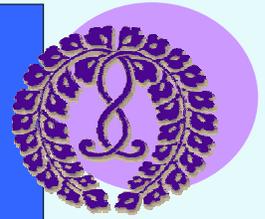


Musical Notes



A Publication of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii
Office of Buddhist Education Music Committee

July 2011 Issue

THE HEART AND SOUL OF THE PIANO THROUGH THE LIFE OF HATSUME TANAKA

by B.J. Soriano



Hatsume Tanaka

Prior to my interview with Hatsume Tanaka of Puna Hongwanji Mission, I had some preconceived thoughts of how music evolved in her life. While I was somewhat correct in my assessment, I was soon treated to a rich and wonderful story of how music and more pointedly, how the piano became synonymous with Hatsume's life.

Hatsume studied piano at Punahou Music School on O'ahu. She first studied with Mrs. Masako Nakamura as well as having taken some piano lessons during the war years from Marjorie Souza, the niece of family friends, the Badecky's. The Badecky's lived nearby, making it easier for her to play the piano, because during those years of martial law, she could not travel to Hilo for lessons. Hatsume was a pre-teen at the time (1941). She recalled one story of the time she was due to give her first recital. She explained that coincidentally, the recital was scheduled for December 7, 1941. She loathed the thought of having to perform in public, and had wished for something to happen so she would not have to perform her recital piece. Needless to say, this infamous date in history (the bombing of Pearl Harbor) prevented her from having to perform. Notwithstanding, Hatsume felt guilty for years thinking her "negative wishing" might have had something to do with the start of World War II.

Her parents sent away for her very first piano that was given to the family by a friend. Making its way from the mainland on several ships, she was ecstatic one day when she opened her front door and was greeted with a Baldwin piano. Having no toys to play with, her piano became her best friend. Her parents noted how she also seemed to enjoy singing because it was witnessed that she went up and down the streets singing many childhood Japanese songs.

After graduating from high school, she was unsure of her immediate plans. She remembers her father advising her not to become a school teacher or a nurse for reasons he shared with her. Initially she thought she wanted to be a social worker. She

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The music committee is proud to announce its very own music webpage linked to the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii website. The link is labeled, "Music Site," and includes three subpages – "New Gathas," "Newsletter," and "Events". Read about music happenings in Hawaii as issues of **"Musical Notes"** will soon be linked!



Music Editorial

by
Francis Okano

Why Prefer the Japanese?

Thanks to the good folks of California's Central District who organized the Buddhist Churches of America's legislative assembly in Visalia this year, I had the rare privilege of addressing the conference banquet in February. My topic was Hawaii's experience with translating Japanese gathas for singing in English. As I eagerly shared of Hawaii's trials and tribulations, I was struck by a glimpse of something beyond music itself.

It dawned on me that, besides supplying the temple with more needed English gathas, translations point to a characteristic peculiar to the present stage of the Hongwanji's "Americanization." I don't know how things are on the Mainland, but in Hawaii have you ever noticed that *some* elder Nisei, conversant in both English and Japanese, prefer to attend the Japanese over the English service? Also, have you wondered why, after singing a gatha in both English and Japanese, *some* (not all) prefer to sing in Japanese?

As to singing, I suspect the reason is partly that the Japanese language, with its open vowel syllable endings (like Hawaiian), sings a lot easier than English which has tongue-curling vowels ("ur", "er", "al"), unmusical hisses ("s", "sh"), and tons of consonant endings. As to service attendance, I suppose it has something to do with remembrances of the temple experience – soothing sutra chanting, the Japanese sermon – of the days of the Issei. Yet I suspect there is more.

A reason we translate gathas is that by understanding the Japanese meanings, we are led to enjoy the deeply lyrical religious expressions so abundant in Japanese. For example, what passionate cry of joy, both self-effacing and intense, is heard – even in translation -- in a verse from the gatha, *To Live (Ikiru)*:

(ikasarete ikite kita / ikasarete ikite iru / ikasarete ikite ikou to /

te wo awasu / namu amida butsu)

In gratitude for yesterdays I've seen, / In gratitude for gift of life today, /

In gratitude for my tomorrows yet to be, / I bow in gassho, Namu Amida Butsu.

