COMMEMORATION OF

50th ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

OXNARD BUDDHIST CHURCH

Buddha — Dharma — Sangha; Past — Present — Future

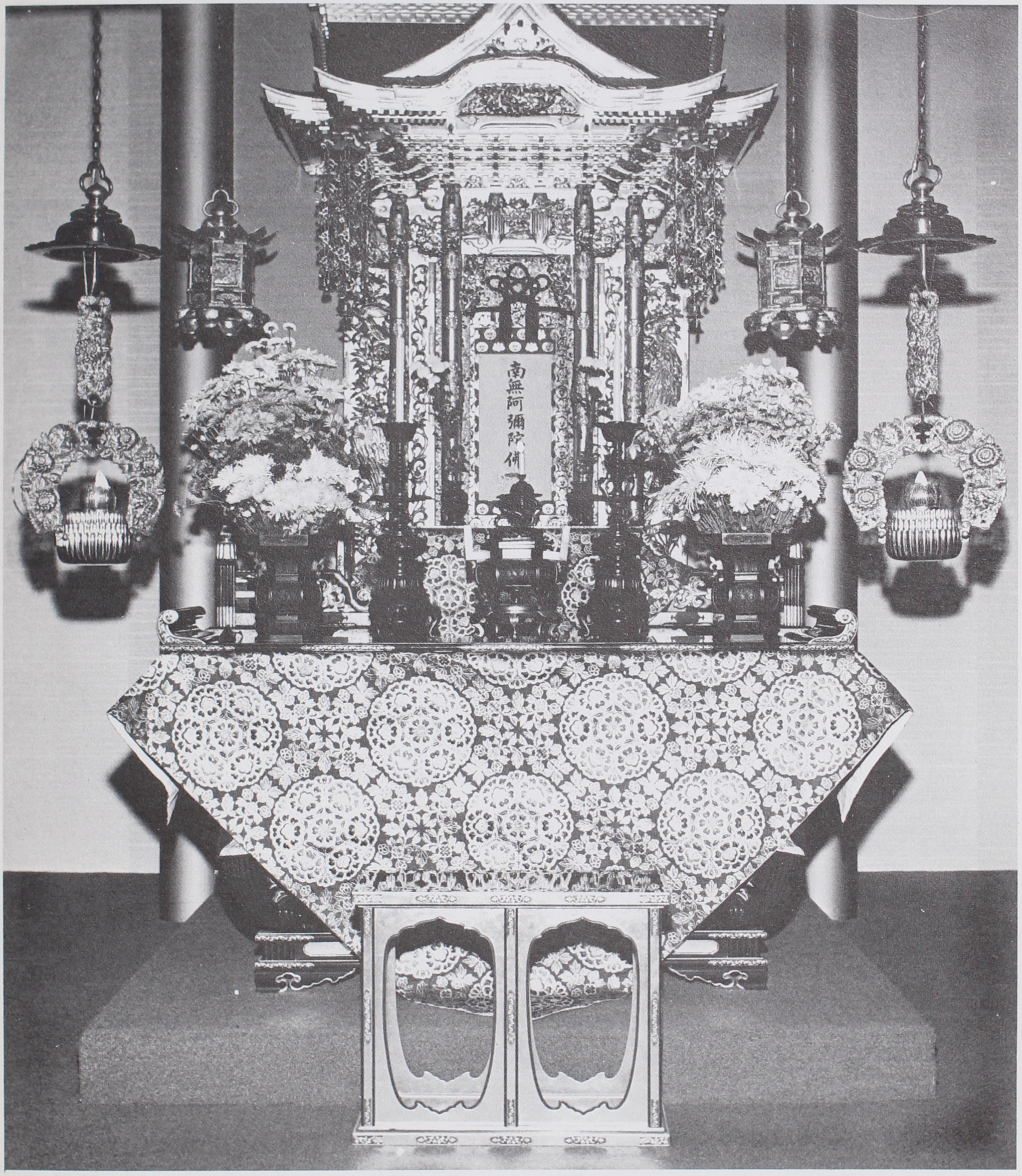
1929-1979

NOVEMBER 17, 1979

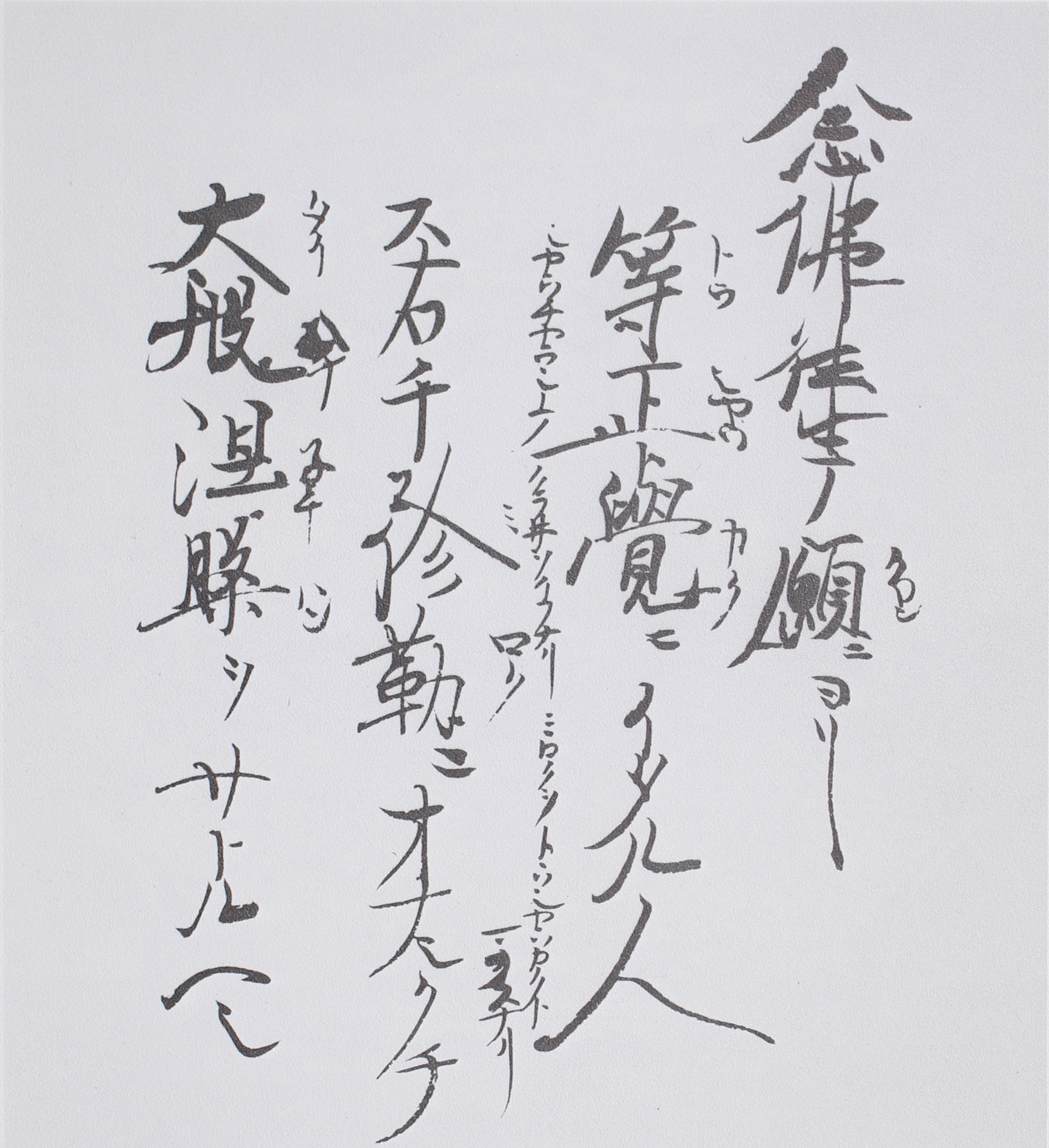
GRATEFULLY DEDICATED

To our pioneer Buddhists for their unwaivering Faith in the Nembutsu.

To our Ministers, past and present, for their guidance and devotion to lead us on the path of Nembutsu.



The Main Shrine of Our Temple.



COMPOSITION AND CALLIGRAPHY BY SHINRAN SHONIN

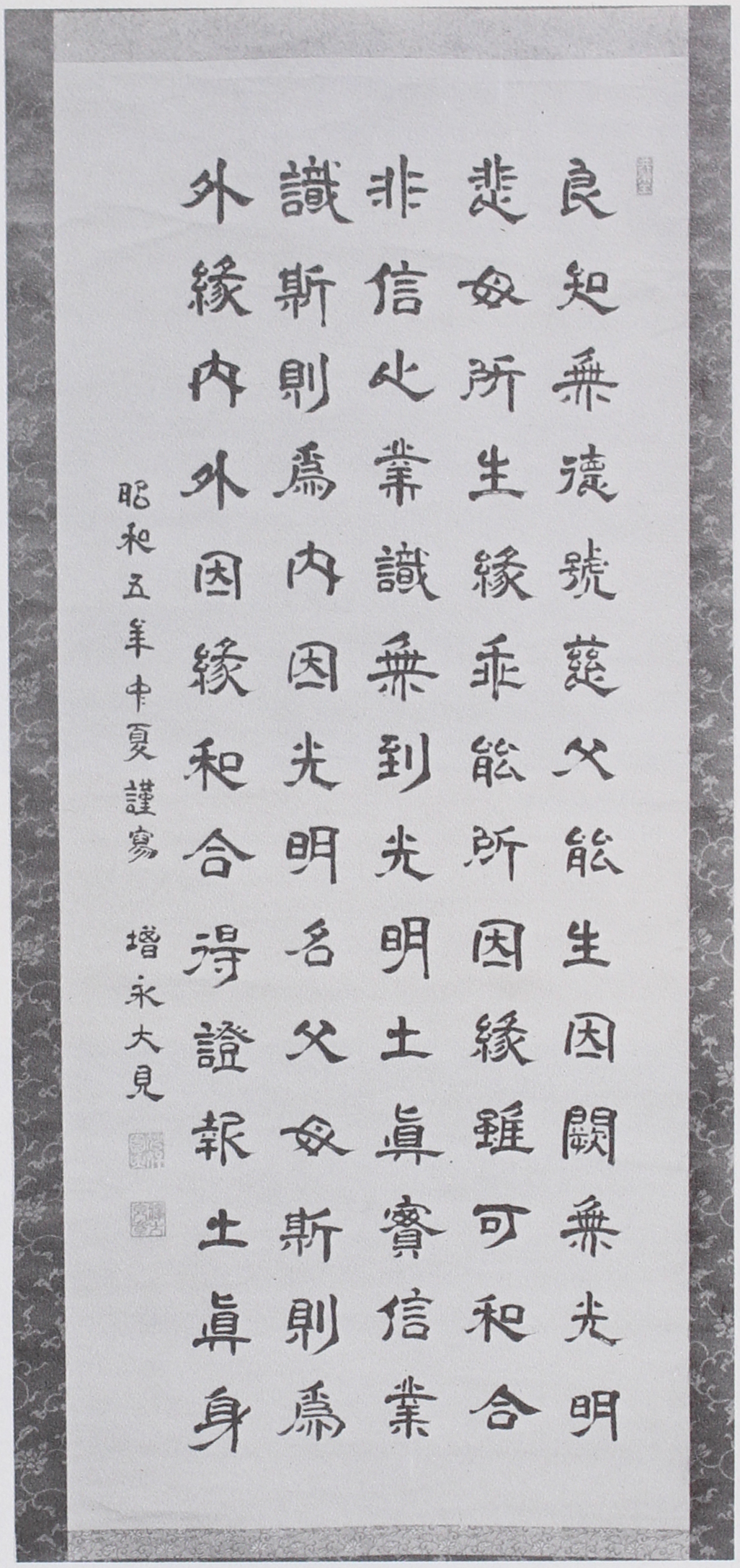
"One who gains the Right Established State
Through the Amida's Eighteenth Vow,
He, alike Maitreya, will attain
Mahaparinirvana, the Full Enlightenment."

