Project “X” Tours Japan Day by Day: DAY 6

14 MAY

Sonya Savoy and Hiroyo Ueno in front of Sekisho-in Temple. PHOTO: Keiko Inoue

Breakfast at hotel. Depart by bus for Koya-san, the headquarters of the Shingon sect of Japanese Buddhism, founded by Kobo Daishi (Kukai) in 816 CE. The Shingon teachings, or mikkyo *(secret teachings), have their origin in the esoteric traditions of India and China. Lunch on the way to Mount Koya. Special arrangements have been made for our stay at the Sekisho-in Temple. Dinner and lecture on the temple grounds by*

Kurt Kubli Genso, an "ambassador" of the hospitality organization Yokoso! Japan, who facilitates the reception of foreign visitors to the Koya sanctuary. Overnight at the temple monastery.

KOYA-SAN

> *"After breakfast at the hotel, we bus off to Koya-san, headquarters of the Shingon sect of Japanese Buddhism, founded by Kobo Daishi Kukai in 816 CE.*
>
> *"We lunch at a nice restaurant along the way – with stops for toilet and store visits, as well.*
>
> *"We arrive in early afternoon and are met by an English-speaking (Swiss) priest, Kurt Kubli-Genso.*
>
> *"Following depositing our luggage in rooms at the Sekisho-in Temple monastery, we spend the afternoon touring all the shrines – and the HUGE cemetery in Koya-san.*
>
> *–Journal entry by Gary Buchanan*

Sacred sites and pilgrimage routes in the mountain range of the Kii Peninsula extend for miles and have been recognized by UNESCO as one of Japan's World Heritage sites. Mount Koya is the major one.

Koya-san is the headquarters of the Shingon sect of Japanese Buddhism and home to one of the first Japanese Buddhist temples in Japan. The sanctuary was first settled in 816 CE by the founder of the Shingon sect, Kobo Daishi (Kukai), as a training hall for the secret teachings (m*ikkyo*) of Shingon, teachings that have their origin in the esoteric traditions of India and China.

After Kobo Daishi was initiated in China as the eighth master of Esoteric Buddhism after only two years of preparation, he returned to Japan, later to found the monastery at Koya-san.

The two main pillars of his teachings were (1) that everyone has the ability to attain enlightenment or Buddhahood (Sokushin Jobutsu) within their lifetime and (2) to bring eternal peace to Japan.

Kobo Daishi

For more on the life of Kobo Daishi (Kukai), read the article on Kukai in Wikipedia .

Okunoin, the mausoleum of Kukai, is surrounded by the largest cemetery in Japan. It is said that Kobo Daishi entered Okunoin with an oath to save people forever. He is popularly believed to be in eternal meditation here since March 21, 835.

"Hall of Lamps" in the cemetary surrounding mausoleum of Kobo Daishi. PHOTO: Jim Elliott

“Here in the sanctuary at Koya-san are planted monuments connected with the Luminous Teaching of the ancient Church of the East (Keikyo).

“I take many photos – the best in front of the Nestorian monument.”

–Journal entry by Gary Buchanan

The Irishwoman E.A. Gordon, author of “On Kobo Daishi and the Nestorians in China,” donated the replica of the monument erected on Mount Koya, which was dedicated with full Buddhist ceremonial on Sunday, October 3, 1911. PHOTO: Jim Elliott

Today there are 117 temples in Koya-san, although the broader image is that the whole mountain is one large temple.

Tour guide Kurt Kubli Genso introduces the layout of the temple complex. PHOTO: Jim Elliott

The Head Temple of Koya-san Shingon Buddhism is erected on the site of the residence of Kobo Saishi’s first disciple, Shinzen Daitoku.

The rock garden surrounding the Head Temple, completed in 1984, is the largest rock garden in Japan and picturesque throughout the year. PHOTO: Jim Elliott

At the site called Danjo Garan, Kobo Daishi conducted the

groundbreaking ceremony and dedicated his life to the construction of the monastery. The site now consists of nearly twenty structures, including the magnificent Konpon Daito, which is considered to be the central point of a mandala covering all of Japan according to Shingon doctrine. Inside are images of the eight patriarchs of Esoteric Buddhism and sixteen Bodhisattvas (Bosatsu). The main image is of the Five Buddhas: the four Buddhas of the Diamond Realm surrounding the central Buddha Dainichi Nyorai (Mahavairocana) of the Womb Realm. The hall called “Miedo” (“the hall of the honorable portrait”) contains a portrait of Kobo Daishi painted by his disciple Shinnyo and is closed to the public except for a few select people who are permitted to enter on special occasions.

