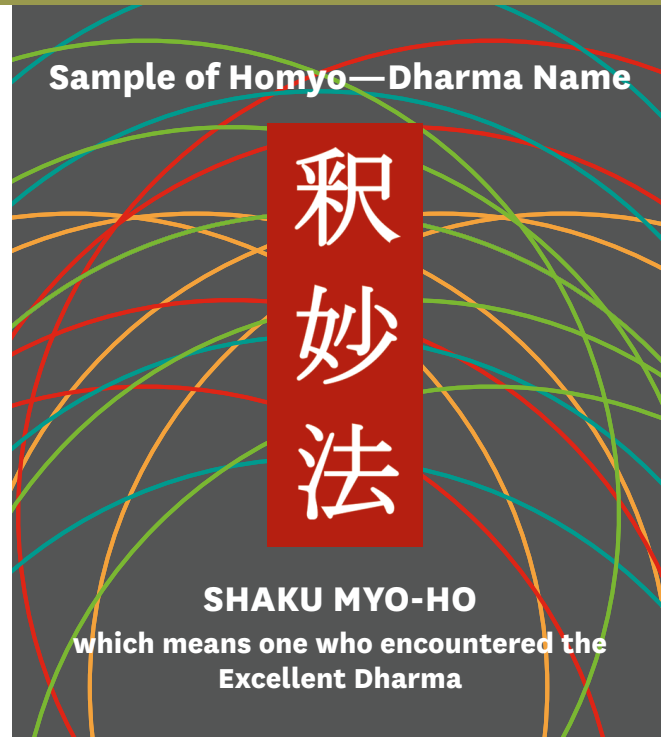


What is a Homyo?

The Japanese term, Homyo means a Dharma Name. A Homyo is conferred upon ministers by the Gomonsu who is the spiritual leader of Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha denomination on the occasion of their Doshiki or initial ordination ceremony. For lay people, it is also given by the Gomonsu on the occasion of Kikyo-shiki or Confirmation Ceremony. The Dharma Name is personally selected by the Gomonsu from the Jodo Shinshu scriptures. In the Buddhist Churches of America, a Homyo is given by the Bishop on the occasion of Kie-shiki or Affirmation Ceremony. The Dharma Name given by the Bishop is often selected by a resident minister based on the favorite word or character from the Dharma chosen by recipient.

When do we receive a Homyo?

Many people tend to think that a Homyo is only given to the person after one's life ends. This is a great misunderstanding. A Homyo is conferred on a person when one is still living and not on a person who has passed away. The reason is to give the living person the opportunity to become a disciple of Shakyamuni Buddha. That is, it is to encourage people to hear the Teachings of the Buddha while they are still able to do it. Therefore, one should receive a Homyo while still living. However, a Homyo can also be conferred after a person's death if one missed the opportunity earlier. This is to allow the surviving members of the family as well as the friends of the deceased to hear the Buddha's Teachings.



What does it mean to receive a Homyo?

In the time of Shakyamuni Buddha, one was allowed to join in the Sangha by taking refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha for guidance. Buddha refers to Shakyamuni Buddha, Dharma to Shakyamuni Buddha's Teaching, and Sangha to the community of fellow followers who have entrusted themselves to Shakyamuni Buddha and his teaching.

To receive a Homyo means that one becomes a disciple of Shakyamuni Buddha. This is why a Homyo is preceded by the word Shaku followed by two Chinese characters which embody the essence of the Buddha's Teachings. Shaku means becoming a disciple of Shakyamuni Buddha. In other words, one joins in the Shakya family and commits oneself to live on the Buddha's Teachings.

How the Homyo can guide and enrich your life

In the case of our secular name (first name), there is a wish made by our parents but no commitment on our part since it was chosen before our birth. In the case of the Dharma Name, there is a strong commitment made by recipients to center the teachings in their lives.

There are so many conflicts and problems occurring in our daily lives. In Buddhism, we are the problem. We always carry attachments and a self-centered nature. Because of I myself, we have to suffer with problems. The Dharma is the answer to our lives. The Dharma is a mirror which reflects the reality of who we are and shows the cause of our problems.

