

Jushin

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inside your Jushin

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Please be sure to open the accompanying Obon Special "web Jushin 1a July.PDF"

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Chairperson's Message

ALOHA! WE'RE OPEN AGAIN!

Few sentiments can express the emotion your Board and I feel as we announce, "We're reopening our doors to share the teachings!" No words can express what's in our hearts. We hope your family is well and we thank you for your understanding.

Throughout these few months our temple has been kept functioning (despite closed doors) by the Aloha and kokua of our minister and kind volunteers. Part of this, I truly believe, is also due to our rich Hawaiian host-culture and spirit. During all this time, loyal volunteers cleaned the temple and Nokotsudo "religiously" as well as brought flowers weekly. We thank you from our hearts. For example I recently learned that to get our temple hondo ready for a private service, the Kikuchi children, Kokoro (8) and Hana (6) helped dust-mop and wipe window sills along with volunteer Harriet Yamada. Ren (10) hot-laminated all our safe distancing, door and seating signs, and packed all our service books. And all helped their parents to clear the hondo ahead of the professional sanitizing company we hired. The Kikuchis are a "temple family" for sure. Arigato.

Being Obon season, at this one opportunity each year we would like to ask for your continued dana and kind, generous financial support no matter how small, or, if any at all, as we move forward. We have placed an Obon donation envelope in this Jushin, a practice we do in every June-July Jushin issue. Although we are NOT having a bon dance this year, running the temple continues 365 days a year. Please consider ONLY what you feel you wish to give for we know how our entire community has been impacted by health concerns, closures and restrictions. Our Kaneohe temple is resilient because of all of us together. Arigato.

At this time I must announce that Rev. Koen Kikuchi and his loving family will be returning to Japan very soon because his religious visa will expire. We will miss the whole family - they have added a special family flavor and have become a part of our 'ohana helping us during their 14 months here. We wish Rev. Koen and his family the very best as they settle in his family's Akita mountainside temple. Ganbatte!

The Hawaii Betsuin will assign a minister to carry-on Kaneohe's responsibilities although a date has not been finalized yet. Therefore, we will have 9AM Sunday services through June including July 5. We are trying to schedule our July services (See page 6). Memorial and funeral services can be arranged by calling the temple at 247-2661 and leaving a detailed message.

We graciously thank Vice-Chair Karen Hayashida for stepping into the Chairperson's role during the time I could not. We also bid Aloha with much appreciation to Walt Herring who stepped down from the Board. Mahalo Karen and Walt for your dana.

Regarding services, we are following government guidelines to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Face masks and physical distancing are required. Our seating capacity will be limited to about 12-18 persons. If you have a fever and/or flu-like symptoms we ask you to please remain home and take care.

In Gassho, Mary Matsuda
Chairperson



Minister's Message

Obon is the 'here and now'

What day is it today? What month is it this month? Is this week the green bin or blue bin for the recycle collection? When are we going to reopen? When can we return to a normal life? These are the questions that we may be asking during this difficult and uncertain situation.

It's partly because we cannot see a clear vision for the future. Not knowing makes us feel anxiety. Will this situation last for months? For a year? When will a vaccine be produced? We don't know.

When we look at our own life, how many things do we know that are for sure? Has your life become how you imagined when you were a child? How many future things do you have – or events you wish for – of which you are 100% sure? If things are going well, we may fool ourselves into thinking things will become how I imagined. But this is still talking about the situation of "if." Not 100% sure. We feel happiness or unhappiness while we are thinking about our future. But this seems the same as gambling.

I was supposed to go to Las Vegas in May with my family. It was to be our first trip there, and I thought I could learn about my true self, which is, I am such a **bakatare** and **bonbu** person – meaning weak and foolish. But, with great disappointment my plans didn't go as I expected. However, I learned about myself anyway! I was happy from pleasurable thinking about future fun - and then the opposite - worrying so much about if our



family could get the cancellations refunded or not. To me, such emotions are just like gambling.

When it comes to gambling, I suppose we wish we win money but, at the same time, we hope we don't lose money. It means our feeling is never the same — always bouncing up and down. Why does this happen? This is because our mind stays in the future and the past, not in the here and now. This is the same situation as we are now facing with COVID-19.