Shrine site on the guided tour of Koya-san. PHOTO: Ron Theriault

Shrine site on the guided tour of Koya-san. PHOTO: Ron Theriault

Shrine site on the guided tourt of

Koya-san. PHOTO: Ron Theriault

Garden at Sesisho-in Temple. PHOTO: Jim Elliott

Garden scene at Sesisho-in Temple. PHOTO: Jim Elliott

For a complete virtual tour of the sanctuary of Koya-san, the present-day headquarters of Koya-san Shingon Buddhism, visit the official web site.

MIKKYO LECTURE

Monks serving dinner at Koya-san.
PHOTO: Ron Theriault

"In the evening at dinner in the monastery, Kurt gives a long talk about his mikkyo (secret teachings)."

—Journal entry by Gary Buchanan

Kurt Genso presents lecture on the present-

day inner teachings of Shingon. PHOTO: Gary Buchanan

Sadayuki Hagihara (aka "Kojak") posing with a statue in front of the monastery at Koya-san prior to departure. PHOTO: Ron Theriault

<DAY 5>

<DAY 7>

Services for the Week of August 11, 2012

Saturday, August 11, 2012
10:00 AM COMMUNION
Chapel of Holy Child

RR Gene Savoy, Jr
Lector: RC Gary Buchanan
Cantor: Rev. Barbara Whitney
Reader: Rev. Ben Hubbard
Organist: Jonathan Kanzelmeyer

Sunday, August 12, 2012
5:58 AM NEW DIVINE SERVICE
Church of New Pentecost
Leave: 4:45
Gate:5:35
Sunrise 6:13

RR Gene Savoy, Jr
Concelebrant: RR Sean Savoy
Assistants:
RC Roger Weld
Rev. Bob Petrovich
RC Rebecca Willis
Organist: RC Gary Buchanan

OPEN-AIR COMMUNION

Church of New Mount Tabor Rev. Vickie Hewlett

Church of New Mount Carmel Rev. Robert Roy

Church of New Mount Hebron Rev. Larry Coesens

Wednesday, August 15, 2012
12 N COMMUNION
Chapel of the Holy Child
Rev. Vickie Hewlett

Friday, August 17, 2012
9:00 AM PRAYER & FELLOWSHIP
Chapel of the Roses
RR Sean Savoy

Lee Ann Baum and Peig Myota to Open New Healing Center in Milwaukee

In mid-June Peig Myota and Lee Ann Baum, who have been residing in Reno for the past eight months, announced that they were preparing to return home to the Milwaukee area for personal reasons. There they plan to reopen their healing center with new insight and a new direction.

During their time in Reno, both Peig and Lee Ann set up office at the Steamboat Hot Springs Healing Center and offered therapies. Peig offered a variety of individual counseling sessions, discussion groups, and workshops. Lee Ann worked as a Sonatherapy therapist under Gary Buchanan's guidance and offered aura photography, sound table therapy, energy work, and light therapy.

Peig Myota

Peig has received an appointment form Bishop Gene Savoy Jr. to teach two courses preliminary to the standard Academy Program as an extension program of the Jamilian University, an "Introduction to Cosolargy" and a "Solar Light Study Program."

Both courses are designed to lead prospective students into the more formalized Academy Program. Peig's past success with teaching similar programs in Wisconsin led to her receiving a formal appointment at this time.

Lee Ann said of her time in Reno, "I have had many extraordinary experiences as well as an abundance of travel across the globe from South Africa to Japan. This acquired knowledge has enriched my life on every level – emotionally, mentally, physically and spiritually.

Lee Ann Baum

"My work is now integrated with a certification in Sonatherapy by Dr. Gary Buchanan as well as having the privilege of working with renowned Cymatic Therapist Yukinori Matsushita, in Kurume, Japan. Currently, Steamboat is the only authorized institution in the world researching and developing the science of Sonatherapy.

"We will be re-opening The Healing Place at Feronia Wellness Center in Germantown, Wisconsin. I will be offering Sonatherapy, Sound Table Therapy, Crystal Bowl Therapy, Aura Photography, Energy Work, Massage Therapy, Raindrop Therapy, Chakra Light Therapy and all the wonderful things in between. Our experience now provides us the opportunity to offer innovative and advanced Sound Therapy techniques."

From the pulpit on Saturday, June 23, Bishop Gene Savoy Jr. announced to the resident congregation the decision of Peig and Lee Ann to return to Wisconsin after their extended visit and provided a look into their future work with the Community.

“They will be re-establishing their Healing Center there in collaboration with our Healing Center at Steamboat,” he said. “They will be continuing their studies in Cosolargy and promoting the Jamilian University to others who are interested in our programs. I will also be working with them personally on establishing a Community Center in Wisconsin. And they will be returning to Reno in September to participate in the Convocation and Conference.”

