A HUMBLE REQUEST FOR A MOMENT OF REFLECTION

Dallas, Orlando, Istanbul, Medina, Paris, Charleston, Oak Creek, San Bernardino and the list goes on and on. Each day, I start by watching the news for a few minutes to see what has happened in the world since I went to bed the previous night. Needless to say, we have many problems and issues which plague us. While mass killings, whether motivated by anger, greed, hatred, racism, self-centeredness, discrimination or any other reason (cause), is only one form of violence(effect) which troubles our world the recent increase in such incidents is a source of concern. It seems no place is safe or immune not even places deemed sacred and holy by many around world.

As we watch the news on TV, listen to the radio, read the paper or glance at posts on social media, we see so much suffering and needless, in my opinion, killing happening around the globe. But, what can we, what can I do? In my humble view, a first step is to consistently remind ourselves (the whole world) of the value of equality, harmony, non-violence, humility, mutual respect and preciousness of life. To be sure, we are not perfect human beings. We have negative thoughts which at times do surface in hurtful ways, but at the same time may we be guided and inspired by an All-Inclusive Wisdom and All-Embracing Compassion which encourages us to self-reflect and to try to respond to situations and circumstances in non-violent ways instead of reacting. In Buddhism, we would say let us be guided by the Dharma or Teachings.

As Buddhists, we are familiar with the sayings “Hatred is not overcome by hatred. Hatred is overcome by love,” “Revenge can be overcome by only abandoning revenge.” “The Wise seek neither victory nor defeat.” “May all beings be happy and safe.” Further in the Larger Sukhavativyuha Sutra, it says “All people of the world...should respect and love each other and should not hate and envy each other. They should share their possessions with each other, without being greedy, always speak gently, and live harmoniously without hurting each other.” The Great Pure Land Master T’an-luan said, “Because they are the same in practicing the nembutsu...all within the four seas, no matter how distant, are brothers and sisters.” Rennyo Shonin is known to have said, “Since we equally receive the benevolence of the Buddha (Amida), and equally have shinjin, all in the four oceans are brothers and sisters.” In Buddhism, everyone and everything possess or has access to Buddha-nature, the potential to become enlightened, and thus one and all should be equally respected for that potential.

My request, on the next available occasion, be it the next Sunday Service, weekly or monthly service or any temple gathering, may I ask that we, as Jodo Shin Buddhists, please take a moment to reflect on the world including ourselves and the Dharma. As to an exact action, whether it be a Dharma Message by a minister, doing a selected reflective reading appropriate for the purpose, or simply the lightening of a candle in tribute to remember and honor those who died, are directly suffering from an incident and those who acted so courageously to help others, I leave that up to each temple and/or sangha. My last thought is I may not be able to change someone else, but with Amida Buddha’s Light of Wisdom illuminating me (awakening me to my ignorance) and Amida Buddha’s Light of Joy nurturing me (transforming my anger into joy), may I come to some realizations about myself and contribute to harmony and peace in the world in grateful response to Wisdom and Compassion. Namo Amida Butsu.

Sincerely in Gassho
Eric Matsumoto, Bishop
OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEW OFFICIAL HONPA HONGWANJI MISSION OF HAWAII WEBSITE

It is with great pleasure that I, along with our State Organization President Mr. Pieper Toyama, would like to officially announce the establishment of our new Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii Website. The Historical Buddha, Sakyamuni said to his disciples close to 2600 years ago,

“Go forth for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the welfare, the good and the happiness of gods and men.” (omitted) “Teach the Dharma which is beautiful in the beginning, beautiful in the middle and beautiful at the end. Proclaim both the letter and the spirit of the holy life completely fulfilled and perfectly pure.”

(From: www.buddhanet.net/.../buddhism/disciples)

In the spirit of those words uttered by Sakyamuni Buddha, in hopes that more people would be able to access and be guided and inspired by Dharma/Teachings, this new website was created. We would like to acknowledge the work and talent of Mr. Dave Atcheson who created this new website. Thank you to the Honpa Hongwanji Membership whose support of Hawaii Kyodan enables the creation of this website. Finally, let me express gratitude to Amida Buddha whose Wisdom and Compassion continues to guide and inspire us. May we continue to respond in gratitude to Amida Buddha’s Great Wisdom and Unconditional Compassion.

Bishop Eric Matsumoto

REV. YOSHIKO SHIMABUKURO RECEIVES HONZAN HOSHO

Rev. Kazunori Takahashi, the chair of the State Ministers Association, and Ms. Carol Valentine, the Hawaii Kyodan VP on Kauai District, visited the Retired Kaikyoshi Minister Reverend Yoshiko Shimabukuro to present her the Honzan Hosho Certificate from the Governor General Bishop Chiko Iwagami and a special gift to acknowledge her devout contributions as a Kaikyoshi Minister for many years to the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii.

Rev. Yoshiko Shimabukuro served her ministry on the islands of Oahu and Kauai, namely Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin, Jikoen Hongwanji Mission, Lihue Hongwanji Mission, and Eleele Hongwanji Mission from 1940 to 1969. During the World War II (1941-1945), Rev. Shimabukuro served Eleele Hongwanji Mission by herself while the ministers from Japan were interned by the government.