Translation by REV. MASAMI FUJITANI

Here in Oxnard,
the Wheel of Dharma has been
in motion since 1929.

Our House of Dharma
1929—1966

THE LATE REV. TAIKEN MASUNAGA



An excerpt from Book 2 of Shinran Shonin's Kyogyoshinsho "a collection of the lines that show the true practice of the Pure Land School."

Calligraphy by the Late Rev. Taiken Masunaga in summer, 1930.

Translation by Ryukoku Translation Series Kyogyoshinsho.

"I truly know that without the merciful father of the virtuous Name, there would be no cause for Birth, and without the compassionate mother of Light, there would be no condition for Birth. Even if the cause and the condition are united, without the karma-consciousness of Faith, there would be no reaching the Land of Light.

The karma-consciousness of the True Faith is the internal cause, and the father of Name and the mother of Light are the external conditions. When the internal and external cause and conditions are united, one realizes the True Body of the Recompensed Land."

DEDICATION CEREMONY
MAY 11, 1930

10th ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION AND CHIGO PARADE
NOVEMBER 19, 1939

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

BUDDHIST CHURCHES OF AMERICA
FOUNDED 1899

GREETINGS

Sincerest Congratulations on the happy occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the founding of your Sangha!

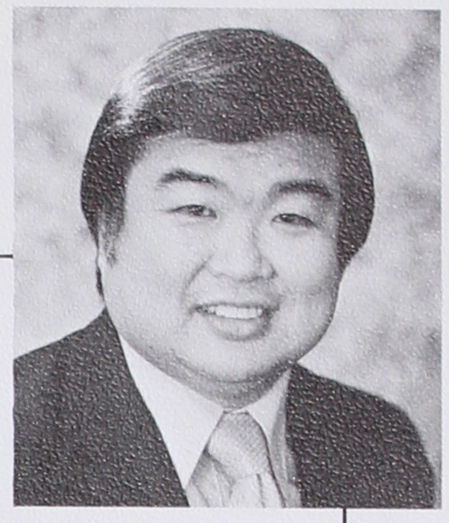
Reflecting on the fifty years of your illustrious history, we cannot help but express our "gassho" of gratitude, especially to the ministers and pioneers who sowed the seeds of Nembutsu in your area. May this "Kansha" - gratitude - to Amida Buddha and to the founders always be the spiritual force in your lives as you strive for Enlightenment not only for the betterment of your church but also for the community at large.

With very best wishes for another half a century of progress,

Gassho,

Kenryu T. Tsuji
Bishop

November 17, 1979



CITY OF OXNARD
CALIFORNIA

November 17, 1979

OFFICE OF THE
MAYOR
305 WEST THIRD STREET
PHONE 486-2601, EXT. 201

Oxnard Buddhist Church
250 South H Street
Oxnard, California 93030

Dear Friends of Dharma:

As Mayor of the City of Oxnard, it is with great pleasure that I officially congratulate the Oxnard Buddhist Temple upon the occasion of its 50th Anniversary. The Oxnard Buddhist Temple has been an integral part of the progressive growth and development of our community. During these past 50 years, the Sangha has made an invaluable contribution to Oxnard by providing spiritual guidance to its members, and enrichment to the many local residents who have participated in its various cultural and social programs.

The Oxnard Buddhist Temple has a very special significance to our family not only because my grandfather Sanzo Tagami is listed as a founding charter member and my mother Hanako Kato's signature appears on the original incorporation papers or that my father Kenji Kato served several terms as President of the Board, but the former church on 234 East Sixth Street was also our home for over eight years. I have very fond memories of those times and the many people that were brought together. I especially remember Reverend Taiken Masunaga and his weekly Sunday School sermons and the help of his daughter Kazuko now the wife of Reverend Kiyoto Nagatani who played piano for every Sunday School service and social event at the church. We in Oxnard will always be indebted to the contributions of the Masunaga family.

Oxnard is a multi-cultural community with great variation in the heritage, customs and philosophical beliefs of its residents. This diversity can be the source of tremendous strength as we confront the complex issues of a growing community. By embracing Buddhism, deep respect for individual responsibility, its commitment to an enlightened life and its positive outlook for the future, we can achieve our common goal of creating an environment in Oxnard which facilitates a productive and harmonious existence for all residents.

Please accept my very best of wishes, both as Mayor and as a past President, for a most successful 50th Anniversary Commemoration and Special Memorial Service.

Gassho,

Tsujio Kato DDS

Dr. Tsujio Kato
Mayor

KATSUKI HASHIMOTO

JINSUKE KANAMORI

SANZO TAGAMI

BUHEI YETO

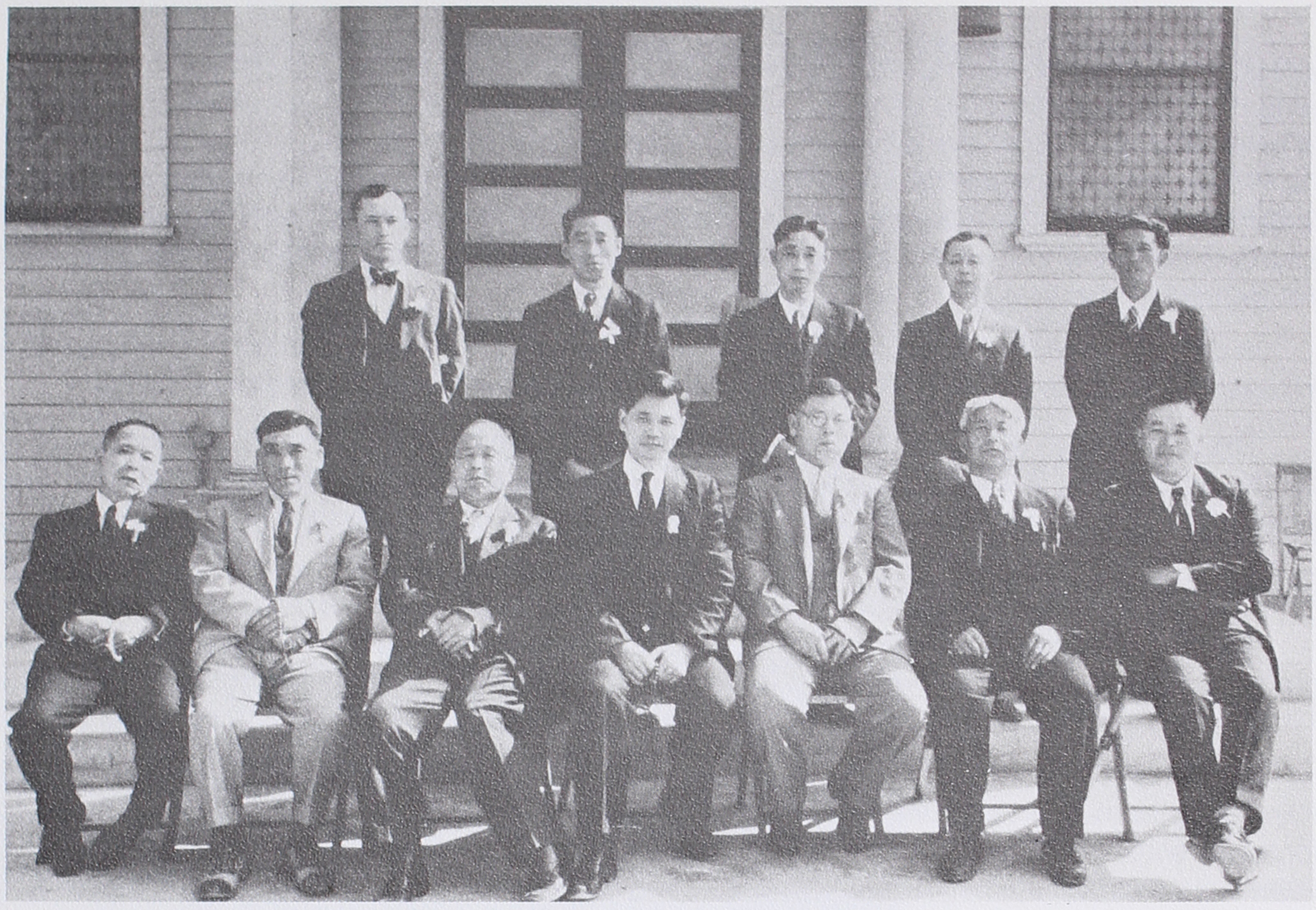
Four Buddhists instrumental in coordinating the fifteen charter member families to establish the Oxnard Buddhist Church in 1929.