Shinran Shonin, founder of Jodo Shinshu, further defined our human nature in his writing as follows; **"We are full of ignorance and blind passions. Our desires are countless, and anger, wrath, jealousy, and envy are overwhelming, arising without pause; to the very last moment of life they do not cease, or disappear, or exhaust themselves."** (CWS P.488, Notes on Once-Calling and Many-Calling #20)

Buddhism signifies the teachings of the Buddha but also awakening to the Truth. However, our eyes are always covered and hindered by our ignorance and blind passions and they obstruct us from seeing the Truth. This is the key point Shinran Shonin focused on to resolve the issues in his life. Jodo Shinshu teaching is for those foolish beings pos-



sessed blind passions and cannot be free from the self-centered mind.

Receiving a Homyo and centering one's daily life in the Dharma will become a precious opportunity for one to focus one's true nature on the Universal Truth of the Dharma and fully live with deep meaning rooted in one's own Homyo, which embodies the essence of the teaching of the Buddha. The Dharma connection to one's daily life will change and make one's life meaningful and fulfilling and further empower one to pursue the path of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha.

What is the difference between Homyo and Kaimyo?

In Jodo Shinshu, the Dharma Name we receive is called a Homyo and not a Kaimyo which offered by other Buddhist schools. Kai means precepts. Therefore, receiving a Kaimyo means to seek enlightenment by upholding the precepts. We, Jodo Shinshu followers, however, are not mandated to observe the precepts of Buddhism as practiced by other Buddhist schools. Followers of Jodo Shinshu receive a Homyo, which signifies living in the True Teaching by wholeheartedly entrusting the working of the Buddha, thereby abandoning self-practice that is a reflection of our self-centered nature.

If you want to live in the Teaching by receiving your Homyo, please contact a minister.

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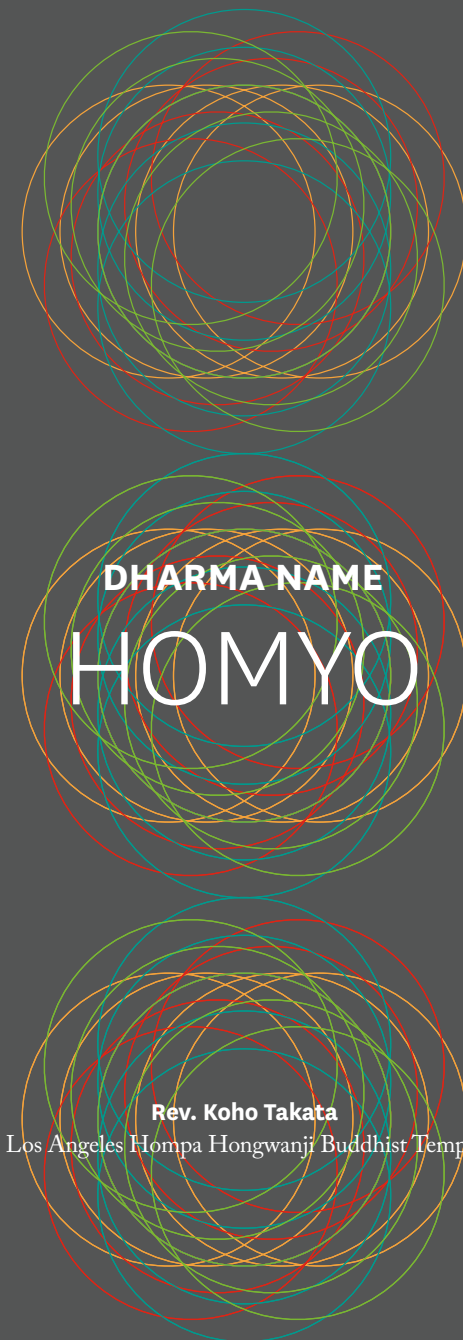
Southern District Temples

- Arizona Buddhist Temple
- Buddhist Church of Santa Barbara
- Buddhist Temple of San Diego
- Gardena Buddhist Church
- Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple
- Orange County Buddhist Church
- Oxnard Buddhist Temple
- Pasadena Buddhist Temple
- San Fernando Valley Hongwanji Buddhist Temple
- Senshin Buddhist Temple
- Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple
- Vista Buddhist Temple
- West Los Angeles Buddhist Temple



Buddhist Churches of America

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**DHARMA NAME
HOMYO**

Rev. Koho Takata
Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple