



# 2025 Southern District Buddhist Conference

Hosted by SFVHBT

**Theme: Cultural Connections: Exploring Jodo Shinshu  
Wisdom through Japanese Traditional Performing Arts**

Date: **Saturday, October 25, 2025**  
Time: **Registration begins at 8:30 am**  
**Conference time: 9:30 am - 3:00 pm**

Location: **San Fernando Valley Hongwanji Buddhist Temple**  
**9450 Remick Ave, Pacoima, CA 91331**

Registration information: \* Space is limited - early registration is encouraged  
- Fee = \$60 / person due by 10/5/2025 \* Late registration = \$80/person due by  
10/12/2025

- Fee includes Bento lunch
- **Make checks payable to: San Fernando Valley Hongwanji Buddhist Temple**
- Request one check per temple as well as one registration form
- Mail completed registration form & check to: SD Buddhist Conference

c/o SFVHBT  
9450 Remick Ave, Pacoima, CA 91331

Contact info: [sfvhbt@gmail.com](mailto:sfvhbt@gmail.com)

**Guest Speaker:**  
**Rev. Henry Adams**  
**of San Mateo**  
**Buddhist Temple**





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## **Guest Speaker: Rev. Henry Toryo Adams**

Rev. Henry Toryo Adams grew up in Buffalo, Minnesota. He discovered his interest in Buddhism during a one-year high school exchange program in Chennai, India. As an undergraduate student at St. Olaf College, he began his study of Buddhist scriptures and first considered pursuing the path to the ministry. After receiving an M.A. in Buddhist Studies from the University of Michigan, he moved to Miyazaki, Japan where he worked for the Miyazaki Prefectural Government. In 2007, Rev. Adams moved to Kyoto, Japan to pursue his ministerial studies at the Chuo Bukkyo Gakuin Buddhist Seminary. Upon graduating from the seminary, he began serving as a Minister in the Buddhist Churches of America in 2010.

Rev. Adams has been serving in his current capacity as the Resident Minister of the San Mateo Buddhist Temple since 2013. Prior to coming to San Mateo, he served the Oxnard Buddhist Temple, the Buddhist Church of Santa Barbara, the San Luis Obispo Buddhist Temple and the Guadalupe Buddhist Church. He also served as Supervising Minister for the Buddhist Church of San Francisco from September 2020 to May 2023.

From September 2018 to May 2019, he served as a Chaplain Intern at the University of California, San Francisco Medical Center.



## Cultural Connections: Exploring Jodo Shinshu Wisdom through Japanese Traditional Performing Arts

### Kyogen Performance: Religious Dispute by Theatre of Yugen

Our conference will explore the profound connection between Jodo Shinshu and Nohgaku (Noh and Kyogen). Noh is recognized as the world's oldest surviving theatrical form and has been deeply influenced by Buddhism. Meanwhile, Kyogen, which features ordinary people as protagonists, offers audiences profound insights into our bonbu human nature through humor and wit. Since Rennyō Shōnin's time, spiritual leaders have employed both art forms as powerful instruments of propagation at Nishi Hongwanji, leading to the construction and preservation of four Noh stages at the temple, including those designated as National Treasures of Japan. We are delighted to collaborate with Theatre of Yugen, the only ensemble in America dedicated to performing traditional Japanese Noh and Kyogen, who will present their production of Religious Dispute (Shuron 『宗論』) for our conference.

#### About the Play

Religious Dispute follows two traveling priests returning to the capital from a pilgrimage to sacred sites. Meeting on the road, they joyfully decide to journey together as companions. However, when they discover they belong to rival Buddhist sects, they engage in an increasingly heated theological debate. As each priest tries desperately to demonstrate his superior wisdom and cleverness, they drift further from appreciating the true essence of their respective teachings, until finally...

Religious Dispute is one of the most beloved and frequently performed Kyogen plays. Through Rev. Henry Adams's Dharma reflection, we will explore together what insights this timeless story offers us about Shinran Shōnin's teachings.



#### About Theatre of Yugen



Founded in 1978 by Yuriko Doi, Theatre of Yugen is an experimental ensemble dedicated to the pursuit of the intangible essence of yugen (幽玄)—yu (“profound” and “tranquil”) and gen (“mysterious”). With a foundation in Japanese noh drama and kyogen satire—the world’s oldest living style of theatre (over 650

years old)—Yugen creates works of world theatre by crafting original material and exploring dramatic and literary classics. No other theatre in the U.S. is exclusively committed to noh and kyogen. As such, Yugen remains a beacon for both traditional and experimental Japanese theatre in this country.





## **Tentative Schedule**

**2025 Southern District Conference on Saturday, October  
25, 2025**

**“Cultural Connections: Exploring Jodo Shinshu Wisdom  
through Japanese Traditional Performing Arts”**

**8:30 – 9:30 Registration (refreshments, Oshoko & Seating)**

**9:30 – 10:15 Opening service**

**10:15 – 10:45 Talk by Rev. Adams**

**10:45 – 11:00 Break (15 minutes)**

**11:00 – 12:00 Brief lecture on Nohgaku & Performance by  
Theatre of Yugen**

**12:00 – 12:30 Panel talk and Q&A**

**12:30 – 1:15 Bento Lunch**

**1:15 – 2:00 Workshops**

**2:00 – 2:15 Break (15 minutes)**

**2:15 – 3:00 Closing service & Announcement**



## **Workshop Options & Descriptions**

**Please review the workshops below and rank your top three choices on the registration form. We will do our best to place you in one of your preferred sessions, but please note that space is limited.**

### **1. Mini Mindful Garden & Japanese Poetry: Finding Calm in Nature**

In this hands-on workshop, participants will create a small, personal tabletop garden using sand, stones, and simple tools—a peaceful reflection of nature’s beauty. Alongside the garden-making activity, you’ll explore and compose two traditional forms of Japanese poetry: Senryu, which reflects everyday human experiences with a touch of humor or insight, and Haiku, capturing seasonal moments in just a few syllables.

### **2. Sustainable Storytelling with Natural Dyeing / Eco Printing**

In this workshop, we’ll reflect on the history of our temple grounds and honor the legacy of past sangha members who lovingly shaped the landscape decades ago. Using leaves, flowers, and other plant materials gathered from our temple grounds today, participants will create their own reusable furoshiki or cloth napkin—blending tradition with sustainability. Through the art of eco printing, we’ll practice the spirit of “no mottainai” (nothing goes to waste), transforming natural elements into personal, meaningful designs.



## **Workshop Options & Descriptions**

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### **3. In the Garden – Honoring Our Past & Future Today**

Many BCA temple gardens, including SFVHBT's, were built through the hard work of the Issei and Nisei generations. Their efforts gave future generations new opportunities—but often left behind the skills of garden care. If you have childhood memories of helping your gardener father, this is your chance to reconnect. Learn a few simple pruning techniques and help preserve the beauty of our Japanese-inspired temple gardens for generations to come. What to bring: Pruning shears, sun hat, sunscreen, and water bottle.

### **4. Folding Peace: Origami Inspired by Buddhist Symbols**

In this relaxing and creative workshop, participants will fold various origami figures such as the lotus, crane, and more—each carrying deep symbolism in Buddhist tradition. Bring your own favorite designs to share or learn something new as we explore the beauty and mindfulness of paper folding together