OUR ADVISORS

Mr. & Mrs. Heijiro Tanaka, Mrs. Masano Moriwaki, & Mr. Tomio Yeto

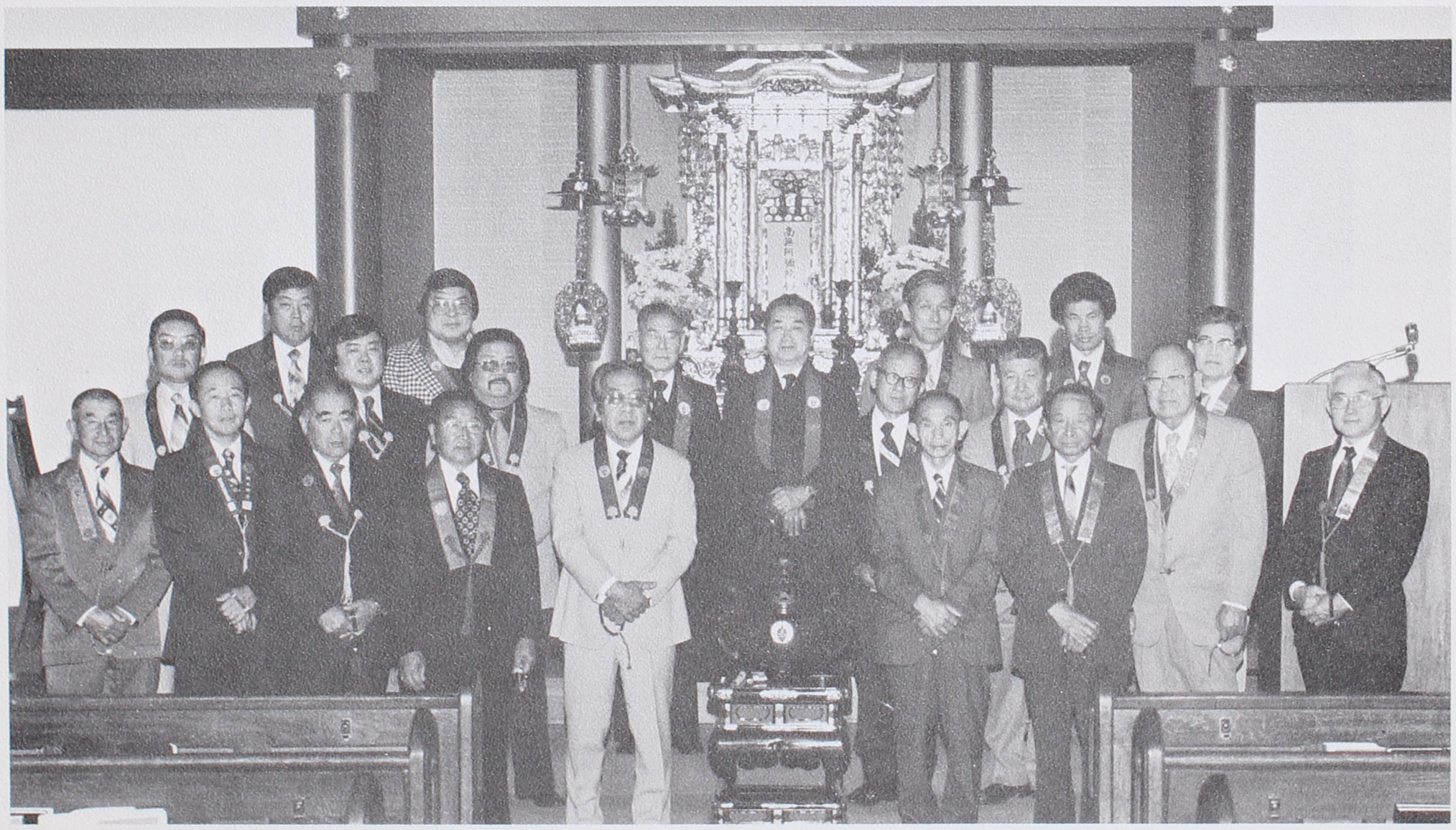
Standing: Rev. and Mrs. Masami Fujitani

1934 CABINET



2nd Row: M. IWAMOTO, S. SUGANO, J. OTSUKI, M. KANDA, K. HASHIMOTO
1st Row: Y. YAMASHITA, J. KANAMORI, S. WATARIDA, REV. T. MASUNAGA, M. TAKEDA, T. MORIWAKI, K. MINE

1979 CABINET



3rd Row: Y. TANAKA, R. KATO, REV. Z. KAWASAKI, REV. M. FUJITANI, M. NISHIMORI, R. ITO
2nd Row: T. KATSUDA, V. KATO, R. MORIWAKI, S. INOUYE, K. ITO, Y. YAMAMURA
1st Row: K. ITO, S. TAKAHASHI, B. HIJI, D. MATSUI, T. MORIWAKI H. YAMASHITA, H. FUKUMOTO, H. TANAKA, H. FUJII

History of the Oxnard Buddhist Church

Today, the members of the Oxnard Sangha are gathered here to celebrate the 50th Anniversary Commemoration of the Founding of a spiritual home that has given comfort to generations of Buddhist families who have sought the solace of this sanctuary, and to give thanks to the guidance of the Nembutsu that brought us safely to this joyous day.

In commemoration of this auspicious day, fifty years of its history is recorded in dedication to all ministers and members, past and present, who have kept the light of our temple burning.

The compilation of the old history has been accomplished through the help of families of the charter members who are still residing in Oxnard. Their early experiences related through interviews leave us treasured memories and a historical document for future generations.

EARLY BUDDHISTS IN OXNARD

There is no written record of the first Buddhists in Oxnard, although, in the Japanese Cemetery, grave markings with Buddhist inscriptions attest to arrival of settlers in this area in the early part of the 1900's. The introduction of Buddhism surely dates back to these people who first settled in Oxnard.

The fertile Oxnard Plains had rich farmland planted in sugar beets and beans during that time. Harvesting season brought an influx of young men who passed through seasonally. Among our forebear, some had found Oxnard to be a good place to settle, and raise their families. Eventually these men established their own business in town or independently started farming on leased land. More and more men engaged in farming, and soon women joined their husbands.

EARLY BUDDHISTS IN OXNARD

Starting new in a strange country was a struggle for these pioneers. The first dream of returning to Japan with great fortunes was soon forgotten in the hard struggle for survival—America became their home. The families formed compatible groups, and among these groups were those who believed in the Nembutsu, embracing the Jodo Shinshu teachings. Since leaving their homeland, the Faith in the Nembutsu had been a spiritual strength that had stayed close within their hearts.

When children were born, the Issei parents wanted most to fulfill their spiritual way and to impart their cultural heritage and religion to their offsprings.

By then, the Buddhist Mission of North America, Headquarters in San Francisco, California was almost in its 30th year, and a strong Buddhist movement was being felt throughout all the Japanese communities.

HOME SERVICES

Prior to the founding of the temple in Oxnard, interested Buddhists had formed affiliation with the Los Angeles Hongwanji Buddhist Temple, and ministers were making regular trips from Los Angeles to conduct services at different homes. The Issei pioneers remember the ministers who traveled far to fill their religious needs. Also, these gatherings were their social outlet where they met their neighbors and friends. They had brought specially prepared food to share with each other. The children accompanied their parents and it was an all day affair for the families.

FIRST SUNDAY SCHOOL AND JAPANESE LANGUAGE SCHOOL

The first Sunday School service was conducted in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Mitsuto Taniguchi. In the meantime, the Showa Gakuen, Japanese Language School, was founded in 1927 by the families of Hashimoto, Kanamori, Tagami and Yeto. These four families were instrumental in forming the fifteen charter members two years later. The Taniguchis and Dr. and Mrs. T. Kaniye were the first Sunday School teachers. They also helped with the Showa Gakuen. Later, the Sunday School was moved from the home of the Taniguchis to the Showa Gakuen on 6th and C Streets. The Showa Gakuen eventually became a part of the Oxnard Hongwanji Buddhist Temple.

1929 SUNDAY SCHOOL STUDENTS.

RESOLUTION TO BUILD A BUKKYOKAI

In 1928, through the devout interest of Mr. and Mrs. Kaniye to bring a Buddhist minister to Oxnard, Rev. Taiken Masunaga of Sacramento was introduced to the Buddhist group. Thereupon, the Buddhist families organized immediately, called a general meeting comprised of fifteen board members to build a Bukkyokai in Oxnard. President Shotaro Toyama, Tokumatsu Shiozaki, Mitsuto Taniguchi, Sasaichi Watarida, Tokutaro Moriwaki, Tsurukichi Taono, Katsuki Hashimoto, Yokichi Yamashita, Magoichi Taketa, Buhei Yeto, Jinsuke Kanamori, Ryoichi Inouye, Sanzo Tagami, Jujiro Otsuki, and Kikumatsu Iwamoto.

REV. TAIKEN MASUNAGA ARRIVES

Representing 35 families, the newly organized board decided on the establishment of the Bukkyokai in Oxnard, independent of the Hompa Hongwanji Los Angeles Buddhist Temple and the assignment of Rev. Masunaga as its first resident minister. Rev. and Mrs. Masunaga and family arrived in Oxnard on February 22, 1929.

CONSTRUCTION OF BUILDING

Six months later, the members strenghthened by the arrival of a minister in their midst, began construction of the building on July 1, 1929, on site, 234 East Sixth Street, Oxnard. The building was completed in November 1929.

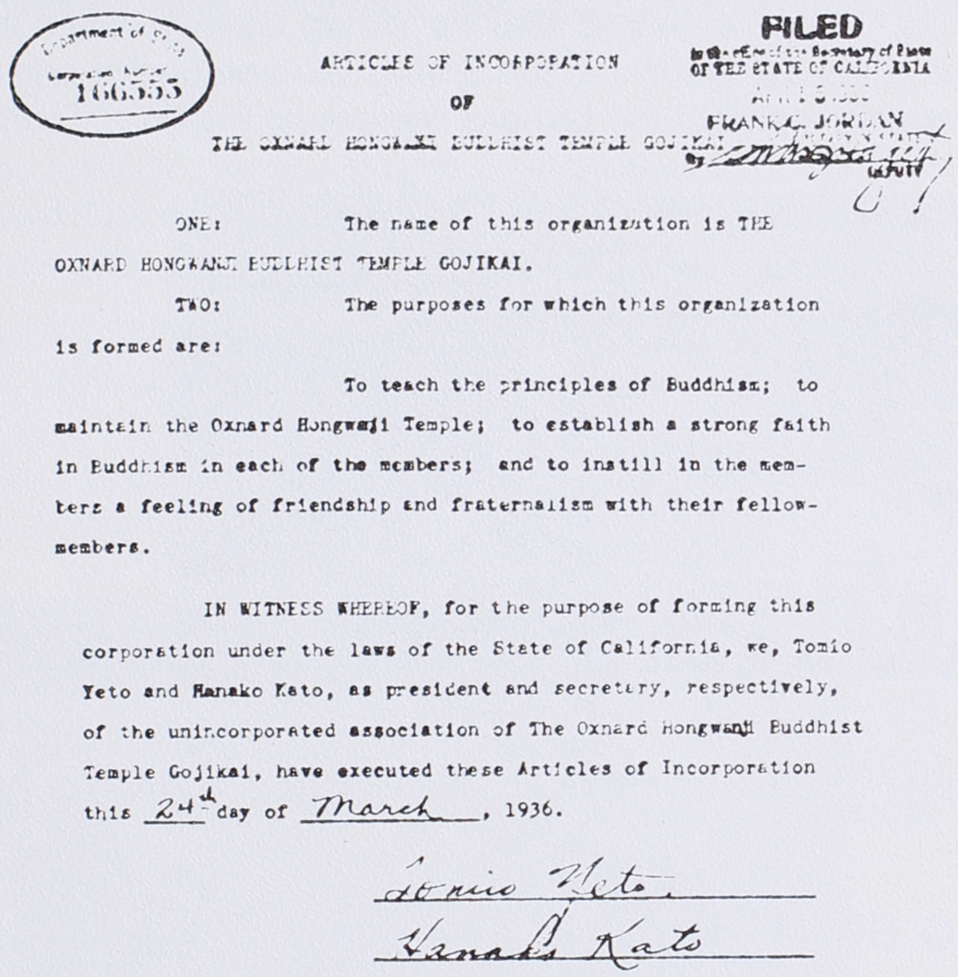
DEDICATION AND NYUBUTSU SHIKI

The long awaited event, the Dedication Service and Nyubtsu Shiki was auspiciously celebrated on May 11, 1930. Rev. Itsuzo Kyogoku of the Buddist Mission of North America served as officiant of the Dedication. Held in May, this event also honored Shiran Shonin's Gotanye.

By chronological listing, recorded by the Buddhist Mission of North America, the Oxnard Bukkyokai was listed as the 31st temple established in the United States.

CHURCH INCORPORATION PAPERS

In regards to the ownership papers of the temple, adhering to strict alien land law, it was first recorded under Mr. Shigeo Yamauchi's signature in 1929. Although when the temple was



Department of State
Corporation Number
166555

FILED
in the office of the Secretary of State
of the STATE OF CALIFORNIA
APR 13 1936
FRANK C. JORDAN
Secretary of State
By [illegible] Deputy

ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION
OF
THE OXNARD HONGWANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE GOJIKAI

ONE: The name of this organization is THE OXNARD HONGWANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE GOJIKAI.

TWO: The purposes for which this organization is formed are:

To teach the principles of Buddhism; to maintain the Oxnard Hongwanji Temple; to establish a strong faith in Buddhism in each of the members; and to instill in the members a feeling of friendship and fraternalism with their fellow-members.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, for the purpose of forming this corporation under the laws of the State of California, we, Tomio Yeto and Hanako Kato, as president and secretary, respectively, of the unincorporated association of The Oxnard Hongwanji Buddhist Temple Gojikai, have executed these Articles of Incorporation this 24th day of March, 1936.