Bishop Savoy closed his announcement, speaking to Peig and Lee Ann seated in the congregation: “We will miss you both, but we extend our blessings and our love. All will be well if you remember to keep the Community at the forefront of your life and decisions. And never forget to trust in the Light.”

Project “X” Tours Japan Day by Day: DAY 5

13 MAY

Entryway to Kono Shrine. PHOTO: Sean Savoy

Breakfast at the hotel. Then, visit the Izumo Grand Shrine, Japan's oldest and second most important Shinto shrine. After lunch, see nearby Kono Shrine, the oldest shrine in Japan, and neighboring Manai Shrine, the original Grand Shrine where the sun goddess Amaterasu was enshrined. Dinner and overnight at the Ark Hotel Fukuchiyama.

> *"This day is definitely a special one for us. The sun in the morning is manifesting. I am immediately drawn into the rays and find it difficult to break away to join the others for breakfast.*
>
> *"Alongside the waterway across the street there are archetypal symbols embedded in the shore's concrete sidewalk – and they are gleaming in the mists of the crashing lake waves."*
>
> *—Journal entry by Gary Buchanan*

IZUMO GRAND SHRINE

Izumo Grand Shrine (Izumo-taisha) is one of the most ancient and important sacred places of Shinto. The hall and its buildings are designated National Treasures of Japan. PHOTO: Blue Lotus

According to the oldest chronicles, Izumo Grand Shrine was the largest wooden structure in Japan when it was originally constructed. The main structure is built in the oldest style of building shrines. In 2008 the inner shrine was opened to the public for the first time in sixty years.

This sacred site is said to enshrine Okuninushi, the deity of marriage and considered to be the creator of Japan. According to the oldest chronicles of Japan, Okuninushi granted his country to Ninigi, grandson of the sun goddess Amaterasu, when he descended from heaven.

For more on Izumo Grand Shrine and a photo gallery, read the article "Izumo-taisha" in Wikipedia.

KONO SHRINE

Kono Shrine, the most important shrine in Tango Province and the oldest shrine in Japan, is said to be founded more than 2,000 years ago. Pictured here is the main door to the shrine. PHOTO: Sean Savoy

Kono Shrine is, with the neighboring Manai Shrine, the original Grand Shrine where the sun goddess Amaterasu was enshrined before she resided at the present Grand Shrine in Ise.

Kono Shrine is built in a unique architectural style that is seen nowhere else but the Ise Grand Shrine.

Some recent theorists have suggested Jewish and Syrian origins for some of the peoples and religions of Japan and point to evidence for their theory with symbols found at Kono Shrine.

> *"We drive a couple of hours to visit the Kono Shrine. It is almost sunset, and the sun continues to manifest.*
>
> *"On the way we visit a winery near Kono and check out the products. The light outside is irresistible, so I spend most of my time on the outside porch observing the light over the vineyards and local lake.*

“Following the winery visit, we drive only a couple of blocks to the Kono Shrine, oldest in Japan. It is now sunset, and even though we can take photos out front and watch the setting sun over the shrine, the shrine proper is closed and gated off.”

—Journal entry by Gary Buchanan

Link to the Kono Shrine official web site.

MANAI SHRINE

Manai Shrine, dedicated to the god Izanagi, is located behind Kono Shrine and is part of the original Grand Shrine. Pictured is the main entrance. PHOTO: Sean Savoy

“We begin walking west and up another high hill to the Manai Shrine — that of ‘eating and wellness,’ from ‘manna.’

“While we are ascending the stairs up to the shrine, I hear people calling my name and telling me to hurry.

“As I reach the top, along with the others there is a fellow standing directly in front of the shrine with his back to us.

“Then, just as I arrive and take my directed position behind him, he begins playing an ancient stone flute melody, with long, drawn-out high tones, in worship. He is cycle-breathing, and the piece goes on for quite some time.

“I hasten to pull out my camera and begin videoing his performance.

Musician playing bamboo flute at Manai Shrine. PHOTO: Sean Savoy

“Next, he changes his stone flute (iwabue) to one in a higher range. This was followed by a vocal chant – quite strongly delivered. Finally, he picked up a bamboo didgeridoo and began playing – clearing the shrine – then turning and pointing the sound at each of us in the assembly.

“I am able to capture a bit of both the flute and vocal chant before my video card is full.

Gary and other tour members visit with the musician after his performance. PHOTO: Sean Savoy

“Afterwards, the musician meets with me – with lots of hugs and smiles, incredible warmth – as we stand together for photos. Our Japanese Consociates explain to him that I am the musician in our religion back in the U.S.