## **Workshop Options & Descriptions**

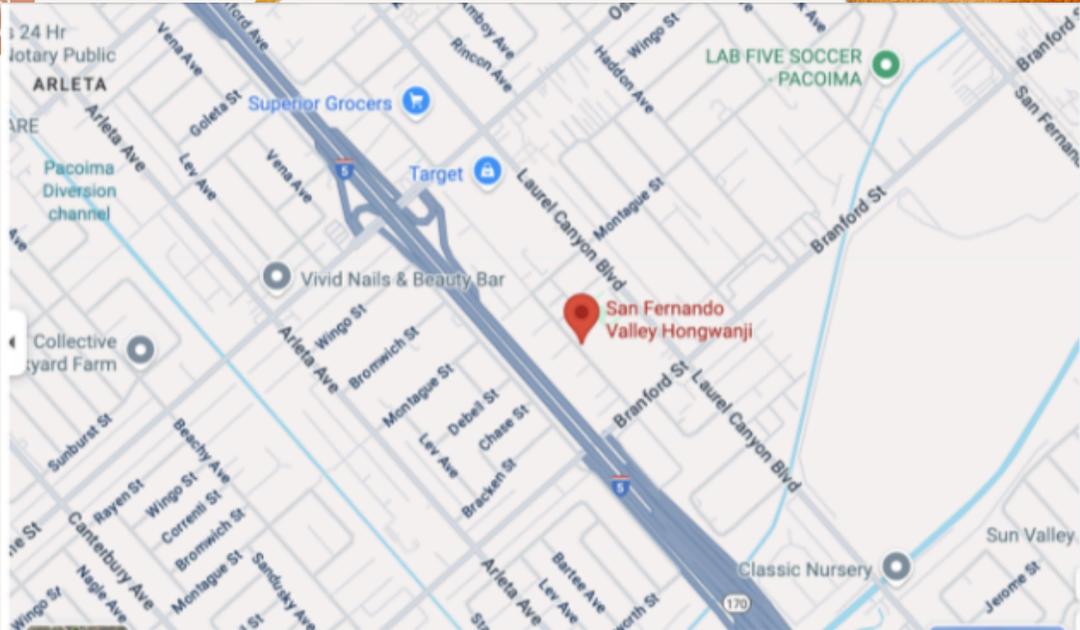
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### **5. Mask-Making Workshop**

Learn the basics of traditional Noh masks and their role in classical Japanese theater. Then, create your own unique character mask using a pre-formed base, adding features with sculpting dough and finishing it with painted details.

### **6. Buddhism and Improv Comedy**

From revealing the truths of interdependence and the preciousness of living in the spirit of ichigo-ichie (one time, one meeting), improvisational group comedy shows us how dropping our ego can lead us to unexpected moments of joy. Participants will get to experience gentle improv exercises that promote deep listening and mindfulness of the moment.



## San Fernando Valley Hongwanji Buddhist Temple (SFBVHBT)

9450 Remick Ave, Pacoima, CA 91331: SFBVHBT is conveniently located just off the Golden State 5 Freeway in the Northeast San Fernando Valley neighborhood of Pacoima.

### Directions from Various Locations (Alphabetical Order)

#### Downtown Los Angeles

1. Head onto US-101 North
2. Merge onto I-170 North, then onto I-5 North
3. Exit onto CA-118 West
4. Exit at Glenoaks Blvd, turn left
5. Turn left on Remick Ave

🕒 Approx. 25–35 min



## San Fernando Valley Hongwanji Buddhist Temple (SFVHBT)

Orange County (e.g., Anaheim, Irvine)

1. Take I-5 North
  2. Merge onto I-210 West, then onto CA-118 West
  3. Exit at Glenoaks Blvd, turn left
  4. Turn left on Remick Ave
- 🕒 Approx. 1.5 – 2 hrs

Pasadena

1. Take CA-134 West, then merge onto I-210 West toward San Fernando
  2. Exit onto CA-118 West
  3. Exit at Glenoaks Blvd, turn left
  4. Turn left on Remick Ave
- 🕒 Approx. 30–40 min

San Diego

1. Take I-5 North
  2. Continue past Los Angeles on I-5 North
  3. Merge onto I-210 West, then onto CA-118 West
  4. Exit at Glenoaks Blvd, turn left
  5. Turn left on Remick Ave
- 🕒 Approx. 2.5 – 3.5 hrs

South Bay (e.g., Torrance, Gardena, Carson)

1. Take I-405 North
  2. Merge onto CA-118 East
  3. Exit at Glenoaks Blvd, turn right
  4. Turn left on Remick Ave
- 🕒 Approx. 45 min – 1 hr