Tomio Yeto

Hanako Kato

OXNARD HONGWANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE INCORPORATION PAPERS

incorporated as Oxnard Hompa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple Gojikai in 1936, the incorporation papers were filed on April 13, 1936 under the signatures of Tomio Yeto and Hanako Kato.

Old records indicate that the original membership dues were listed at $6.00 per family, to be paid annually. The dues were later increased to $12.00.

AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS

Aside from tending to religious duties, Rev. Masunaga administered to all activities of the temple. The Sunday School was regularly attended by over 50 students. Various organizations were soon organized and flourished under Rev. Masunaga's guidance. The Fuzoku Gakuen, Japanese Language School sponsored by the parents was organized in March 1929, the Fujinkai on August 1, 1929, the Young Women's Buddhist Association in January 1930, and the Young Men's Buddhist Association in 1931. The Young Buddhists later merged to form the Young Men and Women's Buddhist Association (YMWBA), which is now known as the Young Buddhist Association (YBA). The

Young Buddhist groups were very active in temple activities and in the South Central Coast District YBA League functions.

FIRST CONFIRMATION SERVICE

On January 1935, the first Confirmation Service was held in Oxnard. His Eminence, the Renshi Shojo Ohtani of Hompa Hongwanji, Kyoto, Japan conducted the service. Records indicate over 100 Buddhists participated in the Okamisori and received their Buddhist Name.

ACTIVITIES

The year 1937 was highlighted by the youth group who was very active in sports activities. The Oxnard Stars, a girls' team, won the Southern District Basketball Championship.

OXNARD STARS,
CHAMPIONSHIP BASKETBALL TEAM, 1937

The Fujinkai, another integral part of the temple, had various group projects that involved many Issei women. At special services like Hoonko, Hanamatsuri, Gotanye, and Obon, they took charge of the food preparations and served delicious nishime plates to the congregation. One project related by an Issei member was to make 500 imon bukuros to be sent to Japan. The study of cultural skills and arts of Japan were encouraged by Rev. Masunaga. Ikebana and tea ceremony classes were organized for YMWBA and Fujinkai members.

TENTH ANNIVERSARY

In 1939, the temple expanded its facilities by purchasing a lot adjacent to the temple to build a hall to be used for social gatherings and activities. This was the year that marked the 10th anniversary of the Founding of the Oxnard Bukkyokai. The anniversary celebration was commemorated with the Anniversary Service and Chigo Procession. Temple members, Sunday School Chigo children, Fujinkai and YBA members participated in the procession. The parade route was along Oxnard Boulevard. Festivity was highlighted with shibai by local talents and buyo by Fujima Kansuma Dancers from Los Angeles.

CHIGO PROCESSION, TENTH ANNIVERSARY, 1939

EVACUATION DURING WAR

World War II brought many drastic changes to the Japanese Community of Oxnard. By the signing of the Executive Order 9066 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and the formation of two military zones by General Dewitt on March 2, 1942, the evacuation order was issued to all persons of Japanese ancestry from Military Area No. 1 and the California portion of Military Area No. 2. This meant that all persons of Japanese ancestry, whether citizens of the United States or aliens, were decreed to evacuate en masse to relocation camps. Most of the Issei leaders, including Rev. Masunaga, were detained soon after December 7, 1941.

Members recall the uncertain period without a resident minister and temple leaders. Amidst a chaotic situation of getting personal effects in order, an arrangement for the care of church property was made. The minister's residence was rented to the Manuel Pena family, while the temple with social hall was reserved for storage of members' properties. Mrs. Hanako Kato was the last person to leave for Tulare Assembly Center, California. In checking the church documents at the Ventura Courthouse, she found taxes due which were four years delinquent. These taxes were paid by the funds turned in by the YMBA and other affiliated organizations. The income from the rental paid the taxes, and kept the church property intact until the return of the evacuees in 1945.

DIFFICULT TIMES AFTER THE WAR

On August 14, 1945, Rev. Masunaga and his daughter, Kazuko, returned to Oxnard with the Yasuzo Hirai and Kenji Kato families from Gila River Relocation Center, Rivers, Arizona. The temple was converted into a hostel in order to serve the returning families. To many, the hostel served as their first stop, while to elderly persons without families, it became their home for almost ten years. Due to the hostile attitude immediately following the war and economic difficulties of the members, the temple continued to provide housing and storage. In 1956 the last of the evacuees storage was moved and local housing arrangements were made for the remaining men residing in the school hall. While caring for the individual needs of the members during these difficult years, Rev. Masunaga resumed Sunday School for the children in September 1945 and conducted memorial services. Miss Kazuko Masunaga was the pianist for all the church services. Rev. Masunaga also commuted to the Santa Barbara Buddhist Temple for over seven years until Rev. Keisho Motoyama was assigned to Santa Barbara.

SECOND CONFIRMATION SERVICE

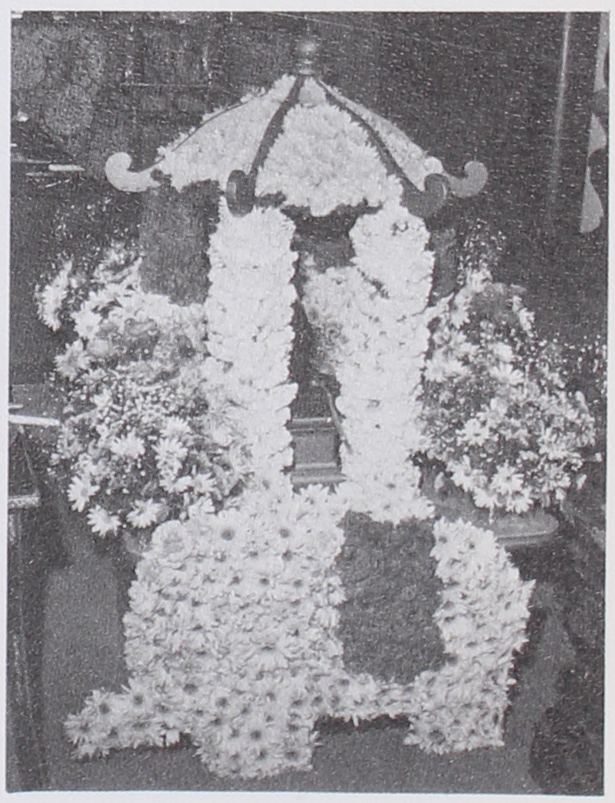
The Confirmation Service was held on November 1951. His Eminence, the Lord Abbot Kosho Ohtani performed the okamisori rites and presented Buddhist Names to 16 persons.

SECOND CONFIRMATION SERVICE, 1951

ORGANIZATIONS REACTIVATED

During the post World War II period, the church activities were very limited, however, the turning point came around June 1952 when new families came to Oxnard seeking the Buddhist Sangha. They had belonged to Buddhist churches before moving to Oxnard. With the interest of the new families, Rev. Masunaga recruited the assistance of Mmes. Hanako Kato and Helen Inouye to reinforce Sunday School classes. Thereupon, the two teachers combined their efforts to encourage participation of children of other interested families. The major problem was transportation. Students without transportation were picked up by Rev. Masunaga and Mrs. Hanako Kato. It was no easy task to bring the children together. By September 1954, the Sunday School had over thirty students attending regularly.

Once again for Hanamatsuri, the Hanamido which had been used before Evacuation was adorned with flowers. The statuette of Baby Buddha was placed in the Hanamido for the pouring of sweet tea. Family-type get-togethers, such as picnics and year-end parties were held by Sunday School families. These gatherings eventually became annual events of the temple.



HANAMIDO.

In 1956, fourteen years after the closure of the temple in 1942, the Nisei Women reactivated the Fujinkai. Fifteen ladies met on April 15, 1956 to form a cabinet with a purpose of welcoming newcomers into the fold of the Buddhist temple. They actively engaged in a membership drive which brought forty-five initial members together. The Fujinkai's first project was to make Zabutons for the comfort of the members. Over 100 Zabutons were made. Their use were enjoyed by members during services and showings of Japanese movies for fund-raising.

The Junior YBA was first organized around 1951. After three years of inactivity, it was again reorganized with Tsujio Kato as president in 1956. The Jr. YBA was active with Tri-County YBA's from 1956. In 1961, Jr. YBA joined Southern District League and thereafter has participated in annual conferences, religious seminars, athletic tournaments and social gatherings such as dances and snow trips.

OBON FESTIVALS

In August 1956, under the leadership of Mr. Kenji Kato, Board Chairman, the members of the temple, the Fujinkai and the Jr. YBA joined forces to stage the first annual Obon Festival. Miss Shirley Watanabe, was the first instructor for the Obon Odori. Not only the members but the whole community saw their first Obon Odori since World War II.

It was very crowded in the Hondo where the Obon Odori was performed. The successful bazaar raised $1,800.00 and was used to repair and paint the church building. With experience and new church members, the second Obon Festival and Bazaar was an even larger success.

FIRST ANNUAL OBON FESTIVAL, 1956

In 1958 and 1959, the festival was expanded and staged at the Oxnard Community Center on C Street. It gained popularity as one of the most colorful events in the City of Oxnard and attracted county-wide interest and attendance.

OBON FESTIVAL, 1958

After two years, the festivals were again held on the temple ground. Doll exhibits, Ikebana displays and other cultural interests were introduced. The first lunch box sale was the forerunner of our chicken and beef teriyaki dinners we serve today. This annual fund-raising event became a community affair to be enjoyed by many people for years to come.

Judo became one of the cultural activities at the temple during 1956. With the help of Seigoro Murakami and sons Ray and George of San Fernando, the Oxnard Judo Club was initiated and practice was conducted in the social hall.

In loving memory of the late Mrs. Yae Masunaga, wife of Rev. Masunaga, a memorial service was held on October 15, 1956, This service observed Mrs. Masunaga's 13th year memorial. She had passed away at Gila River Relocation Center in Arizona.

The Bukkyokai sponsored a welcome party on November 1956 for the 91 Japanese National farm workers contracted to learn agricultural methods in the Oxnard area. Mr. Heijiro Tanaka was instrumental in initiating the Japanese Agricultural Training Program. The Bukkyokai became a second home for many of these men. Rev. Masunaga was instrumental in forming a Senshinkai for these men who in turn participated in the Temple activities.

JAPANESE NATIONAL FARM WORKERS, 1956

ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGEOVER TO NEW GENERATION

In 1958, a major change took place when the Issei cabinet withdrew from active participation in temple administration and turned over duties and responsibilities to the younger generation. Up to this time, Kenji Kato had held the helm from 1953 through 1957. Changeover included newcomers and Nisei members into the cabinet. Minoru Ogata was elected as Chairman.

In 1959, the minutes of the Board meetings were written in English for the first time. The changeover stabilized the cabinet and definite action was taken to clarify the duties of the officers. The first initiative action taken was to establish a salary for the minister. Rev. Masunaga had suffered long with minimal oreis only. He had shared all the hardships with the congregation through many difficult years since the establishment of the Temple in 1929.

THIRD CONFIRMATION SERVICE

His Eminence, the Lord Abbott and Lady Kosho Ohtani visited Oxnard on January 5, 1959. Sixteen members participated in the Confirmation Service and received the "okamisori" and Buddhist name. This represented the third visit from Nishi Hongwanji, Kyoto to Oxnard since the Temple was established.