I guess most humans worry and feel the stress when the future is unclear. But in reality our future is never clear anyway, so why do we have to worry at all? Instead, we should be in the present moment. This is the teaching of Buddha; stay in the present moment, here and now. Our life is not like gambling and we shouldn't gamble with our life. Could this be a "voice" from our ancestors? None of our loved ones would have wanted us to enjoy gambling with our lives and end our lives without the feeling of true calmness.

Obon is the time to think about our loved ones and show appreciation to them. We may feel the sadness of loss. But what we need to do is to listen to their voices. Maybe they would have said, "Don't stay in the past or wish for the future. Focus on your present life." In realizing our alive-ness Obon can – or should – be a joyous time for us to be in the moment.

Unfortunately, we won't have a Bon Dance at our temple this year. But this could be a message from our ancestors telling us to "focus on our present life at this moment" especially during this pandemic. "Don't stay in the past and wish for the future." Yes, let's think about your life through your ancestors. Obon this year will be a little quiet, but it will be a good time to think about these important messages from our loved ones.

I hope all of you stay healthy and have precious times in whatever your current situation. Hope to see you soon. Mahalo.

In Gassho, Koen Kikuchi



A family enjoying precious moments, truly focusing on their lives together, at the setting sun at Ala Moana Beach Park.
File Photograph

Hanamatsuri Guest Message

Rev. Jan Youth, Minister Honpa
Hongwanji Betsuin (Retired)

Aloha Dear Dharma Friend,

As I sit at the computer, I face the reality that the multiple causes and conditions make our meeting for Hanamatsuri no longer a possibility. Therefore, I am writing a message to share with you my thoughts and considerations surrounding the pandemic of COVID 19 and what it means for us, in this moment, individually and collectively.

Each of us has had several responses to the current global conditions affecting our life. The responses range from paralyzing fear, debilitating anger, to stunned disbelief. Whether it was panic purchasing and stockpiling household items, our focus was clear. Some of our actions followed similar paths based on our personal perspectives about the situation. We unapologetically acted in terms of what was going to be necessary for our survival. As we caught our breath, our responses shifted towards denial and faultfinding.

Now after another a month of “stay at home” and “physical distancing” guidelines, I sit back anxiously awaiting the return of normalcy in home and neighborhood. It is in this moment that I learn of the creative responses that have come forth - volunteers sewing masks, arranging Zoom parties, drive-by birthday and wedding celebrations. In this moment, as I draw a new map for living, these acts of kindness and compassion restored humanity in my life. In this moment, I am reminded of the pain and suffering experienced by those who contracted the virus. In this moment, I begin a shift and see things from the conditions on the outside toward a look more deeply inward into being human. This priceless moment reveals a new self-portrait. What about yourself?

The images and the emotions, through reflection and introspection, are likely an affirmation of my sense of self. This give rise to a sense of self-satisfaction and righteousness. Moreover, the process leads further along the path — with further questions into the nature of what it means to be human. Yet there are thoughts and feelings that do not have any conceptual language or description. None of us are immune to the changing conditions of living. We all feel something, have an opinion on most things, and make judgments about everything; none of which changes the reality of the pandemic.

This is my personal journey in response to the impermanent and ever-changing nature of my environment. The constant throughout this is my own ego-driven responses to all conditions around me. I rage about decisions being made for me. I complain at what I judged to be less-informed decisions made by others for me. I grieve at the painful stories of the suffering and loss of life as well the personal struggles for those whose work meant helping others live and die through the virus. I cheer for those who could respond in



Our poster of 'ohana photos with flowers displayed during our Hanamatsuri virtual service

the face of their own personal fears. I feel hopeful as the compassionate

responses from so many to keep others uplifted. As the news channels share numerous acts and expressions of kindness, love, and peace, gratefully I found a shift or a soft twist in my self-serving selfish judging mind that, “it’s not all about me.”

When I sit away from all the electronic devices that have consumed my attention, I am shocked at how easily I have been distracted to a reality that I created from my ego-driven judgments. I treated my opinions and conclusions as undeniable facts. I could not see beyond the limits of the screen. In a moment of sheer anguish, I wept - not for others or about the current conditions. I wept for myself as I slowly came to an awakening of myself as one who moves through this life in the depths of ignorance.