Shinto priest "clearing" field of Yukinori at Manai Temple. PHOTO: Sean Savoy

"Meanwhile, the other Shinto priest in attendance (from the Ise Shrine), over to the side, is treating Yuki – working on clearing his aura, swishing with his hands and whistling, pulling negative influences out and throwing them away.

"Gene also meets with the priest and they discuss a potential future visit to Reno for sunrise services, perhaps upcoming conference in September, etc.

"We leave the hill feeling as if ALL has been perfect on this sunny day!"

–Journal entry by Gary Buchanan

One of the smaller shrines at the larger Manai Shrine. PHOTO: Ron Theriault

Watch "Manai Sunset," a video of the Japanese musician's performance on YouTube.

<DAY 4>

<DAY 6>

THE LUMINOUS TEACHING STONE OF CHINA: The Stone Itself, Part 4: Recognition

Luminous Teaching Stone of China

A full-sized replica of the oldest surviving Christian

monument in China is now on permanent display in the chambers of the Sacred Oversee of the International Community of Christ, Church of the Second Advent. The reproduction of this extraordinary monument was donated to the Church on May 11, 1991, by Mark Lord, its creator.

The monument and its cultural context had intrigued Lord since his earliest contact with The Church through the Jamilian University's correspondence extension program in the late 1970s, when he became familiar with its history. Syriac documents and traditions suggest that Christian missionaries contacted China many times during the first millennium, and Chinese imperial edicts record major events in the establishment, and disestablishment, of the Church throughout its existence in China. But the inscription on the Luminous Teaching Monument is the earliest local document testifying to a Christian presence in China. The inscription, written by a Persian monk in a Christian monastery of eighth-century China, commemorates the mission of his church to the great T'ang dynasty. The narrative tells that the Rabban A-lo-pen made his way to China from the Middle East and in A.D. 635 arrived at the capital of Ch'ang-an. There the emperor investigated A-lo-pen's teaching and in A.D. 638 issued an imperial rescript that recognized the validity of Bishop A-lo-pen's "Sutras and Images." In China, the missionaries of the Church christened their religion *ching-chiao—ching* meaning "luminous" or "bright light" and *chiao* meaning "teaching" or "religion." An examination of the Chinese character *ching* shows its component parts to be two independent characters, the one meaning "sun" and the other meaning "great." In medieval China, the Church of the East began to be officially called "The Great Sun Religion" or "Luminous Religion," a title virtually identical to the Chinese name given to the popular Vairochana Buddhist teaching. (In the West, the Church of the East is generally referred to as the "Nestorian" Church, a misnomer perpetrated for centuries by the Western Churches to indicate, for them, its heretical nature.)

In 1988, Lord learned of an original rubbing of the inscription being displayed in the front window of a small antique shop in Taiwan. When Lord mentioned the prospect of obtaining the rubbing to the then Head Bishop of the Second Advent Church, Gene Savoy Sr., the Bishop urged Lord to make an offer through his acquaintance in Taiwan who had notified him of the rubbing. Over the next year, increasing difficulties prevented further progress when the antique shop became a museum of Taiwanese folk art, and the rubbing was removed. In June 1989, Lord mailed a letter to the museum on behalf of Bishop Savoy, who was then on expedition in Peru. Written under the auspices of the Andean Explorers Foundation, the letter requested the purchase of the rubbing, or a copy of the rubbing, and explained the monument's correlations with other researches the foundation had done. In July, Mr. Shun-Ming Chang, the wealthy proprietor of the Taiwan Folk Art Museum in Taipei as well as many businesses in Hong Kong and Singapore, phoned Lord to inform him that he was in Reno, Nevada. By coincidence, Mr. Chang had received Lord's letter and made the full-size copy of the 100-year-old-rubbing, which he brought to Reno.

Construction of the replica began later in 1989 with an initial display design and the repeated efforts of friends to aid in the project. One, a professional photographer, was able to photographically replicate the rubbing to size without distortion. Another, a wood artisan, designed a frame for the giant slide of the inscription and, over a few months, constructed it to the dimensions of the original monument as recorded in several texts: approximately ten feet tall, three feet wide, and one foot thick. At Bishop Savoy's request to reproduce the monument as accurately as possible, Lord attempted to reproduce in wood the dragonlike figures of the monument's headpiece for his display. Using photographs from several sources and knowing the exact size of one of the design elements, the Saint Thomas Cross, Lord was able to reproduce the fantastic shapes of the headpiece with relative

accuracy, tracing the outline in the wooden slab line by line, then checking the lines again and again as he carved out the figures.