THIRD CONFIRMATION SERVICE, 1959

30th ANNIVERSARY

The 30th Anniversary of the Founding of the Oxnard Hongwanji was celebrated on November 14, 1959. On this occasion, Rinban Daitetsu Hayashima of Los Angeles Betsuin was invited to officiate at the anniversary ceremony. Ministers from Tri-County Churches, (Ventura, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo) and Oxnard pioneers were invited. Presentations of certificates of appreciation were made to past presidents of the temple and the Fujinkai.

During this year, the Bukkyokai and Fujinkai members participated in a clothing and fund-raising drive to aid the victims of the typhoon disaster in Japan. Disaster areas included Mie and Aichi Prefectures near Nagoya.

REV. MASUNAGA'S RETIREMENT

In the fall of 1960, everyone was saddened by Rev. Masunaga's announcement to retire. He had been with the Oxnard Sangha, interrupted only by his internment years during World War II. His lifetime ministerial work devoted to the propagation of Shinran's Teachings motivated many to continue supporting the Temple, Rev. Masunaga left Oxnard to live with his son-in-law, Rev. Nagatani in Visalia. He returned to Japan in 1964. He passed away July 1, 1966 at his home in Kumamoto. Rev. Masanori Ohata was assigned to succeed Rev. Masunaga.

OXNARD BUDDHIST TEMPLE MEMBERS, 1960

FACILITIES EXPANDED

In the rapidly growing community, the potential growth of the Temple was evident. Methods of supporting the Bukkyokai and the new minister were studied. A membership drive was organized. This drive not only increased the number of members but also gained new support.

In 1961, it was recognized that the present facilities would be inadequate to accommodate the increasing membership and the enrollment of the Sunday School children. Under the leadership of Board Chairman, Heijiro Tanaka and the guidance of Rev. Ohata, a building committee was formed, with Kinya Katsuda and Minoru Ogata as Co-Chairmen. Members of the committee were Tsugio Hiji, Harry Miyamoto, Noriyoshi Moriwaki, Hirao Tanaka and Shigeo Tanaka. A fund drive was initiated and $33,625.00 was collected from donations. This nucleus of funds led to a successful building fund campaign.

The recommended expansion of facilities began with the purchase of the connecting property (next to the Bukkyokai property on Meta Street) in 1962. This was used immediately for parking and was projected for future construction of church and classroom facilities. A pledge program was activated for maximum participation by all members toward this goal. The Board had approved the Sunday School Penny-a-Day Fund in April 1961.

An interest in cultural activities was developed during this period. Many families participated in Japanese classical dancing lessons for their children. Under church sponsorship, the Hanayagi Kunishio Koen-Kai was formed in May 1961. Miss Hanayagi's students, numbering from 40 to 50 students, presented dance recitals for the community as well as for festivals.

MISS HANAYAGI AND HER STUDENTS.

Karate was introduced to Oxnard by Rev. Ohata. He instructed the Oxnard Karate Club which included interested Bukkyokai members and the Oxnard Police Department.

On May 8, 1962, the Fujinkai sponsored the "Japanese Bunka," a cultural program, at the Oxnard Community Center. The day-long festivity was staged in honor of "Boy's Day" included demonstrations of judo, karate, tea ceremony, Japanese dancing, exhibits of Ikebana and bonsais were part of the program. Proceeds were designated for the building fund. The Fujinkai now numbering 95 members assisted in all activities of the Temple.

NAME CHANGE TO OXNARD BUDDHIST CHURCH

The Board approved the corporation name change from Oxnard Hongwanji Buddhist Temple to Oxnard Buddhist Church on May 28, 1962.

PURCHASE OF PRESENT CHURCH BUILDING

In 1964, a Nisei, Shigeto Inouye became Chairman of the Board, and the meetings were conducted in English for the first time. Restructuring of the church administration was started. The Board approved the increase of annual dues from $12.00 to $25.00. The present constitution was adopted at the October 1964 general meeting.

On April 1, 1964, Rev. Ryotetsu Kazumata succeeded Rev. Ohata who left for Japan on a leave of absence.

The building committee continued to pursue the search for a new site. Following the inspection of various sites in and around Oxnard, the purchase of the St. John's Lutheran Church was approved by the membership at the November 1964 General Meeting. Escrow was closed on December 29, 1964 with signatures of Shigeto Inouye and Noriyoshi Moriwaki. The church building, minister's residence, and classrooms on real estate of 140 feet by 400 feet on 250 So. H Street, Oxnard, was purchased with a down payment of $30,000.00 toward the total cost of $145,000.00.

The original church and social hall on Sixth Street with additional property were reserved to be sold and funds earmarked to be used to help retire the mortgage on the new property.

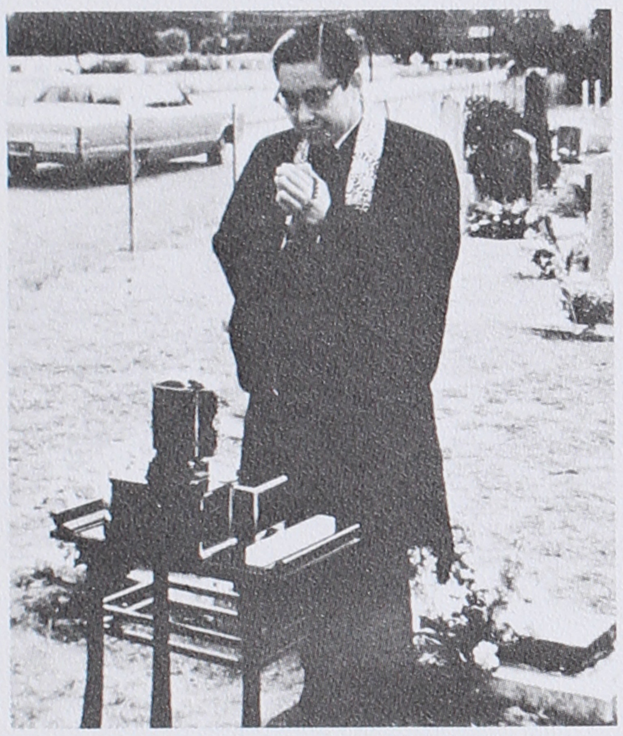
The Japanese Language School was reorganized as an affiliate of the Bukkyokai in 1964. It was opened on June 22, 1964 with the resident minister as its superintendent. Presently, the classes are conducted on Saturdays with classes up through high school. Attendance of 135 students were reported in 1967.

A monthly church bulletin was started by Rev. Kazumata to consolidate all church news into one publication. Up to this time, the church notices, the Fujinkai bulletin, the Sunday School and YBA news had been sent separately whenever needed.

CEMETERY SERVICES

For many years the members of the church have observed Memorial Day and Obon services at the Japanese Cemetery at the corner of Pleasant Valley and Olds Road in Oxnard. The Japanese Cemetery dates back to the early 1900's. The Bukkyokai has kept up the tradition of visiting the cemetery annually in memory of the Issei pioneers, many of whom have no relatives living nearby.

Since 1964 the services have been observed at the Ivy Lawn Cemetery. It is noted that the Japanese Cemetery was recently designated as a historical landmark of Ventura County.



SERVICE AT JAPANESE CEMETERY.

SERVICE AT IVY LAWN CEMETERY.

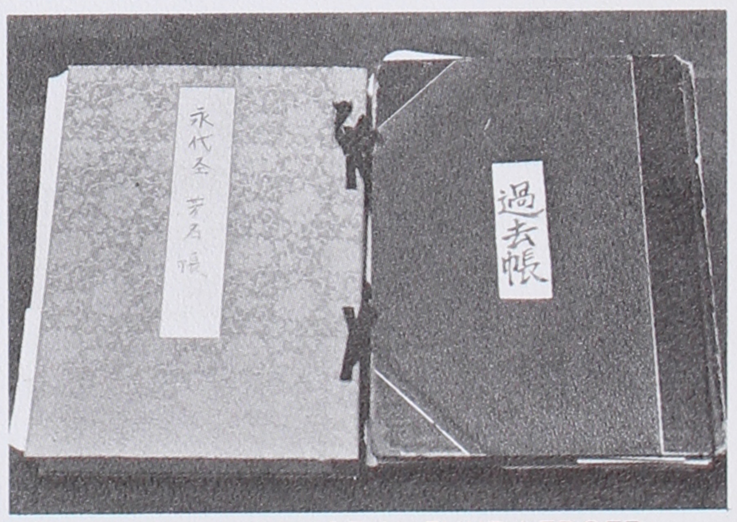
EITAIKYO, PERPETUAL MEMORIAL

The Eitaikyo, Perpetual Memorial Fund Program, was organized in October 1964 as proposed initially by Mrs. Masano Moriwaki. Many donations were received and the total balance of $12,729, was reported by Mr. Tomio Yeto. Eitaikyo treasurer, on May 1979.

35th ANNIVERSARY

In 1965, Mr. Fred Yasukochi was elected Chairman of the Board. This year was marked with preparation for the move into new facilities. In April 1965, Rev. Koshin Ogui arrived on a temporary basis to serve during Rev. Kazumata's absence. He was assigned on November 8, 1965 to become the new resident minister.

The 35th Anniversary of the Founding of the church was held on September 25, 1965 as the last special service at the old church site.



PERPETUAL MEMORIAL FUND LEDGER.

A special memorial service was held in memory of the numerous pioneers who had passed away. An excerpt in tribute follows: "...It is an understatement to say that most of the privileges which we have today, taken for granted, was earned by the hard work, sweat, fortitude, and foresight of these hardy pioneers, whom we are honored to salute this day..."

The monthly memorial service was initiated by Rev. Ogui, and is still observed regularly.

MOVE INTO NEW FACILITIES

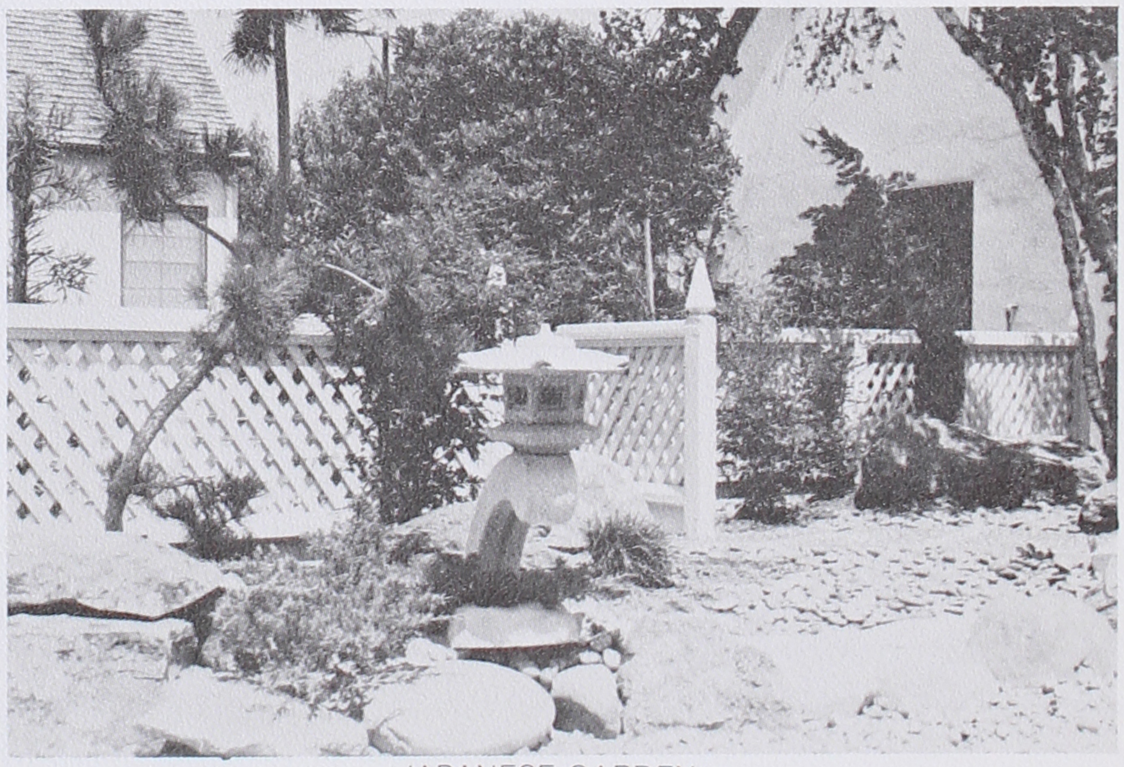
The first Sunday School service was held at the new facilities on September 19, 1965 in the classroom. Due to agreements with the Lutheran Church, it was not until February 1966 that our Sangha was able to complete its move into the church building and the first family service was held in the new Hondo on February 15, 1966.