This awakening is not by my efforts. This awakening is the grace of Amida that enables an awakening to become so. This awakening is only possible as Shinran wrote in the Jodo Wasan, ***“The fundamental intent to which the Buddha appeared in the world***

Was to reveal the truth and reality of the primal vow. He taught to encounter or behold Buddha Is as rare as the blossoming of the udumbara.”

The journey of awakening is now; in every encounter, in every conversation, in every thought and action. I need only to be vulnerable and receptive. So dear friend, may you be safe and well regardless of all conditions. May you experience the compassion of Amida even without words to explain it.

I dry my tears to find myself in the great moment of “I think I may be getting it.” The path of awakening is not linear, systematic or intentional. It is sudden and not of my doing. The message from Shinran’s Wasan brings forth the reality of our condition and the necessity for Shakyamuni’s presence in this reality in order for me to experience the compassion of Amida. Shinran reminds me through his Wasan,

“Shakyamuni and Amida are our father and mother, Full of love and compassion for us; Guiding us through various skillful means, They bring us to awaken the supreme shinjin.”

Note: Youth Sensei was asked to be the guest speaker at our Hanamatsuri service, April 12. However, all churches were closed due to COVID-19. Jan Youth was a public school teacher, then vice principal, and retired as an educational officer. She followed her calling and became a Honpa Hongwanji minister, serving at Honpa Betsuin and at Mililani Hongwanji. She is now retired.

Douglas Crosier

Hoshidan was “life changing”

This is a condensed dharma talk given by Douglas A. Crosier on January 12, 2020, at the Kaneohe Higashi Hongwanji.

Editor’s note: *The Ho-onko commemorates Shinran Shonen’s November 1263 passing and is the Higashi Hongwanji’s most important annual service. People from all over Japan journey to the main temple in Kyoto during the last week of November to attend one of the services held. The Hoshidan is a formal study and work session held for Higashi laypersons for 2-1/2 days during Ho-onko. Hoshidan participants receive familiarization of Jodo Shinshu tenets, intensive group discussions and lectures, attend daily services, dine together and partake in a temple project. Douglas and Jean Crosier, gojikai members of Kaneohe Higashi Hongwanji, were invited by the Hawaii Betsuin to attend the 2019 group with five other Hawaii District members.*

First of all, I thank the Board of Directors for giving myself and my wife, Jean, the opportunity to attend the Ho-onko Hoshidan at the Honzan, the main temple of Higashi Hongwanji in Kyoto in the last week of November, 2019. We also thank the Higashi Hawaii Betsuin for funding this very educational trip. Thank you, Kikuchi Sensei for taking very good care of our Hawaii group.

When I am asked, “how was the study trip,” by our temple members and friends, I say that for me it was a life changing experience. What do I mean by this? Why did I leave at the end of the Hoonko Hoshidan experience feeling that way?

It was life changing because I saw my world, my existence, how I live, what I believe, all change, not completely but enough, to keep me thinking about it very often ever since I left Kyoto. My beliefs changed as I, now, understand a little more of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism.

This I learned from the 2-1/2 days of morning, afternoon, and one evening of Michael Conway Sensei’s presentations explaining the meaning of Jodo Shinshu to our group of 11 Americans. Our group

encountered Conway Sensei’s presentations at the Honzan’s retreat center. We were joined by seven sensei from other areas of Japan there to attend the memorial of Shinran Shonin.

Shinran, the founder of Jodo Shinshu, lived from 1173 until his passing on November 28, 1263 - a long life of 90 years considering the era in which he lived.

We were cared for in a very nice, newly dedicated conference building adjacent to the two large temples of the Honzan. It also included a genuine onsen for conference participants.



