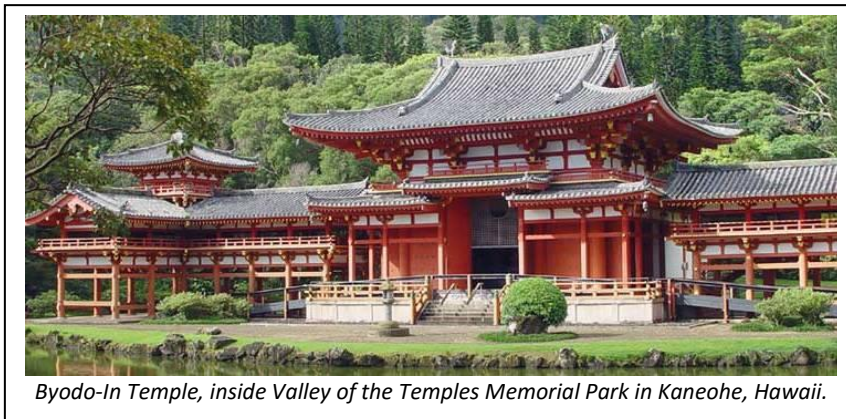


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Byodo-In Temple, Inside Hawaii’s Valley of the Temples Memorial Park, Celebrates 50th Anniversary With Series of Free Public Events

Popular Oahu tourist attraction marks 150th anniversary of the first Japanese immigration to Hawaii; visitors invited to day-long celebration in Kaneohe on Saturday, August 4



Byodo-In Temple, inside Valley of the Temples Memorial Park in Kaneohe, Hawaii.

KANEOHE, HAWAII – “Hey Jude” by The Beatles topped *Billboard’s* Top 100 chart and Apollo 8 became the first manned spacecraft to orbit the moon in 1968, the same year the [Byodo-In Temple](#) at [Valley of the Temples Memorial Park](#) welcomed its first visitors. Five decades later, the Byodo-In, a non-denominational temple that pays homage to the first Japanese settlers in Hawaii, has remained virtually unchanged. Over the years, the Temple has received people of all faiths to worship, meditate or simply appreciate its extraordinary beauty. To commemorate its 50th anniversary, Valley of the Temples is hosting a range of free activities for the public, including a large-scale celebration on August 4, 2018, to coincide with the Temple’s annual Obon Festival, one of the largest such festivals held on Oahu each year.

“We’re honored to be the caretakers of this historic site and to preserve a seminal part of U.S., Japanese-American and Hawaiian history,” said Dennis Boser Jr., regional manager of Valley of the Temples Memorial Park. “We invite the world to come and discover the beauty, tranquility and cultural significance of the Byodo-In. We think they’ll find the temple and its grounds as remarkable and peaceful now as it was in 1968.”

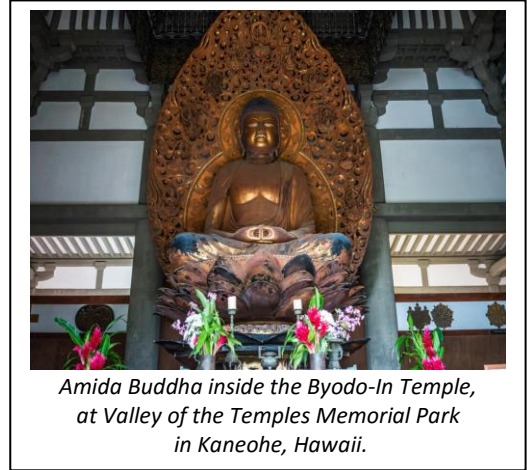
Byodo-In History

In 1968, Valley of the Temples constructed a half-sized replica of the 11th-century Phoenix Hall of the Byodo-In Buddhist temple complex in Uji, Japan. Nestled at the foot of the Ko’Olau Mountains, the Temple was built to commemorate the centennial of the first Japanese immigrants to Hawaii. Construction took nearly three years and cost \$2.6 million. The Temple was dedicated on June 7, 1968 with a traditional Buddhist ceremony. Governor John A. Burns, a favorite of the Japanese community because of his support for Japanese rights during the state’s territorial years, presided over the dedication.