Only two other full replicas of the monument are known to exist. The first stone replica of the monument was cut in 1907 from the same quarry in China as the original through the unrewarded efforts of the young Danish orientalist and explorer Frits Holm. It came under the ownership of a Roman Catholic convert, who in 1916 moved the stone to the beautiful former palace of the popes, the Lateran in Rome, where, as pontifical property, the Monumentum Syro-Sinicum came to occupy for many years a place of honor opposite the main entrance. The Irishwoman E.A. Gordon, author of “On Kobo Daishi and the Nestorians in China,” donated another replica of the monument, which was erected in Japan and dedicated with a full Buddhist ceremonial on Sunday, October 3, 1911. This replica of the monument is displayed at the top of the holy mountain, Koya San, in Japan’s chief Buddhist sanctuary. A third partial replica was made in 1937, when the Church of Saint Simeon the Zealot was built in Shiraz, Iran. The priest in charge, the English missionary Norman Sharp, had a facsimile of the monument’s headpiece made and placed in the church as a memorial to Persia’s Christian past. The original monument remains at Xian, near its first site, in the Forest of Monuments, which was once the grounds of the Confucian College, well protected from wind and rain and the hands of careless visitors.

Robert G. Petrovich

1991, 2010

Project “X” Tours Japan Day by Day: DAY 4

12 MAY

The dinner table at Hotel Ichibata. PHOTO: Rob Roy

Breakfast at hotel. Bus all day to the main island of Honshu. Upon arrival at Izumo, enjoy dinner. Bishop Gene Savoy Jr. delivers a brief talk. Overnight at Hotel Ichibata.

Visit <the island of Honshu through Wikipedia [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Honshu] >.

LANDSCAPES

PHOTO: Sean Savoy

PHOTO: Sean Savoy

PHOTO: Rob Roy

PHOTO: Gary Buchanan

LECTURE AT IZUMO

Gene Savoy Jr. delivers a brief lecture at the Hotel Ichibata.

<DAY 3>

<DAY 5>

Project “X” Tours Japan Day by Day: DAY 3

11 MAY

PHOTO: Sean Savoy

*Communion Service and Third-Degree Ordination for Reverends Shoko Ohba and Eriko Ueno. Breakfast at hotel. Depart by bus for Seiwa Bunraku Puppet Theater to watch a full play. Bunraku companies, performers, and puppet makers have been designated Living National Treasures. Then, visit the Heitate Shrine, closed for centuries as the "Hidden Shrine." Heitate is considered the navel of the world, where the legend of "High Heaven's Plain" (*Takamagahara*) was born. Lunch. Continue by bus to Takachiho, site of one of the most well-known and important legends of Japanese mythology, that of the great sun-goddess Amaterasu. Tour Amano-iwato Shrine and Ama-no-yasugawara, the "Cave of the Sun Goddess" or "Heavenly Rock Cave." Dance performance at nearby art center. Dinner and overnight at Hotel Shenzhou.*

COMMUNION SERVICE

Noriko Soejima shows off her embroidery handiwork before the service. PHOTO: Sean Savoy

"Birthday of Gene Savoy, Sr. He is in our thoughts.

"We are up early (4:00 AM) to depart to a site on Mt. Aso for a sunrise service. Unfortunately, it is still overcast. Thus, we are unable to debark and set up for a service. We return to the hotel to put into action 'Plan B.'

"After breakfast we hold a small Communion Service in a side room off the lobby … with rice cakes, followed by a 3rd-Degree Ordination service for Eriko and Shoko.

Congregation gathers for Communion of Fellowship Service PHOTO: Rob Roy

“Music is played by myself on a small keyboard … while some of our Japanese Consociates accompany with singing bowls in the correct keys. Quite effective, and there are many wet eyes in the room.”

—Journal entry by Gary Buchanan

ORDINATION CEREMONY

Bishops (from left to right) Sean Savoy,

Gene Savoy Jr., and Yukinori Matsushita open Ordination Ceremony. PHOTO: Rob Roy Deaconesses Eriko Ueno and Shoko Ohba receive Third-Degree Ordination. PHOT Rob Roy(from left to right) Deaconesses Yaeno Sanada, Shinobu Uwataki, Miyuki Okayama, and Keiko Inoue of the Bell Choir play crystal bowls during Ordination Ceremony. PHOTO Sean Savoy

SEIWA BUNRAKU PUPPET THEATER

PHOTO Sean Savoy

In the Aso district the group visits Seiwa Bunraku Puppet Theater to watch a full play.

Founded in the seventeenth century, bunraku is a theatrical art form expressing the movements of human feeling and gesture. It is an author’s theater. The Joruri music that accompanies the play is a form of traditional music that

emphasizes lyrics and narration over the music itself.