Douglas Crosier



Douglas Crosier accepts his Buddhist dharma name at the Honzan.

from Conway Sensei, who, to our surprise, spoke fluent Japanese and wrote kanji as easily as he spoke and wrote in English. He

was one of 14 siblings of an Irish Catholic family from Chicago. He found his way to Buddhism through the Buddhist Temple of Chicago, then travelled to Kyoto in his deeper search of Buddhism 16 years ago and has lived in Japan since. Conway Sensei led all of our Hoshidan presentations. The other sensei were like us,



Reverend Michael Conway (standing at the blackboard) is giving an overview of Jodo Shinshu to the English-speaking Hoshidan participants. Courtesy photos

Once we checked in, we could not leave the Higashi grounds. We had a tightly packed schedule everyday beginning with the most difficult part for me was getting up at 6 am. We were busy from that time on until early evening in group presentations and discussion sessions with Conway Sensei, group dining and such. We also had twice-daily services that were very impressive, as Kikuchi Sensei said, to hear all the Hongwanji members chant Shoshinge together. I was told that they were 177 attending this Hoshidan retreat, 11 from the United States and 166 from Japan. Morning and other services held in the chilly open Main Hall included the public that numbered in the hundreds seated on tatami. What I learned came

listening to him explain his understanding of Jodo Shinshu. His presentations gave me the start of trying to understand Jodo Shinshu.

At the first day and first meeting, we were asked to introduce ourselves and say a few words about ourselves. I probably surprised the others because I said that I came to this retreat, “to learn the truth.” What I meant by that was my desire to learn what is the truth about the meaning of life; what does Jodo Shinshu Buddhism say about this, compared to the other religions that speak to that question.

I gave the example of how one apparently under Buddhism can be a Buddhist and a Christian at the same time.

Continued on next page.

Hoshidan

Continued from previous page.

However, one apparently under the Christian belief, could not be a Christian and a Buddhist. For Christians there is only one truth, one way, and it is the belief in and the way of Christ. Only through Christ according to Christianity will you enter the Kingdom of Heaven and see God. For me then, if you did not believe in Christ, then you could not go to Heaven and be with God.

Conway Sensei explained that for Buddhists there are two aspirations - One: To be and live in accordance with the truth which is to live life as it is and not what you expect life to be; and, Two: to aspire to help others. He also explained the meaning of “shinjin” in relation to these aspirations. He explained that to have “shinjin” or the awakened mind is the awareness and acceptance of life.

But if truth is awareness, then what is the awareness of? He explained that the awareness is that life is filled with suffering from birth, illness, aging, and then death. It was through this awareness or shinjin could one be relieved of this suffering through acceptance of this fact. Conway Sensei also answered my other question I had asked on the last day of our session, “Is there everlasting life in Shin Buddhism?” His answer was that there is no everlasting life in Shin Buddhism, there is no heaven. When you die, you die. So why was hearing all of this life changing for me?

Because hearing that made me realize that Shin Buddhism is a way to achieve shinjin, to be awakened to the reality that life is difficult - filled with forms of suffering (our wants not being met, our dismay that we get old, get sick, and die, that nothing remains the same as everything changes.) Impermanence, as Buddhists would say.

Jodo Shinshu has the two aspirations of life. I realized that the first aspiration is to know that reality and to accept that so we are not so disappointed or dissatisfied with the sufferings of life. For me, and I speak only for myself, I also understand that accepting this stark reality will possibly help me live life in accordance with this view of reality, and thereby help me focus my life on what seems to be



Hawaii and US mainland attendees, ministers, and Honzan administrators, pose for a Hoshidan group photo. Rev. Michael Conway is front center. Courtesy photo

important - to live life to the fullest while I am alive, to live in the moment, to smell the flowers, not to sweat the small stuff. In other words, to focus on what you can do in life, to live in appreciation that I have a life and to make the best of it, to concentrate on what we can do now during our existence on Earth instead of hoping and praying that we will have another life in heaven after death where I will see those who have already passed, my loved ones, ancestors, family, obaachan and ojisan, my pets - all in heaven which is what some other religions offer as salvation.

All very confusing in a way, and disturbing in another way. Realizing that there is no Buddhist heaven makes it much harder to live as a Buddhist than to live as a Christian. The second aspiration, as I understood it, was to live your life helping others, to help others to do well.

