?
18 Dec	<b>Rev. HASEO Daien</b> Resident Minister, Tozenji Temple, Kanagawa	What is Jodo Shinshu? - In comparison with Christianity
<b>2022</b>		
29 Jan	<b>Rev. OGI Shojun</b> Resident Minister, Choshoji Temple, Yamaguchi	The Nembutsu: My ONLY Hope for Liberation
26 Feb	<b>Rev. Bettina LAGNER-TERAMOTO</b> Bomori, Gokurakuji Temple, Osaka	The German perspective on Jodo Shinshu – Nembutsu in Daily Life
26 Mar	<b>Rev. ISHIDA Hoyu</b> Prof. Emeritus, University of Shiga Prefecture	Encountering what is transient and what is unsurpassed

Please note that physical services may be cancelled or postponed due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. In-lieu, online streaming of the Dharma talk is available at the website (<https://tsukijihongwanji.jp/lecture/saturday-english-service>). Please check the website for updates.

## ◆ Other information

### Visiting hours

**Main Hall** – 6:00 to 4:00pm (the doors will be closed after the end of the evening service)

**Temple Grounds** – 6:00am to 9:00pm

**Address** 3-15-1 Tsukiji, Chuo-ku, 104-8435 Tokyo JAPAN

**Official Website** <https://tsukijihongwanji.jp/>

**English Website** <https://tsukijihongwanji.jp/global/guide>

**English YouTube Channel** <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCVBY1rzHwzjnpCR-0lGdYnA>



### Contact Us

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