The puppets of bunraku range in size from two to four feet in height. The heads and hands are carved by specialists; the costumes are designed by a costume master; the preparation of the puppets' hair is an art in itself. All but the most minor characters require three puppeteers.

Training a main puppeteer can take thirty years.

Bunraku companies, performers, and puppet makers have been designated Living National Treasures.

Bunraku puppeteer amuses the audience after the performance. PHOTO: Gary Buchanan

<Read about Bunraku on Wikipedia> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bunraku].

Tour member Jalayne Grady appears onstage with puppeteers and puppets. PHOTO: Sean Savoy

The theater at Seiwa is an award-winning design, a large-scale version of the conventional layered-wood structure with eaves thirty-feet high, designed to stage a form of bunraku that has been performed from the time of the Tokugawa Shogunate.

<Read about the architectural design of the Seiwa Bunraku Puppet Theater [http://www.pref.kumamoto.jp/uploaded/attachment/16270.htm] >.

"The play was being filmed for TV broadcast on May 21.

"The theater show is a 160-year-old art form – oral tradition – drama and music, Japanese "opera." Members of our group were invited to try out the puppets – great fun!"

–Journal entry by Gary Buchanan

HEITATE SHRINE

Heitate Jingu Shrine is considered one of the most outstanding power spots in Japan and the origin of the world. Every five years, a celebration is held at the shrine celebrating the origin of all peoples: the Five-Colored Grand Festival.

In the city of Aso the group visits Heitate Shrine, a famous “power spot” on the Japan Median Tectonic Line, on which are many other sacred places, including Ise Shrine. Heitate Shrine is considered the navel of the world, where the legend of “High Heaven’s Plain” (*Takamagahara*) was born.

Closed for centuries as the “Hidden Shrine” to preserve its extraordinary sanctity, Heitate Shrine is not big and not easy to access, but ambassadors and officials, spiritual leaders and people from around the world have come here to visit

during the Five-Colored Grand Festival (*Goshikitaisai*), which is held every five years in August to celebrate the ancestors of humankind and to pray for peace.

Spring at Heitate Shrine. PHOTO: Rob Roy

"At 11:30 AM we depart for Heitate Shrine – 'Navel of the World' – 'High Heaven's Plain.'

"It is a long climb up stone steps to the shrine at the top of the hill. For a long time a 'hidden shrine,' the original was simply trees and rocks (very old trees). Now there are several buildings and individual springs and smaller shrines…for drinking sacred waters and washing hands.

"We learn/observe the entry protocol of two bows, two claps, and final bow before entering.

"One could fee a great presence at this shrine…and after walking down a nearby pathway into the forest. There was also a unique smaller shrine with five small priests (appearing like children) looking heavenward."

–Journal entry by Gary Buchanan

One of the smaller shrines within the Heitate Shrine. PHOTO: Ron Theriault

Members of the tour group on the way to Takachiho Shrine PHOTO: Ron Theriault

TAKACHIHO SHRINE

Ancient cedar tree at Takachiho Shrine. PHOTO: Sonya Savoy

Takachiho is the site of one of the most important and well-known legends of Japanese mythology. According to Japanese mythology, the land of Takachiho is where Ninigi, the bringer of celestial gifts and great-grandfather of the first emperor, descended from the heavens, sent by the Shinto sun goddess Amaterasu. According to the popular tradition, the three gifts he brought are the imperial sacred treasures: the sacred mirror, the sacred sword, and the sacred jewel. Today the mirror is enshrined at the main shrine of Ise Jingu, the sword at Atsuta Jingu in Nagoya City, and the jewel in the Imperial Palace.

Takachiho Shrine enshrines the three gods of the three generations (*Joko Takachiho Sumegami*) that appear in the Himuka imperial foundation myths. According to oral tradition, the shrine was founded early in the first century CE. In the precincts is an 800-year-old cedar tree planted in the twelfth century by the famous samurai Hatakeyama Shigetada, who visited the shrine on behalf of the Kamakura Shogunate.

AMA-NO-IWATO SHRINE

Landscape near Ama-no-iwato Shrine. PHOTO Sonya Savoy

Ama-no-iwato Shrine, according to the myth, is where the sun goddess Amaterasu hid in a cave, outraged by her brother's cruelty, bringing darkness and cold to the world, until she was lured out by a wild dance led by Ame-no-Uzume, goddess of the dawn and revelry. The other gods placed a mirror at the opening of the cave, so that when she came out to see what was going on she would see her own image in the mirror. As she looked out, she was blinded by the light and, thinking they were celebrating the arrival of a greater goddess than herself, she came out of the cave. The world was bathed again in light and a holy seal was placed on the cave so that she could not hide there again. The Sacred Mirror, recognized as one of the three imperial gifts from heaven, is enshrined at Ise Grand Shrine.