As I said, Hoshidan was life changing for me because I saw my world, my existence, how I live, what I believe in, all change - but not completely. Not completely because I still don't know if these two Jodo aspirations are the only purposes of living. The question for me is: Are we only here to avoid suffering and to help others or is their another purpose or reason why we exist? I don't know and I am still searching for that answer. For me it is important to know that answer in order for me to be fulfilled. Nonetheless, my life has changed in that I appreciate understanding more fully that I have one life on Earth and that I need to make the best of it, to appreciate and have gratitude that I am blessed to be alive and to be grateful for that rather than to spend life hoping for salvation in another life which may or may not be. Although I struggle with such

thoughts, but at least now I am aware of that. That is a beginning to achieve shinjin. Buddhism and its view as explained by Conway Sensei resonate with me more now than ever before. I left the retreat thinking that the path to shinjin, to be awakened about these things, was meaningful to me, and it provided an understanding to live life in a more meaningful and compassionate way.

I still don't know enough and I am still searching for answers. But for me, I now know that Buddhism offers a philosophy of life that is meaningful and positive, more so than I have ever felt about life before. I can say that because of the Ho-onko Hoshidan, I am more a Buddhist than anything else. That is life changing for me.

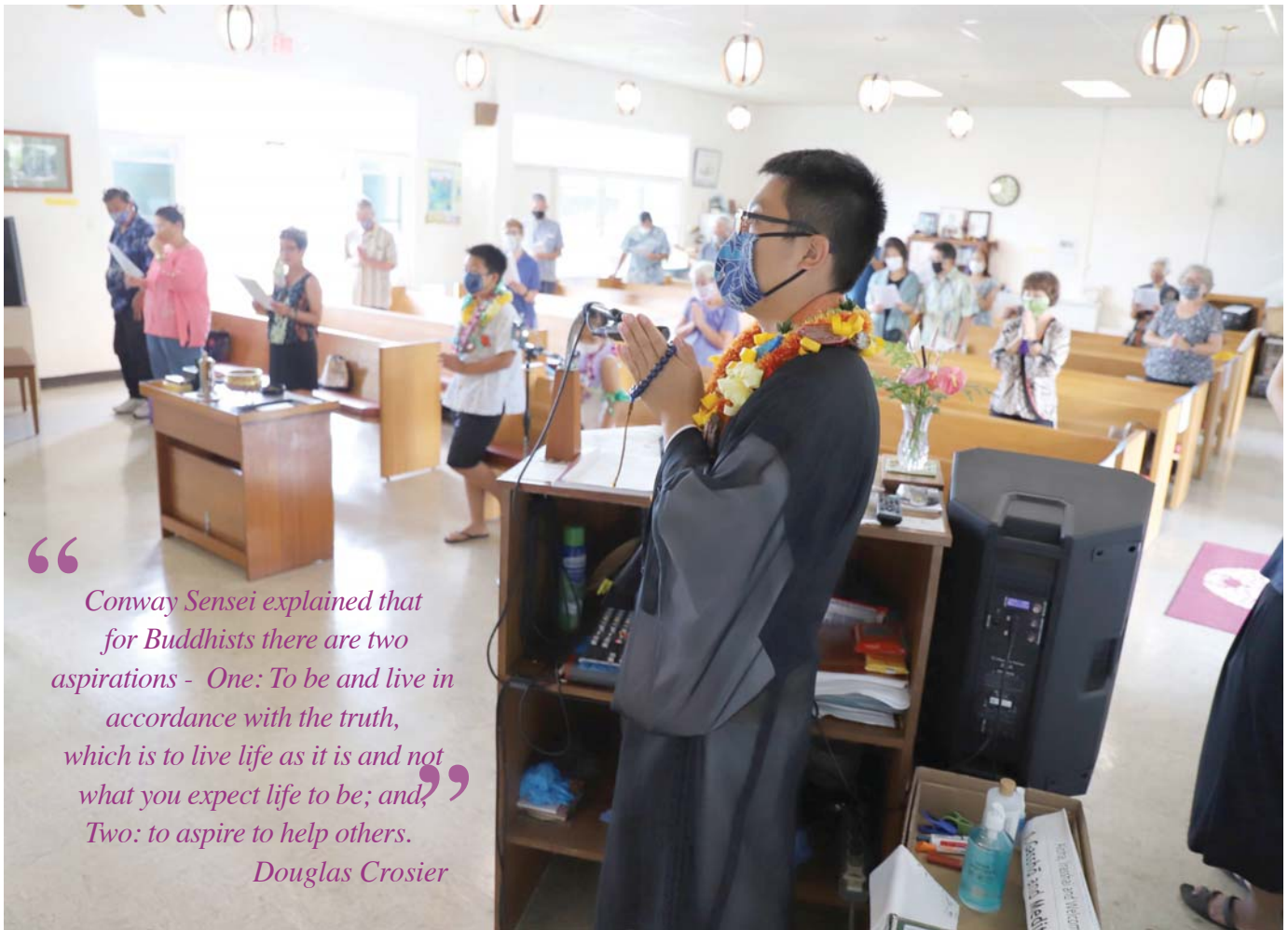
Response from Kikuchi Sensei

Aloha, Doug (and dharma friends);

Thank you for your revelations. Your writing touches upon many deep topics modern society may find “different” when comparing, say, religions.

Buddhism offers a philosophy of life and is a journey to keep walking a path with questions which are provided by the teaching. Walking and questioning is the path of our Buddhist life. Jodo Shinshu Buddhism does not “provide” answers, forgiveness, or offer any heaven. I believe we find moments of awakening during our seeking the path, but awakening is not the goal - it is another start of our life.

The Hoshidan offered you and many others the first awakening experience. Even though you feel you must call us sensei, we are your equal peers in this journey together. Welcome along on this journey! In Gassho, Koen



“
*Conway Sensei explained that
