03/03/2026

Pastoral Visit to Okinawa and Tokyo, Japan



From February 19 to 22, 2026, Metropolitan Ambroseios of Korea and Exarch of Japan visited Okinawa and Tokyo, Japan, to address the liturgical and pastoral needs of the Orthodox faithful and catechumens.

In Okinawa, which is the fifth largest island in Japan, the metropolitan met with the Executive Director of the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC), Dr. Nathan Hoppe, and Presbyter Fr. Stephen Ritsi, who came from Florida, USA, to discuss on-site the organization of missionary work in Okinawa, where no Orthodox missionary efforts have been undertaken to date.

On Friday, February 20, the metropolitan, along with OCMC members and local figures, visited the building intended to be used as a church, priest's residence, and spiritual center for the parish of the Nativity of Christ. They then met with the building's owner at his office to discuss the details of its purchase. In the evening, the metropolitan presided over the archieratic Vespers, with the participation of Presbyters Fr. Andrew Kearns and Fr. Stephen Ritsi. Fr. Andrew preached the divine word.

The following day, after Orthros and the archieratic Divine Liturgy—in which Fr. Stephen delivered the sermon—a memorial service was chanted for the repose of souls. Afterward, Dr. Nathan Hoppe spoke about the work of the OCMC and made

special mention of the first Executive Director of the OCMC, the ever-memorable Metropolitan Demetrios Couchell of Xanthi, who had fallen asleep in the Lord just two days prior. Warm thanks are due to Mrs. Erasmia Iliaki and her family for transforming her home into a “house church” in order to conduct the aforementioned liturgical gatherings.

On Sunday, February 22, the metropolitan celebrated Orthros and the Divine Liturgy at the Greek ambassadorial residence in Tokyo, which was very kindly provided by Her Excellency the Ambassador of Greece to Tokyo, Mrs. Olga Kliamaki. This worship service was also attended by His Excellency the Ambassador of Cyprus to Tokyo, Mr. Ioannis Michaelides, as well as Greeks and Japanese. After the dismissal, the metropolitan blessed the Vasilopita, followed by a reception.

During the reception, the metropolitan had a private meeting with the Japanese art history professor, Mr. Masuda Tomoyuki, with whom he discussed the details of the 23rd Annual Japanese Byzantine Studies Conference, to be held on the weekend of March 28 and 29, 2026, at Waseda University, where he is invited as the keynote speaker.



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