OXNARD BUDDHIST TEMPLE HONDO

The remodeling of the altar was started immediately. Architects, Tawa and Shimozono of Los Angeles, were contracted for structural design and it was built by general contractors, Tsuno and Sons of Gardena. Rev. Ogui guided the transformation of the Shrine throughout its construction.

The Obutsudan will be remembered as a gift presented in memory of the late Dennis Ito by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Ritsuo Ito and grandmother, Mrs. Shie Ito. The offerings from the Sunday School students and teachers received through the Penny-a-Day Fund and special donations from members provided funds for the remodeling. All accessories were donated by the members.

In preparation for the dedication scheduled in March 1967, the members joined forces to build the Japanese Garden designed by Mr. Shigeo Kato. Rocks were hauled from river beds near Santa Paula to enrich the setting. A red pine was planted in the front which held special significance since it was the same age as the old church. The tree was a dedication gift from Mr. Akira Kurihara. The bird of paradise plant was one of the plants transplanted from the old church; it was remembered that the Late Rev. Masunaga especially enjoyed arranging its blooms for the altar offering.



JAPANESE GARDEN

During 1966, the Kado Class was organized under church sponsorship. Mrs. Sachiko Tanaka of Los Angeles became the instructor.

Also in 1966, the Board approved the establishment of the Library Fund to start a library. The administration of the library was assigned to the Sunday School Department. The initial stock of books was selected from the BCA Buddhist Bookstore and cataloging was done by Mrs. Mickey Tanaka.

The first Hanamatsuri Festival and Bazaar was held in April 1966. This event featured Japanese culture in sports, arts, and food. Later this festival was changed to Fujimatsuri Festival to be held annually in May to coincide with Shinran Shonin's birthday.

DEDICATION OF NEW BUILDING AT "H" STREET

Members with Board Chairman Dick Matsui planned the dedication of the new church with great anticipation. A memorial service for deceased church members was observed the night before Dedication.

Dedication Day on March 18, 1967 commenced with a Chigo procession.

The Obutsudan was unveiled by Bishop Shinsho Hanayama of the Buddhist Churches of America revealing the Omyogo, Namu Amida Butsu. The original Obutsudan was donated to the South Alameda County Buddhist Church.

CHIGO PROCESSION, 1967.

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS CONFERENCE

On October 29, 1967, the Oxnard Sunday School teachers hosted the Southern District Buddhist Sunday School Teachers' League Conference. The theme, Nembutsu-Meditation, carried a message for all teachers to experience a deeper insight of Onembutsu.

Bukkyo Koza, sangha classes in Japanese and English, was started in January 1968 by Rev. Ogui. Course subjects covered were Buddhism, the Tannisho, the Shoshinge, and other subjects of interest.

USE OF THE HONDO

From the inception of the church, all Buddhists regardless of affiliations with Buddhist sects other than Jodo Shinshu had been welcomed to participate in all activities of the Buddhist Church.

In 1968, an issue was raised as to whether the church would condone religious services being held in the church hondo of religious rites of sects and denominations other than Jodo Shinshu. Since Oxnard is affiliated with Buddhist Churches of America, a Jodo Shinshu organization, of which the Church is chartered and resident ministers are assigned, it was the decision of the Board that all services held at the Oxnard Buddhist Church shall be officiated by its resident minister.

In regards to present members who are of another sect, the general membership at the meeting of April 4, 1968, decided that special dispensations should be granted to these members who have supported the church with the provision that such requests be made in writing addressed to the Board of Directors of the Oxnard Buddhist Church not later than July 30, 1968, whereupon their request be adhered. Thereafter the resident minister will be the only one to serve as the officiant.

The Board of Directors of the Oxnard Buddhist Church reported that no such special requests were received.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

On May 31, 1968, upon Rev. Ogui's resignation to further his studies, Rev. Gisho Himeji was assigned to succeed him and moved his family from Los Angeles Betsuin.

Our Jr. YBA hosted 350 youths at a two-day Southern District Jr. YBA League Conference during the Labor Day weekend in 1968. The Young Buddhists presented a meaningful conference along with many fun events guided by Rev. Himeji and Mr. and Mrs. Takashi Yamashita, Jr. YBA Advisors.

In 1969, the Board called a Planning Committee meeting to study revenue-producing activities towards a sound church financial base. Activities planned and implemented were pancake breakfasts at Spring and Autumn Higans and the beef teriyaki booth at the Ventura County Fairgrounds in October. These annual projects proved successful.

There are two military installations, the Naval Construction Battalion Center and the Pacific Missile Test Center near Oxnard. Many ladies born in Japan who are married to American military men reside in the vicinity. On July 30, 1969, these ladies formed a club under the guidance of Rev. Himeji. This club, named Mutsumi-Kai (Club of Friendliness) under the leadership of Mrs. Shizuko Muramoto, emphasized the social, cultural and religious education benefits. Besides the monthly meetings, the members participated in church activities. The Mutsumi-Kai was disbanded in December of 1971.

FOURTH CONFIRMATION SERVICE

The visitation of his Eminence, the Lord Abbot and Lady Kosho Ohtani included Oxnard in their itinerary during their visit to the United States in November 1969. Arrangements were made for Confirmation Service for the members of the Tri-County Temples on November 11, 1969. It is inspiring to note that 119 Buddhists received the "okamisori" and Buddhist Name.

FUJINKAI CONFERENCE

The Oxnard Fujinkai together with the Santa Barbara Fujinkai served as toban of the Southern District Buddhist Women's League in 1970. Mrs. Helen Inouye served as the president of the Southern District Buddhist Women's League for that year. Highlighting the activities for the year was the co-hosting of the 19th Annual Southern District Buddhist Women's League Conference at the Oxnard Community Center on October 4, 1970. The conference carried the BCA theme, "Realize Amida's Immeasurable Benefits," which brought together 17 chapters of the Southern District Fujinkai with attendance exceeding 450 Buddhist women.

The need for kitchen facilities had been evident for many years, and in September 1970, the construction of the kitchen was started. Board Chairman Henry Tanaka and Heijiro Tanaka took the lead in soliciting additional donations and overseeing the building of the kitchen, dining area and parking area. The building was completed at a cost of $23,218.00 with additional cost of $6,065.77 for kitchen equipment.

40th ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION

The 40th Anniversary Commemoration and Special Memorial Service for the Late Rev. Masunaga was held on September 12, 1970. Rev. Himeji and the members attributed the prosperity of the church to the splendid efforts of the members and the wonderful work of many ministers, and particularly to Rev. Masunaga, Oxnard's first minister, to whom we owe a debt of thanks for his many years of service. Rev. Masunaga's son, Rev. Shoko Masunaga attended to express thanks on behalf of his family.

Rev. Himeji resigned on March 25, 1971, to return to Yamaguchi, Japan. The present minister, Rev. Masami Fujitani, was assigned by the Buddhist Churches of America and arrived with his family from the Berkeley Buddhist Temple on May 5th, 1971.

The Southern District Shinto Taikai was hosted by the Oxnard Buddhist Church on November 7, 1971. The conference theme, "Futari ni Shite," conveyed a warm message that prevailed throughout the gathering. Welcome was extended by Board Chairman Kaiji Ito. The choir which was organized in May 1971, with Mrs. Kyoko Fujitani as choir director, gave its first performance at the Shinto Taikai.

SHINTO TAIKAI, 1971

INVOLVEMENT IN COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

In 1972, Dr. Tsujio Kato took office as Board Chairman. He was also elevated to the Oxnard City Council in March of the same year and has since been elected Mayor of Oxnard. The church became more involved in affairs of the community and became the focal point among the local Japanese-American population. On August 15, 1972, a welcome party was hosted for the officers of the JDS AMATSUKAZE in port at Port Hueneme for technical training of the TARTAR missiles through the U.S. Navy.

On July 10, 1972, the Board granted the request of the Bunka Kyoshitsu to start Shodo Class, and approved its use of church facilities. The Shodo (calligraphy) Class became an affiliate of the church with instructors, Rev. and Mrs. Kanshu Ikuta.

TESTIMONIAL DINNER

On September 24, 1972, the Oxnard Buddhist Church sponsored a Testimonial Dinner honoring Mr. Heijiro Tanaka, recipient of the Fifth Order of the Sacred Treasure from the Emperor of Japan. City officials, County Supervisors, and representatives of the Japanese Consulate were in attendance to honor Mr. Tanaka. A congratulatory message was given by Board Chairman, Dr. Tsujio Kato on behalf of the members.

SEIBO TAIKAI

The annual Seibo Taikai, year-end party, was held at the Oxnard Community Center on December 16, 1972 with over 350 persons in attendance. Bishop Kenryu Tsuji on his annual visit was the guest of honor. On this occasion, 22 Sunday School teachers, four organists, and six Japanese Language School teachers were presented with gifts. A special recognition was awarded to Mrs. Helen Inouye for 18 years service as Sunday School superintendent. The Sunday School had grown from a handful of students to more than 130 within the past 20 years.

SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDANT AWARD—18 YEARS.

6th STREET CHURCH SOLD

Since the move to the new church, the old church property on East Sixth Streets was held until 1972. The sale of this property was approved by the Board to the Santa Barbara Rescue Mission at a negotiated price of $45,000.00. Close of escrow was signed by Dr. Tsujio Kato and Mr. Shigeto Inouye on July 15, 1972. The sale netted $40,125.00.

On August 14, 1972, the Board approved the use of funds realized from this sale to pay the mortgage on the present church site. The remaining balance of the mortgage was paid by the Building Fund money which completely cleared the mortgage on 250 South H Street property.

MORTGAGE BURNING

MORTGAGE BURNING

Mr. Hitoshi Kajihara was elected Board Chairman for the 1973 year. His Board instituted a long range church improvement and maintenance plan. The church membership list recorded 132 members for that year.