for Buddhists there are two
aspirations - One: To be and live in
accordance with the truth,
which is to live life as it is and not
what you expect life to be; and,”*
Two: to aspire to help others.
Douglas Crosier

July Calendar

Dear Members and Jushin Readers,

Reverend Koen Kikuchi will soon return to Japan because of his expiring visa. We held our Obon service on Sunday, July 5, as originally scheduled last July.

A new resident minister will be assigned but the arrival date has not been set. During July we will also try to schedule 9am Sunday Service each Sunday.

Please telephone our temple at 247-2661 on the Saturday before our Sunday service you wish to attend, listen to the voice message to verify if a service will be held with a guest minister.

Mahalo!

JULY

- | | | |
|----------|------------|----------------------------------|
| 5 | 9am | Sunday Service at temple |
| 12 | 9am | Sunday Service at temple (tent.) |
| 19 | 9am | Sunday Service at temple (tent.) |
| 26 | 9am | Sunday Service at temple (tent.) |

Kikuchi Sensei has been broadcasting “live” services on Facebook. Here are those services on FaceBook: March 29, April 12, April 26, May 10, May 24, and each Sunday through our July 5th Obon. Search for Kaneohe Higashi Hongwanji.



Kaneohe Higashi Hongwanji 2020 Obon Service, July 5, 2020, following Hawaii's health orders. Reverend Koen Kikuchi officiating.



After June 28th Sunday service, presentation of a surprise Mahalo gift to Rev. Kikuchi on behalf of the Kaneohe Higashi Hongwanji and 'ohana.



A framed portrait of children Ren, Kokoro and Hana in a hula pose with the Koolau mountains in the background. The family knew and kept it a secret!

Obon Special

Obon

1954 Our oldest bon dance photo!

2017 Bon Dance

Patient Sensei Doug with keiki

1960s Taiko

2017 Taiko

2010 Shakas

2003 Bon Dance Crowd

Arigatai for donated vegetables

1960s Food concession

Wonderful HJCC volunteers

We hope you'll have fun looking at our past and current bon dances that our community has enjoyed since the 1950s. How our bon dances have grown since then, due to so many of you! *Arigato!*

Hatsubon service

Koharu 2007

Awesome Koolau Sunset

Kokoro and Hana give a high 5!

Sensei Jean shows the way 2019

Our 2016 Kitchen Chefs

YUM! YUM!

Showing our new, restful Nokotsudo

Kaneohe Higashi Hongwanji Mission

Celebrating Our 95th Anniversary **1924** **2019** Collector's Edition Tenugui

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