I assume such poignancy arose from centuries of Japan's immersion in Buddhism. In contrast, Japanese Buddhism reached America's shores a mere hundred years ago. While expressions of Jodo Shinshu have made, and continue to make, great strides in the English language – in song, sermon, literature -- they seem yet to possess a more robust flavor in Japanese – for those who comprehend the language. I venture the day will come when the inspirations from Jodo Shinshu will be articulated in English as naturally as in Japanese, even if the Old and New World cultures have long appeared to me fundamentally polar opposites. When English will have grown equal with Japanese as a medium of Jodo Shinshu – in poetry and prose – it will be because Buddhism will have penetrated the American psyche as deeply as it has the Japanese. In the long view, I feel the flowering of Jodo Shinshu in English has only begun.



Music Committee

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Joan Tamori-Edit, Layout and Design

(Tanaka—continued from page 1)

attended the University of Hawaii, but admitted not studying very much. Much of her lack of commitment to schoolwork stemmed from not knowing what her interests were. It was during this time that she played the organ at Honpa Hongwanji Hilo Betsuin. After much soul searching and discussions with her piano teacher, she decided to take the plunge and travel to the east coast to attend the Boston Conservatory of Music. Here she studied theory and worked diligently with professors to improve her piano playing and music study. After three years of studying, her father suffered a heart attack back home in Hawaii. Torn between her deep concern for him and wanting to finish her education, she felt she should return home. She returned to Hawaii in 1954, and upon her return started her career teaching piano. During that time, she began teaching piano to three students.

Tracing back to 1944, Hatsume worked along with Rev. Shirasu who had recently returned from being in a concentration camp. She played the organ and led the choir at Olaa Hongwanji Mission. She attended Punahou Music School learning theory and harmony. During that time, Hatsume also served as Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin's organist for approximately three years and enjoyed singing in the choir as well. Having played the piano and organ for many temple services, special services and Gatha Fests, she also led the Puna Hongwanji Mission Choir until 2006 when current director, Lee Ikeda, took the helm. She continues as its piano/organ accompanist until today.

Through the years, she has encouraged her students to also serve as pianists or organists for their temples, explaining that it is important to share one's talent by playing for their respective temples. Today, Hatsume continues to teach the piano to youngsters, and undoubtedly has shared her skillful methods to hundreds over the years. Using today's technological language, one would describe her as an "icon." By its definition, an icon is described as one of pictorial representation, an object of uncritical devotion. If you, like me, are fortunate to know Hatsume, you will certainly agree that this definition of an icon is synonymous with her! Thank you, Hatsume, for sharing your gift of playing the piano and organ with so many! We are truly grateful for your gift of aloha!



Translation Subcommittee

The Translation Subcommittee members are very busy gathering new ideas for upcoming translations of Japanese gathas. The committee will meet in July to exchange thoughts. The committee compiled some of the Japanese gathas and published 15 translated gathas in 1989 and two in 1999. In 2007 when the committee was formed, 12 gathas were translated, followed by 11 gathas each in 2009 and 2010, totaling 34 Japanese gathas. The committee would like every temple to use and sing the beautifully translated gathas.



Kōzaburō Hirai, Founder of the Society of Poetry and Music

[based on *Invitation to Buddhist Music* by Kanritsu Asuka
(2008, Hongwanji Publications, pp. 183-185),
translated by Osamu Kawabata, edited by Francis Okano]



Kōzaburō Hirai, composer of such delightful children's songs as *Yurikago* and *Tombo no Megane* and such popular gathas as *Saki Niou*, *Shūye*, and *Yurusareshi*, was born in 1910 in Kochi prefecture, Shikoku, as Yoshiyasu Hirai. When, in mid-career, he began using the pen-name, Kōzaburo, many thought the same last name was shared by two different composers.

He gained instant acclaim in 1935 – as Yoshiyasu -- when he wrote a powerful cantata, *Ōinarukana*, for the Buddhist League, to commemorate Shakyamuni Buddha's birth, while still a student at Tokyo Music College. The following year, 1936, he captured the 5th Japan Music Contest for another cantata, *Fujisan wo Mite*. Hirai showed youthful dynamism in his early works and he became noticed as a rare composer of large-scale Buddhist music. The huge success of *Ōinarukana* led to his annual writing for the Buddhist Music Association, in its heyday, of such songs as *Shūye* (1936) and *Tamashii Matsuri* (1937).

After the War, he began composing gathas for Ōtani Gakuen and for Nishi Hongwanji in Kyoto. Among the notable works from this period are *Yurusareshi* (1954) and *Kusa wa Moyuruo*. His popularity in Buddhist music circles increased as he later composed such large pieces as *Daibutsu Kaigen* and many other gathas, choral music, and children's songs. It was then, around 1955, that he adopted his pen-name, Kōzaburō.