On April 27, 1973, a special service commemorating the mortgage burning was conducted at the church. Mr. Jinsuke Kanamori, the only living charter member of the church residing in Oxnard, performed the burning of the mortgage with Rev. Fujitani officiating the ceremony. Appreciation plaques were presented to the original charter members of the Oxnard Buddhist Church still living or to their decendents who are still active members of the church. Recipients were Mr. and Mrs. Jinsuke Kanamori, the Late Mr. Tokutaro Moriwaki, received by his widow, Mrs. Masano Moriwaki, and the late Mr. Sanzo Tagami, received by his daughter, Mrs. Hanako Kato.

PLAQUE RECIPIENTS

The mortgage burning ceremony was combined with a service and a party to honor Mr. Fred Yasukochi, newly-elected president of the BCA for 1973. Also, in recognition of leadership at the Southern District and BCA level, a Certificate of Appreciation was presented to Mr. Dick Matsui at this service. He had been active in youth work, especially in coordinating the Southern District Summer Basketball League in which the Oxnard youths have been participating for many years. At this time, deep appreciation was expressed to the Sangha, past and present, who have made possible the completion of the mortgage through generous monetary donations, participation and support.

CERTIFICATE RECIPIENT

1974—ANNIVERSARY YEAR

1974 was a memorable year for all Jodo Shinshu Buddhists. For the Oxnard Sangha, celebrating the 45th Anniversary of the founding of the Oxnard Buddhist Church along with the auspicious celebration of the 800th Birthday of Shinran Shonin and the 75th Anniversary of the founding of the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) on the same year involved all the organizations of the temple throughout the year.

A special program theme was featured during the Fujimatsuri Festival on May 19, 1974 to commemorate these anniversaries. In a colorful outdoor pageant, "The Ode of the Cherry Blossom," the Sunday School students presented the "Ordination of Matsuwaka Maro" and a chigo in honor of the 800th Birthday of Shinran. The beautiful "Shinran Odori" was part of the pageant with many dancers participating in the program.

In July, the Obon Festival also carried the commemoration theme and the festivity was highlighted by the traditional Obon Odori. It was a pretty sight to see for the first time the dancers all dressed alike in yukatas with "sagari-fuji" design.

OBON ODORI

OBON FESTIVAL
DANCE INSTRUCTORESS

It is noted here that a special recognition was presented to Mrs. Mickey Tanaka, our dance instructor at this festival who had led the Oxnard dancers for many years at Obon Festivals.

Board Chairman Noriyoshi Moriwaki headed the delegation from Oxnard to the BCA 75th Anniversary held through August 24 to September 1, 1974 at San Francisco. The attendees witnessed an impressive conference climaxed by the Commemorative Service with Lord Abbot Kosho Ohtani of Kyoto, Japan as Chief Officiant. Highlighting the event was an inspirational message given by Bishop Kenryu Tsuji expressing the necessity for more English-speaking ministers to propagate Buddhism in the United States. He paid tribute to the Issei pioneers who had the foresight to see the need for Buddhist teachings in this country. Special emphasis was placed on the Issei mothers who were the stabilizing force that anchored the family and insured the Teachings of the Nembutsu.

The 5th World Buddhist Women's Convention was also held in conjunction with the BCA 75th Anniversary during the same week in San Francisco and attended by many of our Fujinkai members.

45th ANNIVERSARY

The Commemoration of the 45th Anniversary of the Oxnard Buddhist Church was held on October 24, 1974. The 45th Anniversary Committee was chaired by Mr. Hitoshi Fujii, and remembered for the beautiful spirit of fellowship shared by the Sangha on this event. Program included special recognition certificate presentation from the BCA to outstanding local leaders. The selected recipients were past Board Chairmen of the Oxnard Buddhist Church and Presidents of the Oxnard Buddhist Women's Association. Bishop Tsuji from the BCA Headquarters made the presentations.

Other honorees were the thirty-five senior members of the temple. They were pinned with corsages and boutonnieres, and escorted by the Jr. YBA members. They were gifted with afghans which were handcrafted by the Fujinkai members to especially honor our pioneers for this occasion. Many organizations participated in the entertainment program. They included the Shigin Class, Choir, Jr. YBA, Sunday School and an All Star Cast from the Sangha.

HONORED SENIOR TEMPLE MEMBERS

THE PLAY

The play, "Priest and His Disciples" by the choir members was outstanding. The scene from "Shinran Shonin and his two disciples caught in the snow near Echigo and refused lodging for the night," was beautifully cast and presented.

The puppet show, "The Birthday of Oxnard Buddhist Church," dialogued in Japanese, was dedicated to the senior members. Presented by the Sunday School teachers, the script was original and uniquely created with characters identified with the early members of the Oxnard Buddhist Church. The gaiety of the 45th Anniversary Celebration was expressed by the Jr. YBA's "Odorimasho." The finale was the "Dojo-Sukui" by the All Star Cast.

DOJO SUKUI

SHIGIN CLASS

The Shigin Class, Oxnard Branch of Kansui School Kinyu Ginshi Kai of America, became an affiliate of the Cultural Division of the Oxnard Buddhist Church in 1974. The Board approved the use of the church facilities. The Shigin Class began with eighteen charter members.

SOUTHERN DISTRICT WORKSHOP

The activities in 1975 commenced with the hosting of the Southern District Workshop on March 2, 1975 with over 220 attending. The workshop, with the theme, "Everyday Gassho," was held to acquaint all newly-elected officials of the Board, Fujinkai, YBA, Sunday School and members of affiliated organizations with the local and BCA organization set-ups, and to familiarize them with the innerworkings of the temple.

JR. YBA CONFERENCE AT HOLIDAY INN

On August 30-31, 1975, the Oxnard Jr. YBA hosted the 25th Anniversary Southern District Jr. YBL Conference at the Holiday Inn, Ventura. Under the conference theme, "Searching for Truth," a successful conference was held due to the hard work of the Oxnard Jr. YBA members. They were led by Conference Chairman Gene Kanamori and President Mark Fukumoto. Chairman Kanamori delivered the welcoming address to over 400 youths of the Southern District Jr. YBL. Over 80 members participated in the event. Reverend Fujitani, Jr. YBA Advisors, Mr. and Mrs. Hitoshi Kajihara, Youth Director, Mr. Dick Matsui, and numerous Jr. YBA parents provided guidance and support. The Jr. YBA members are active participants in various areas including the invitational basketball tournaments, seminars, conferences, dances and in our church-sponsored events. They are one of the popular groups in the Southern District.

FUJINKAI'S 45th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

The Fujinkai celebrated their 45th Anniversary on September 27th, 1975. A memorial Service was dedicated in memory of all deceased members of the Fujinkai, and invitations were sent to all family members of the deceased. The Fujinkai members were grateful for Mrs. Kazuko Nagatani's attendance in memory of her parents, the late Reverend and Mrs. Taiken Masunaga.

At the commemoration program a special recognition was present to four charter members of the Fujinkai. Ladies honored were Mrs. Miji Kanamori, Mrs. Miye Kurihara, Mrs. Masano Moriwaki and Mrs. Kameyo Tsunoda.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

RESOLUTION TO FUJINKAI PRESENTED

The Oxnard Buddhist Church honored the Fujinkai with a Resolution expressing congratulations and commending the past and present Fujinkai members for their invaluable contribution to the temple. Board Chairman Henry Tanaka made the presentation of the Resolution.

STUDY CLASSES

During 1975, "Mompo no Tsudoi," Japanese Study Class, conducted by Reverend Fujitani, completed the study of "Tannisho," Notes Lamenting Differences, continued into the "Shoshinge," The Gatha of True Faith in the Nembutsu. The "Shoshinge," is Shinran Shonin's gatha composed out of his deep feelings of gratitude to Amida Buddha. This gatha is at the end of the chapter on Practice from the Kyogyoshinsho, the Shonin's life work.

Reverend Fujitani started his Sangha class with the text, "Buddha, Truth, and Brotherhood." The class progressed in the book, "Shinshu Seiten," Jodo Shin Buddhist Teaching, published in 1978. The "Shinshu Seiten" is an English compilation of the various Shinshu texts translated by noted Buddhist scholars. This text is a valuable contribution to the understanding of Jodo Shinshu.

The work of our Sensei, Reverend Fujitani, is deeply reflected in this text. As one of the translators of the Shinshu Seiten, he has contributed his extensive linguistic knowledge of Asian languages into the most comprehensive book on Jodo Shinshu published to date.

LAY SPEAKER PROGRAM

The Oxnard Lay Speaker Program was increased by the addition of Messrs. Hitoshi Kajihara and Dick Matsui, to the original speakers Messrs. Kiyoshi Tsuji, Fred Yasukochi and Dr. Tsujio Kato. The Sunday Services have been enriched by the delivery of messages by these speakers during the absence of our resident minister.

H. KAJIHARA

D. MATSUI

T. KATO

F. YASUKOCHI

K. TSUJI

RECOGNITIONS

In 1976 with Mr. Akira Nagaoka, serving as Board Chairman, the Buddhist Church extended recognitions to Rev. and Mrs. Fujitani, for 25-years service as a BCA Minister. Appreciation was extended to our minister and his wife from the members with presentation of monetary gift at a special service and dinner.

REVEREND AND MRS. FUJITANI

NEWLY-ELECTED OXNARD MAYOR

Dr. Tsujio Kato, newly-elected Mayor of Oxnard, was a recipient of a "Kanshajo," certificate of appreciation, and "Shikishi," a Japanese calligraphy, for good community relations generated through the Mayor's Office to Buddhists of this area.

On December 18, 1976, in recognition for outstanding cultural activities, Mr. Shigeo Kato was presented with a plaque from the Oxnard Buddhist Church at the annual Seibotaikai dinner. He had served on the Special Activities Committee for many years and contributed as consultant in temple affairs. He was instrumental in starting the Bonsai Class, Bonsai displays and demonstrations, in his charge at the festivals, helped greatly to enhance the cultural interests for the temple. His activities were not limited to the temple but throughout the Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties.

MR. SHIGEO KATO RECOGNIZED

MEMBERSHIP

The official change made by the Board during 1976 was the increase of church membership dues from $25.00 to $50.00 to be effective on January 1, 1977. The Board decision was passed at a Special General Meeting on December 13, 1976. At this time, the total membership reported to BCA was 133 Church members and 125 Fujinkai members. These figures are used by BCA in the annual assessment.

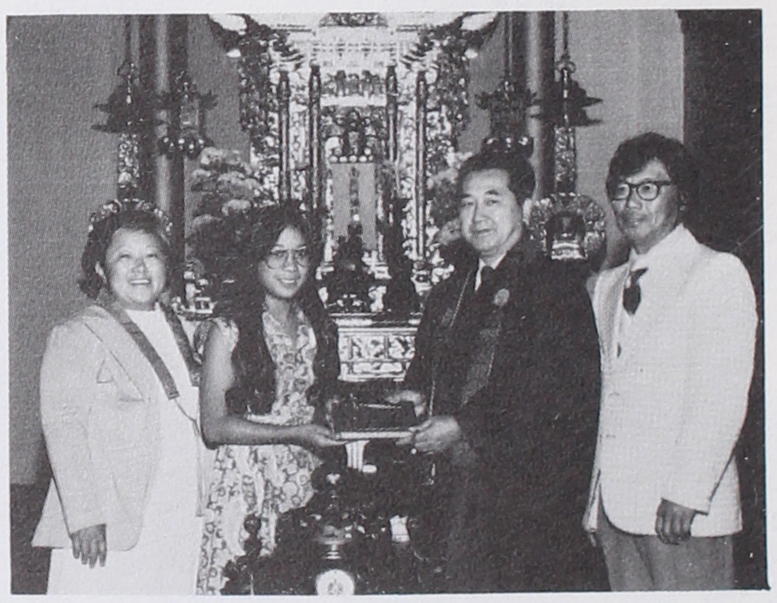
IMPROVEMENTS TO BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

In 1977 under the direction of Board Chairman Eiki Kato, major improvements were made to the church buildings and grounds. The building exterior, including the church, classrooms, minister's residence, and garage were sandblasted and color coated. The grounds were improved by replacement of a sprinkling system and resodding of the front lawn. This renovation started in preparation for the coming 50th Anniversary. Plans also included remodeling of the restrooms which was completed in 1979.

