

November 2022

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 Friday of every month from 12:00pm with a Dharma talk given preceding the concert. Classical pieces 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



◆ 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 Nishi 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.



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.



Seijin-shiki – Coming of Age ceremony Jan 22

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 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.



◆ Offerings during "Ho-onko"

In Jodo Shin Buddhism, we often make offerings to Amida Buddha to show our gratitude and respect. The most gorgeous offerings are made at the Head Temple Nishi Hongwanji Temple during the "Ho-onko" service, which is a service to commemorate the Founder Shinran Shonin who passed on the teachings of Amida Buddha, and to express the joy of encountering the teachings.

There are various offerings for "Ho-onko" like "mochi" rice-cakes, fruits and confections stacked upon each other. The diameter is about 20 cm, and the height can be as high as 80 cm including the dais on which the offerings are placed. The largest offering is the "senju-manju" which are buns stacked upon each other that can be as high as 1.5 meters, which is about a size of a person.

Offerings are made at Nishi Hongwan-ji and other Jodo Shinshu temples, not only for the "Ho-onko" service, but also for other services. In addition to the rice-cakes and fruits that are often seen, sometimes kelp, gingko, and dried gourd shavings called "kanpyo" are also used.

When visiting a temple, you may discover various new things by not only paying attention to the chants and etiquette, but also by looking at the offerings.



◆ 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 (November 2022 ~ March 2023)

Date	Speaker	Topic
2022		
26 Nov (Ho-onko Service)	Rev. Dr. Kenneth TANAKA Prof. Emeritus, Musashino University, Tokyo	The Larger Sutra Teaching of 'Desiring Less and Being Satisfied with What I Already Have': Its Message for the Personal and the Social
18 Dec	Rev. HASEO Daien Resident Minister, Tozenji Temple, Kanagawa	<i>Shoshinge</i> - the essence of Shin Buddhism
2023		
28 Jan	Rev. KUMAHARA Kana Minister, Shozenji Temple, Saitama	Being raised by the Buddha's teachings
25 Feb	Rev. Victoria YOSHIMURA Bomori & Minister, Shonenji Temple, Miyazaki	An Open Heart and an Open Mind: Living, loving, and learning with Jodo Shinshu
25 Mar	Rev. NANJO Ryoei Resident Minister, Hojuji Temple, Tokyo	The Life of Shinran Shonin

Online live 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 4:30pm (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-0IGdYnA>



Contact Us

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