Hirai championed new ground, and, in 1965, proclaiming song as the “fruit of the collaborative spirit between poet and musician,” he organized the Society of Poetry and Music, composed of poets and composers as Yoshinao Nakata, Tsugio Katsu, Yoshio Yabuta, and many others, dedicated to infusing Japanese song with new vitality. Its first concert, in November 1966 at the Japan Urban City Hall, premiered twenty-one new works. It held a concert each year and published its premieres in a volume, *New Japanese Songs*. By the concerts' 25th anniversary in 1992, 910 songs of immense variety had been published in 40 volumes. Many contained Buddhist themes. By his death in 2002, Kōzaburō Hirai was recognized throughout Japan as both composer of Buddhist music and leader of the Society. —

WRITE LYRICS AND WIN!!

Have you ever felt the urge to write the perfect gatha? Has a dharma talk ever made you want to put your feelings in verse? If so, why not do so and maybe win a prize?

Simply send your poem to the **Lyrics Contest 2011**, Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, ATTN: Hawaii Kyodan Music Committee, 1727 Pali Hwy, Honolulu, HI 96813, by **October 15, 2011**.

Contest announcement and flyer should be posted at your temple office. Rules are simple: the poem must have at least 2 verses and have a Buddhist theme. Indicate if you are younger than 13 or are 13 years or older. You may enter more than one poem.

**Why not discover the beautiful voice in your heart?
There is no question, everyone who tries is a winner.**



OAHU DISTRICT

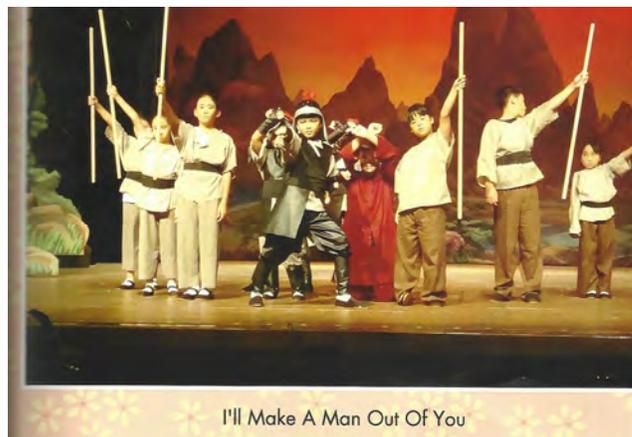
by Gail Taira



Ohana Arts

In this issue of Musical Notes, I would like to share with you what I know of Ohana Arts, a new 501(c)(3) non-profit arts organization founded by sisters Cari and Jenny Taira of Mililani and Mililani Hongwanji and Laurie Rubin of Los Angeles and New York. Both Cari and Jenny were raised in Mililani and regularly attended Mililani Hongwanji. They were active in the Junior YBA program as well as the Dharma School.

Currently in its second year, Ohana Arts has two components, a musical theatre workshop and a one-week Fall Festival of Music. The musical theatre workshop is an educational program for youth ages 8 to 18, at which students enrolled in the program will hone their skills in music, dance and acting. Instructors include local and national professionals who enjoy successful careers in theatre and classical music. The Hongwanji Mission School has very kindly allowed Ohana Arts to base this program at the school for all rehearsals and classes. In 2010, its inaugural season, Ohana Arts students performed *Mulan, Jr.*



which was a great success! This year the students are excited to present the Royal Shakespeare Company production of "The Wizard of Oz." with a live orchestra. Jenny, Cari and Laurie believe that it is of the utmost importance that the talents of our local children are nurtured through a quality arts education.

The Fall Festival of Music will include both local and mainland musicians who will come together in Honolulu. This year the Fall

Festival of Music will explore and celebrate the music of French composers. Featured performances will include the one woman opera, "La voix humaine" as well as concerts given by Chamber Music Hawaii and the Hawaii Vocal Arts Ensemble, with more exciting groups to be announced.

The overall vision for Ohana Arts is to expand into a performing arts festival and school which will serve as an international haven for the arts, bringing together artists and audiences worldwide to Hawaii's beautiful setting.