SANGHA TEENS ORGANIZED

For the sub-teen group, the Board officially approved the formation of the Sangha Teens on April 11, 1977. This group was organized and coordinated through the efforts of Mr. and Mrs. Hitoshi Kajihara to help the youngsters smoothly fill the gap of growing up into teenagers before becoming involved in Jr. YBA activities at age fourteen. Composed of seventh and eighth grade level youngsters, this group elects its cabinet and plans activities under the guidance of Sensei and the Advisors.

Aside from the fun activities, Sangha Teens provide an opportunity for the youngsters to develop together harmoniously within a religious background.



FIRST PRESIDENT OF SANGHA TEENS

SANGHA TEEN'S BOWLING

APPRECIATION TO TEACHERS

Appreciation to the Sensei, the teaching staffs of the Sunday School and Japanese Language School, and others are presented on Seibotaikai, the year-end party. On December 17, 1977, the most significant awards were presented to two Sunday School teachers, Mrs. Hanako Kato and Mrs. Helen Inouye in recognition for their 25 years of teaching at Sunday School. Since 1952, their work has inspired continued dedication of other Sunday School teachers to help serve voluntarily in preserving and propagating Buddhism and Shinran Shonin's Teachings to almost three decades of young Buddhists. Gift from the Buddhist Church was a "sagari-fuji" pendant.

TWO SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS OF 25-YEARS

TEN YEARS SUNDAY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AWARD

TEN-YEAR PERFECT ATTENDANCE AWARD

Since the holding of the first Sunday School Service at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Mitsuto Taniguchi in 1927, five Sunday School students have achieved perfect attendance for a ten-year period. The first ten-year award was given to Miss Sandra Kato in 1973, followed by Miss Tomoko Ito in 1977, Miss Yasuko Ito and Miss Lucy Nagaoka in 1978, and Miss Alicia Kajihara on the Oxnard Buddhist Church's 50th Anniversary year, 1979.

BUDDHIST EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The Buddhist Education Committee (BEC) organized through the BCA by Bishop Tsuji, reinforces the strengthening of the Buddha-Dharma and developing of the educational purpose of the temple to help fulfill the potential for understanding and practice of our religion by the members. The Oxnard BEC was officially established on January 10, 1978, by the Board, and implementation commenced in March.

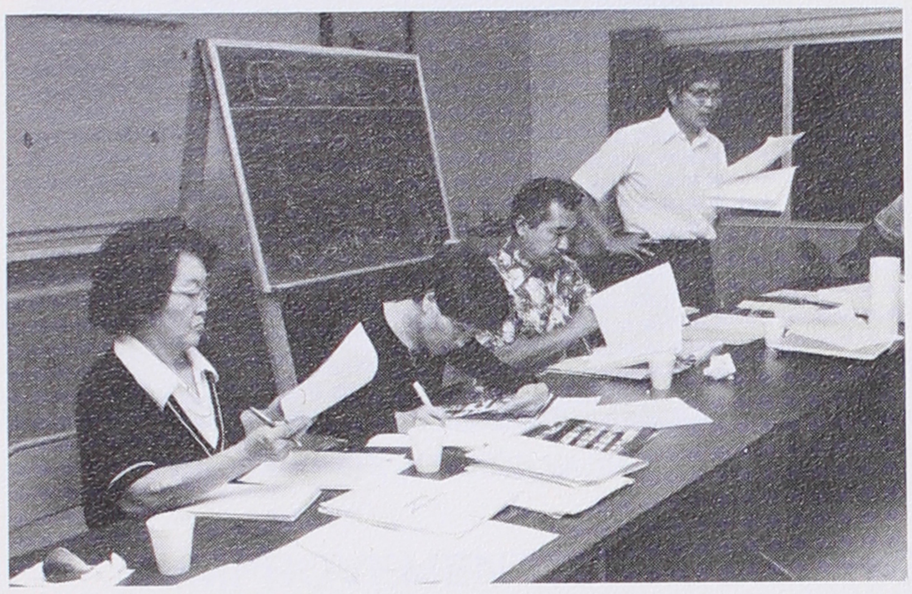
This BEC, chaired by Mr. Dick Matsui, met to discuss the potentials for improved communication within the temple and departments for better centralization under the Board. BEC representatives include the Religious Chairman, Sunday School Vice Chairman, Sunday School Superintendent, Fujinkai, Jr. YBA Representatives, Youth Director, and representatives from the English-speaking and Japanese-speaking membership-at-large.

Through the Tri-County BEC Council, mini-lectures were made available to the Oxnard Sangha. Also a program to invite English-speaking ministers every month to Sunday morning services was implemented.

PREPARATION FOR THE 50th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

The first planning meeting was held on February 1, 1978 to initially discuss appointment of committee heads and plan details of programs and activities in preparation for the Oxnard Buddhist Church's 50th Anniversary. At the Board meeting held on March 14, 1978, Board Chairman Yo Iwai named Mr. Shigeto Inouye as the 50th Anniversary Chairman. The commemoration date was set for Saturday, November 17, 1979, with the title, "50th Anniversary Commemoration and Special Memorial Service." On May 9, 1978, the Board approved the inclusion of the Oxnard Buddhist Women's Association to jointly celebrate its 50th Anniversary.

50th ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE MEETING



50th ANNIVERSARY BOOK PUBLICATION COMMITTEE MEETING

In commemorating this historic event, a 220-page book will be printed, featuring write-ups and photographs of the whole Sangha during the last fifty years. Our book carries the theme, "Buddha, Dharma, Sangha—Past, Present, and Future."

JAPANESE LANGUAGE SCHOOL UNDOKAI

The first "Undokai," Athletic Meet, was held by the Japanese Language School on March 11, 1978. Many games were of authentic Japanese tradition. It was an exciting event for students and teachers alike competing with red and white "hachimakis," head bands. The tug-of-war was a draw.

Along with the "Yomikata taikai," Reading Recitals, the Gakugei-kai Recitals, and Graduation-Award Ceremony, the Undokai has become an annual activity and part of the year's program for the Japanese Language School students. There were 67 students and 5 teachers in 1978.

MEMORIAL DAY PICNIC

The annual Memorial Day Picnic was held on May 28, 1978 under the sponsorship of the Oxnard Buddhist Church for the first time. Over 200 persons enjoyed themselves at Soule Park in Ojai.

For the past 25 years, Memorial Day picnics were sponsored by the Sunday School for the enjoyment of the youngsters and church families. Combined with lots of food and fun, the all-day get-together starts with an outdoor service. These services held on sand or under great oak trees or on green grass have always conveyed the feeling of warm companionship which lasted throughout the day. Various picnic grounds are remembered where everyone had such good times.

FUN AT A MEMORIAL DAY SUNDAY SCHOOL PICNIC

The very first picnic was at Oxnard Mandalay Beach. Other locations were at Jockey Mead, Thousand Oaks; Camp Comfort and Foster Park near Meiners Oaks; Arroyo Verde Park, Ventura; Oak Grove Park, Camarillo; Steckel Park near Santa Paula; and this year at Soule Park, Ojai.

Whatever each enjoys, be it a delicious chicken teriyaki, the ball game, the three-legged race, a bingo game, or just meeting friends, the annual picnic will draw many to share a wonderful day out in the open.

BUS TRIP FOR THE SENIOR MEMBERS

Senior Buddhists, 65 years and older, as guests of the Buddhist Church, enjoyed a bus trip to Huntington Library, San Marino. They visited the Botanical Gardens and Art Museum at Pasadena on August 12, 1978. The trip was arranged by the Social Activities Committee.

BATIK CLASS

On June 13, 1978, the Board approved the use of facilities for Fujinkai-sponsored Japanese Batik Class, Roketsu-zome. Instructor, Mrs. Masae Saga held classes on Wednesdays.

BCA FRATERNAL BENEFIT PROGRAM

The BCA Fraternal Benefit Program adopted in 1979 has a total membership of 3,805, of which 114 members are from Oxnard. For 1978, concerted effort was launched by the FBA chairman to increase the Oxnard Buddhist members' participation. The purpose for starting the FBA by the BCA was to create a self-sustaining organization to enable BCA to propagate Shin Buddhism and to insure the future of Buddhism. Other objectives include creating interest and dialogue with our younger generation, to provide more imaginative and far-reaching programs for Sunday School and the Youth Program. Ten percent of the FBA yearly dues are rebated to Oxnard annually.

NEW HORIZON PROGRAM—THOUSAND OAKS SANGHA

"Gift of Dharma excels all the gifts" —Dhammapada—

Buddhist families residing in Thousand Oaks area gathered at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Wes Koyano to hold a Buddhist service on December 10, 1978 with Rev. Fujitani and a few members of the Oxnard Sangha. The New Horizon Program initiated by the Thousand Oaks Sangha is truly a step toward the priceless gift of Dharma that all Buddhists want to convey to the young generation. Monthly services have been scheduled at alternative homes.

JAPANESE GARDEN

A landscaping project to beautify the temple grounds for the 50th Anniversary was accomplished during March and April 1979. The members, headed by Sumi Arimura, landscaped the front lawn extending the original Japanese garden. All landscaping material including valuable plants, rocks, fill dirt, and use of heavy equipment were part of the 50th Anniversary donations. In the spring, the flowering cherry trees will be in full bloom.

1979—50th ANNIVERSARY

The Oxnard sangha has reached the 50th-year milestone of the Jodo Shinshu Way in Oxnard. The fruition of the foresight and aspirations of our Issei pioneers shall always remain a part of our heritage. Many of our Isseis are gone, and the carrying on of this heritage has been passed on to the hands of the Nisei and Sansei.

On our Golden Anniversary Celebration Day, we shall honor all the pioneers and ministers who have helped establish our temple. It is our tribute in gratitude for the perpetuation of our Faith of the Nembutsu.

. . . Gassho . . .

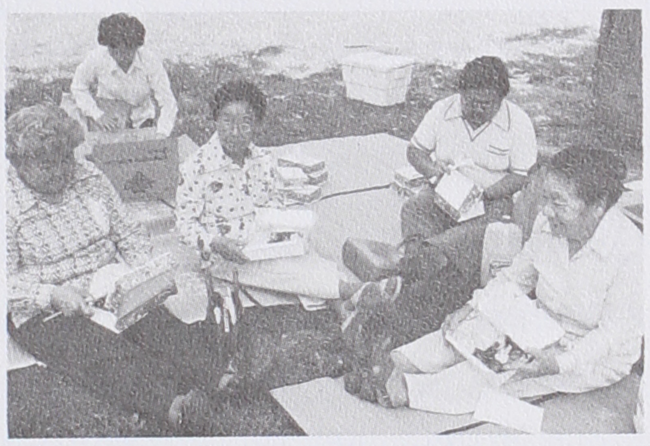
Installation Service, 1979

1979 President

Omigaki

TEMPLE ACTIVITIES

Omigaki



Huntington Library Park

Shinto Taikai—Anaheim