At the last Giseikai on February 2016, the delegates unanimously approved the Resolution of Congratulations and Appreciation to the Rev. Yoshiko Shimabukuro. We congratulate Rev. Shimabukuro on her 105th birthday in December, rejoice in her good health, and extend our deepest appreciation for the joy of Nembutsu she has shared with us.
On June 24-26, 2016, the Federation of Jr. YBA held its annual Convention which is a way for Jr. YBAers across the state to get together, have fun, meet new people, and of course hold its General Assemblies/Federation Meetings. This year, the convention was held on the island of Maui whose United worked tirelessly to make the “Talk Dharma to Me” themed weekend a memorable one.

The weekend kicked off with its usual Federation meeting, opening service, auction, and oratory contest. Prior to the start of the actual convention, delegates and advisors for the first time in convention history got to participate in a pre-convention activity: zip lining. Those who were able to go had a complete blast and said that it was an “experience of a lifetime”. As for the traditional Convention festivities for the first day, everything went effortlessly smooth with members anxiously waiting for the next activity. Former President and Convention co-chair Layce Yamauchi had an organized handle on things as we were able to zoom through the meeting and service without a hitch. As for the auction, things were done a bit differently this year and was more like a silent auction where attendees got to purchase tickets that would go towards any package of their choosing. Whichever United had the most tickets in a particular jar, won the corresponding package. Each was filled with an array of goodies from every island ranging from potato chips, to Spanish bread, to cookies. Everyone was very pleased to be eating such ono food from each respective island. As for the oratory contest, both participants gave it their all and definitely made the decision a tough one for the judges. Also that night was a wonderful Obon dance activity where Convention attendees got to take part in traditional Maui-style bon dances all of which were both entertaining and invigorating to do. By the time everyone got to the hotel, they were tired but excited for the next day to come.

On the second day of the Convention, the first General Assembly as well as election speeches took place. The Assembly was very efficient with a lot of participation from the officers, delegates, advisors, members, and guests. You could definitely see the passion and care that the attendees had for Jr. YBA and its wellbeing. Following the meeting, the candidates running for the 2016-2017 term were given the chance to take to the stage and convince members to support them in their election campaign. For treasurer was Aaron Nonaka, for Co-Secretaries Kano Hashimoto and Ally Kuwana, for Vice President Sheera Tamura, and for President Layce Yamauchi and Zoi Nakamura. After the speeches came the insightful workshops which included financial fitness, college readiness, and taiko workshops. Each had something unique to bring to the table and engage the different Convention attendees. Later that night came the annual dance which was a night to remember with classic sounds, upbeat songs, and party-like atmosphere. Following the dance was the awards ceremony where members were recognized for both their club and personal achievements, essay writing, oratorical speeches, and art abilities. Many participated and gave it their all in their respective contests. It was a great way to close the night and see all the Jr. YBAer’s hard work pay off.

The final day of the Convention was extremely eventful. The final General Assembly was held which ended with the Budget and Instagram resolutions being passed, Special Olympics and Project Dana as the charities we would fundraise for during HBY month, and the next year’s officers elected. Now voted in and installed the officers for the upcoming year are as follows: Aaron Nonaka as Treasurer, Kano Hashimoto and Ally Kuwana as Co-
Secretaries, Sheera Tamura as Vice President, and Zoi Nakamura as President. Each are dedicated and looking forward to the upcoming year. Following the closing service, the first Federation meeting of the year was held which immediately followed with the dreaded good-bye process. Although a bit sad and teary, the attendees were grateful to have had the experience and shared it with such amazing people.

In closing, I would just like to thank Maui United, especially co-chairs Donna Ikeuchi and Layce Yamauchi, for hosting such a wonderfully successful convention. It went extremely well and everyone cannot wait for the next one. I would also like to thank the 2015-2016 officers, Mie Miller, Chika Matsumoto, Alia Fukumoto, Zoi Nakamura, and Layce Yamauchi for doing such a great job this past year. An even bigger thank you goes out to Joy Nishida for being such an awesome advisor and always knowing her stuff. Whether it be an unsure moment of parliamentary procedure, or technology question, Aunty Joy seems to always have the answers. As last term is coming to a close, I look greatly forward to next year and all of the good things to come.

(Zoi Nakamura, FJYBA President)

COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL CONCERNS

On June 29, 2016, Bishop Eric Matsumoto, Reverend Satoshi Tomioka, and Dean Sakamoto attended a bill signing ceremony for the 2016 affordable housing bills at the Hawai‘i State Capitol. The Committee on Social Concerns continues to interact with the Housing Now! Coalition and other non-profit organizations to support efforts to address the homelessness situation in Hawaii.

CONDOLENCES

- Mr. Hatsuo Takahashi, a member of Lahaina Hongwanji Mission, passed away on May 20, 2016. The Posthumous Title (Ingo) of “Jyō-Chō-In” 常聴院 has been conferred from Bishop Eric Matsumoto upon Mr. Hatsuo Takahashi for his contribution to Lahaina Hongwanji Mission and HHMH.

- Mr. Edward Matao Fujimori, a member of Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin, passed away on May 20, 2016. The Posthumous Title (Ingo) of “Shou-Shin-In” 正心院 has been conferred from Bishop Eric Matsumoto upon Mr. Edward Fujimori for his contribution to Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin and HHMH.

- Mr. Albert Hajime Kawabata, a member of Kamuela Hongwanji Mission, passed away on July 6, 2016. The Posthumous Title (Ingo) of “Riki-Shou-In” 力精院 has been conferred from Bishop Eric Matsumoto upon Mr. Albert Kawabata for his contribution to Kamuela Hongwanji Mission and HHMH.