The cave is enshrined in the West Hall of the shrine; the goddess Amaterasu herself is enshrined in the East Hall. A shortened form of the legend is reenacted for tourists every night of the year as night dances (*yokagura*) at the Takachiho shrine.

Kagura dancer. PHOTO: Sean Savoy

Read more about < *kagura* [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kagura]> in Wikipedia.

AMA-NO-YASUGAWARA

PHOTO Sean Savoy

South of town is Takachiho Gorge, formed by the lava that once flowed out of Mt. Aso. Designated as a special natural treasure and scenic spot, it is famous for the feel of its rocks and the mysterious beauty of their forms, such as the

precipice Byobuiwa.

The “Cave of the Sun Goddess” or “Heavenly Rock Cave” grotto is filled with visitors and hundreds of small rock piles, devotionals built as offerings to the shrine over the centuries. This is the legendary cave where the sun goddess emerged after being kidnapped.

Manai waterfall in Takichiho Gorge is one of the most prominent falls in Japan. Approaching the falls by boat is a thrilling experience.

TRADITIONAL DANCE PERFORMANCE

In the evening there is a dance performance at the nearby art center. PHOTO: Sean Savoy

<DAY 2>

<DAY 4>

Sanctuary Water Project: Phase 2 Nears Completion

PHOTO: Ted Staver

After approximately 10 months of hard work and planning, Phase 2 of the Sanctuary Water Project is nearly completed.

After completing Phase 1 of the water project, the Church's Building Department first needed to design and build a lift pump, or booster pump, station that would lift the water from the Argonaut well up the hills to the 10,000-gallon reservoir behind the Chapter House. To do this required a little more than 3,000 feet of pipe and a lot of digging with a trenching machine.

PHOTO: Ted Staver

Pipe laid near the lift pump station. PHOTO: Ted Staver

That part of the project alone took a little more than 7 months to complete because, along with the pipe that was laid, electrical wiring for power distribution and signal wire for communications were also placed in the trench.

The photos show that there is a lot of equipment inside the lift pump station: power distribution transformers, motor controllers, a computer for monitoring sensor signals, and a specialized inverter, or power transformer, for converting wind and solar power to run the pump in the future as those things become available.

Herman Aggenbach, who designed and installed the electronics, checks his work. PHOTO: Ted Staver

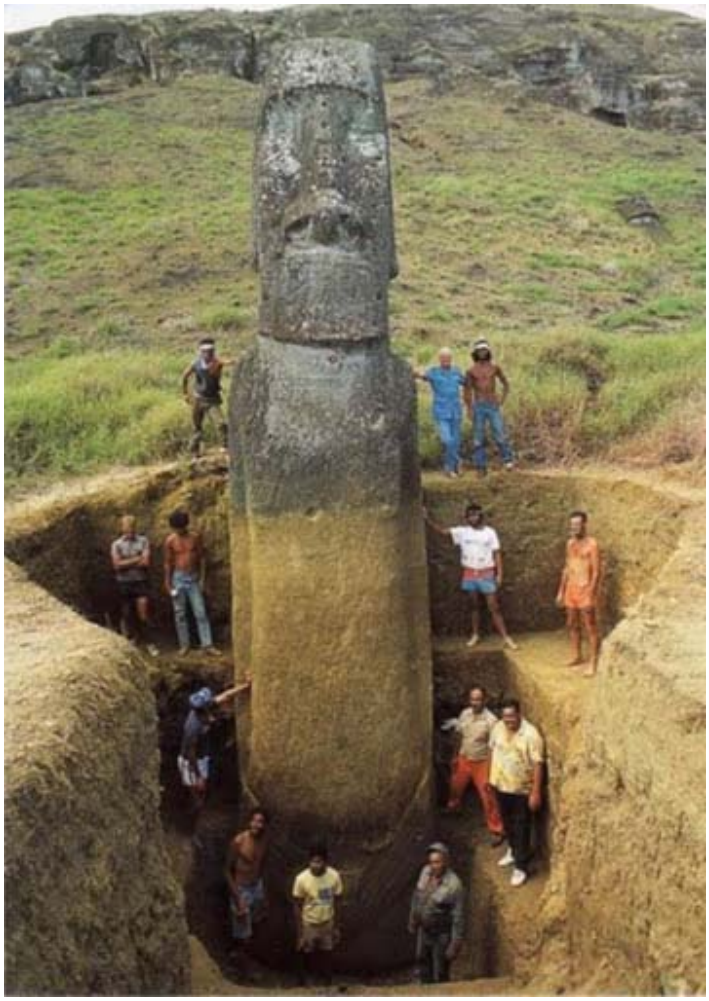
Ted Staver, one of the main workers on the project from the Church's Building Department, made some comparisons to give an idea of what these developments will mean for the Sanctuary in the future: "In the past, we were using a diesel generator to pump water for our irrigation system on the upper level of the Sanctuary. That was not very cost effective. To give you an idea of what this means, the diesel generator during the summer months was pumping 60,000 gals of water per month. The lift pump station that we have designed will enable us to pump *1.3 million gallons of water per month,* if we choose, to the upper level of the Sanctuary *at one-tenth the cost of diesel fuel*. It is a major step toward the future growth of the Sanctuary."