A Golden Year of Celebrations

As Byodo-In celebrates its 50th birthday, the Oahu landmark invites the public to participate in the following free events:

- **Ching Ming Festival (April 1)** – During this annual festival, residents perform important Chinese ancestor worship rituals, such as cleaning and weeding graves and lighting incense.
- **Byodo-In 50th Anniversary & Obon Festival (August 4)** – This public event will be a joint celebration of the Temple's 50th anniversary and Valley of the Temples' annual Obon Festival. The day's activities will include Japanese dancers, a spiritual blessing, traditional tea ceremony, floating lantern ceremony, commemorative giveaways and more. Similar to America's Thanksgiving, Obon marks a time when Japanese families reunite to celebrate their heritage with loved ones and ancestors who've passed away. Valley of the Temples' Obon Festival is one of the biggest on Oahu, where hundreds of people gather to take part in this yearly Japanese ritual.



A Tourist Destination & Hawaii State Landmark

One of the most picturesque places on Oahu, Byodo-In is among the top 10 visitor attractions on the island and the #1 attraction in Kaneohe. More than 300,000 people visit annually. The temple grounds are often used for wedding ceremonies for Hawaiians or visitors from Japan.

Temple Features

Inside the 11,000-sq. ft. temple is a nine-foot statue of the Lotus Buddha and a wooden image depicting Amitabha, which is covered in gold. Outside is a meditation pavilion and a three-ton, brass peace bell called Bon-sho (sacred bell). Surrounding the temple are large koi ponds and lush Japanese gardens. The grounds are also home to wild peacocks, black swans and hundreds of Japanese koi carp.

USPS Priority Mail Stamp

On Jan. 21, 2018, the United States Postal Service (USPS) issued the Byodo-In Temple Priority Mail stamp, which features a colorful illustration of the Temple. The Postal Service commemorated the issuance of the stamp with a dedication ceremony on January 23.

Byodo-In Temple in Pop Culture

Several episodes of the television series, *Magnum P.I.* and *Hawaii Five-O*, feature the Byodo-In Temple. The area also served as a stand-in for South Korea in one episode of the ABC series *Lost* and as the presidential villa in an episode of *seaQuest DSV*. In 2001, the movie *Pearl Harbor* featured the Temple as its original namesake from Japan.

Being Buried Inside Byodo-In

A private room in the rear of the temple hosts a columbarium where 3,000 cremation glass-front niches are housed, with 1,200 still available for purchase. Niches can hold up to six full-size urns to accommodate families wishing to maintain their closeness, even in the afterlife.



Getting There

Located on the Windward side of Oahu in Kaneohe, Valley of the Temples Memorial Park is free and open to the public 365 days a year. The replica of Japan's Byodo-in Temple is located inside the Park and is open between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. daily. Admission is \$5 for adults, \$3 for seniors and \$2 for children under 12.

For more information, please visit <http://www.byodo-in.com> or www.valley-of-the-temples.com or call (808) 725-2798.

CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

WHAT:

The Byodo-In Temple, located inside Valley of the Temples Memorial Park, celebrates its 50th anniversary in tandem with the annual Obon Festival, one of the largest such festivals held on Oahu each year. The day will include a range of free activities for the public, including Japanese dancers and drummers, a spiritual blessing, traditional tea ceremony, floating lantern ceremony, commemorative giveaways and more.

WHERE:

Byodo-In Temple at Valley of the Temples Memorial Park
47-200 Kahekili Highway
Kaneohe, HI 96744
(808) 725-2798

WHEN:

Saturday, August 4, 2018

WHO:

Attendees include: Japanese dancers and drummers, Bishop Fukuhara to preside of the blessing and tea ceremony, Oahu tourists and residents and more.

ADMISSION:

Anniversary and Obon-related events will be free to the public. For more information, please visit www.valley-of-the-temples.com or call Valley of the Temples Memorial Park at (808) 725-2798.

ABOUT VALLEY OF THE TEMPLES MEMORIAL PARK

As the premier cemetery on Oahu, Valley of the Temples Memorial Park provides end-of-life services to families from diverse religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Established in 1963, Valley of the Temples Memorial Park is located on the Windward side of Oahu and is surrounded by mountains and lush, rolling green hills which overlook the Pacific Ocean. Valley of the Temples features the Hawaii Byodo-In Temple, the famous 1968 replica of the 11th century Phoenix Hall of the Byodo-In Buddhist temple complex in Uji, Japan. The Hawaii temple has appeared in numerous popular television shows including *Lost* and *Hawaii Five-O*. Valley of the Temples Memorial Park is part of a family of cemeteries, funeral homes and crematories with locations throughout the U.S. For more information, visit www.valley-of-the-temples.com or call (808) 239-8811.



Black swans call the reflecting lake home at Byodo-In Temple in Kaneohe, Hawaii.