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Shinto Shrine Finds New Home at Illinois Wesleyan

Sept. 4, 2014

Illinois Wesleyan University is now the permanent home for the Bloomington Normal Sister Cities Mikoshi, a Shinto shrine donated by Asahikawa, Hokkaido, Japan—Bloomington-Normal's sister city.

Translating to “god vehicle,” a mikoshi is a temporary, portable shrine. In Shinto tradition, a mikoshi is used to hold the spirit of deity during festivals.

On display in a research area, the mikoshi is set amidst the **International Studies**, Religion and Philosophy Departments. The cultural artifact's physical presence will benefit student research in a variety of fields, according to Professor of Sociology Teodora (Teddy) Amoloza, who is also a member of the Bloomington-Normal Sister Cities Committee. The mikoshi will occasionally be taken out to exhibit to the Bloomington-Normal community during parades.

Asahikawa presented the mikoshi to Bloomington-Normal in 1992 in celebration of the 30th anniversary of the sister cities relationship. In recent years, the mikoshi has been kept in the homes of B-N Sister Cities Committee members while the committee searched for an appropriate, public home.



From left, Illinois Wesleyan Provost and Dean of Faculty Jonathan Green, Chairman of the Bloomington-Normal Sister Cities Committee Rich Strle, Normal Mayor Chris Koos and Bloomington Mayor (IWU Professor of Political Science) Tari Renner at the dedication of the mikoshi's new home.

By Tia Patsavas '16