PHOTO: Ted Staver

Completed lift pump station near the Sanctuary pond. PHOTO: Ted Staver

Report provided by Ted Staver

The Easter Island Statues Have Bodies!



Explorer Thor Heyerdahl excavated this Easter Island statue in 1954-55. The UCLA project is the first, legally permitted archaeological project in the quarry since Heyerdahl's dig. The grandchildren of diggers on that project now work on Van Tilburg's project. PHOTO is from Heyerdahl's book Easter Island: The Mystery Solved.

The Easter Island statues have bodies! Apparently this is not really news. It is only news to people like me—and maybe you. Apparently this has been known since the Thor Heyerdahl dig in1955 exposed the bodies for the first time.

Here is a link to a blog entry on the subject posted on

snopes.com with photos: "Head Case."

For more information, follow this link to an article posted May 30, 2012, in *UCLA Today*.

In recent years the Easter Island Statue Project (EISP) has excavated and studied a number of the statues, revealing their bodies in the process. The EISP official website (www.eisp.org) provides a great deal of information on the expeditions undertaken to discover information on the statues and a lot of photos. Click on the link above to visit the site.

These articles were brought to our attention by Elizabeth Reece.

Project "X" Tours Japan Day by Day: DAY 2

10 MAY

Looking out the entrance of Izumi Shrine. PHOTO: Sean Savoy

Breakfast at hotel. After a brief orientation, depart by bus for Kumamoto. Visit Kumamoto Castle, which covers nearly one square mile. Enjoy lunch at Suizen-ji Park, one of the most beautiful formal gardens in Japan. The park hosts Izumi Shrine. Then, continue by bus to visit Mount Aso in Aso Kuju National Park and surrounding farmlands. Mt. Aso is the largest volcano in Japan and among the largest in the world. Dinner and overnight at Aso Villa Park Hotel.

KUMAMOTO CASTLE

> *"Kumamoto Castle. Enormous and impressive – covering nearly one square mile."*
> *–Journal entry by Gary Buchanan*

Kumamoto Castle. PHOTO: Robert Roy

Kumamoto Castle, with its signature curved stone walls, is one of the three premier castles in Japan. The history of the hilltop castle complex dates back to 1467, when its foundations were established.

Suizen-ji Joju-en Park. PHOTO: Ron Theriault

Kumamoto is also home to Suizenji Park (Suizen-ji Joju-en), one of the most beautiful formal gardens in Japan, less than two miles from the city’s landmark castle, at a site selected in 1636 by Lord Hosokawa for its spring-fed pond whose water makes excellent tea.

The park, declared a national historic site of scenic beauty, hosts Izumi Shrine.

IZUMI SHRINE

Tour members enter Izumi Shrine grounds. PHOTO: Gary Buchanan

“Izumi Shrine in Suizen-ji Park. Beautiful architecture and gardens. Buddhist-Shinto mix of styles. Miniature Mt. Fuji in the park. Good vibes. Lots of large fish in the ponds.”
—Journal entry by Gary Buchanan

Izumi Shrine. PHOTO: Gary Buchanan

Garden with replica of Mount Fuji,
Izumi Shrine. PHOTO: Gary Buchanan

ASO KUJU NATIONAL PARK

Mount Aso, in Aso Kuju National Park in the east of Kumamoto Prefecture, is the largest active volcano in Japan and among the largest in the world. Aso caldera holds five peaks and the small city of Aso. The crater of the peak at the center is still active, constantly sending up black smoke and rumbling underground. In and around the park are many hot springs.

“Aso Kuju National Park and surrounding farmlands that

stretch to the horizon. Among the largest volcanoes in the world. However, it is raining and overcast, and we are only allowed to visit the museum, which nevertheless is also impressive. We viewed a film of the entire history and geophysical development of the Aso area."
—Journal entry by Gary Buchanan

<DAY 1>

<DAY 3>