The Wizard of Oz will be presented at the Roosevelt High School Auditorium on July 21, 22, and 23rd at 7:00 p.m. and at 2:00 p.m. on July 23rd. The Fall Festival of Music will take place from October 30 through November 6, 2011. For more information and tickets, please visit the Ohana Arts website at www.ohanaarts.org.



HONOLULU DISTRICT by Mitsuyo Saito



NEW HONGWANJI CHOIR FORMED

The Hawaii Betsuin Choir is very busy participating in all the major services and community events. Recently, we formed **The Hongwanji Choir** which consists of Hawaii Betsuin Choir, Moiliili and Jikoen Hongwanji Choirs. This choir has performed at special events such as HBC Buddha Day, former Bishop Thomas Okano's farewell luncheon, newly-elected Bishop Eric Matsumoto's welcome banquet, and at the Honolulu United BWA educational workshop. The choir sang newly translated gathas beautifully and harmoniously: *Amida Within My Heart; Thank You!; Overflowing Light; Many, But One; Cosmos Flower; and Nembutsu (new)*.



VOICES FOR JAPAN

The Hawaii Betsuin Choir performed after the Spring Ohigan service to express our sorrow and sympathy to the people who have been suffering after the earthquake/tsunami disaster hit the northern areas of Japan in March. The choir and the congregation sang *Peace Begins With Me* together with conviction and encouragement to the people in Japan! It was an emotional moment for all of us.

The Hongwanji Mission School and **kindergarten Japanese classes**, visited the Kūkini Hospital Nursing Home and expressed their joy and happiness with the senior citizens.



The students sang several humorous Japanese songs complete with modern steps and motions. It was a heartwarming scene of the young and old interacting. The Betsuin choir and Hongwanji Mission School Japanese classes will continue to carry on this project in the future.

LETTER—MESSAGE TO SHINRAN SHONIN

Honzan conducted an essay contest "Tegami - Message to Shinran Shonin" as one of the special projects of Shinran's 750th Memorial. This writer submitted an essay expressing the purpose of why gathas are being translated here in Hawaii. The winning essays are available in Japanese at the Honzan website: <http://daionki.hongwanji.or.jp/kanren-open/img/ex12.pdf>



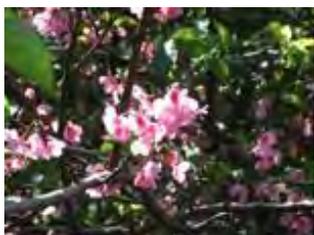
Mitsuyo Saito stands near her essay along with the Hawaii delegation.

Kauai District

by Gladys Fujiuchi



HANAMI on KAUA`I



A gloriously beautiful day awaited us as we drove up the winding roads of Koke`e to the **Hongwanji Camp** to view the blooming of the cherry blossoms on the first day of Spring, March 20. All Hongwanji temples were invited to participate in this event. To open the day's activities, a service was led by ministers Rev. Kazunori Takahashi of Kapaa and Rev. Itaru Nozaki of Lihue. Following the service,

the group joined their voices in welcoming spring by singing *Haru ga Kita* and *Sakura* in observance of the cherry blossom blooming. We practiced *Thank you (Arigato)* and *A Flower Grows (Hanamatsuri)*, with me on the ukulele, in preparation for the islandwide Hanamatsuri service at **Lihue Hongwanji** on April 3.



The participants then took a break to view the blossoms and to take a group picture in front of a cherry blossom tree.

After that we reassembled in the cabin to create paper flowers taught by Laurie Tateishi and members of West Kauai Hongwanji. Even with the same directions, it was fun to see how differently each person's flower turned out.



It was a lovely day of fun, fellowship, music and beauty which truly refreshed and nourished our spirits. Thank you West Kauai Hongwanji for organizing this fun-filled event.



MAUI DISTRICT

by Joan Tamori



Ry

WAILUKU HONGWANJI MISSION CHOIR FEATURES FLUTIST

The **Wailuku Hongwanji Mission Choir** proudly presented two numbers at its Spring Ohigan service; *Deep in the Woods of Dharma* and *Flying Free*, a ChoralFest favorite. For *Flying Free*, the choir was tickled pink and very fortunate to have the accompaniment of a flutist, a student from the band at Maui High School. Together with Ry Damaso, (selected by her teacher for her outstanding playing ability) and Dale Sugiki, our very capable organ accompanist, the choir debuted the song at this service. It was a most thrilling and moving experience for the choir as well as the congregation.

Upon suggestion by the mission's board chairman, a June service was slated as a Board of Directors Sunday at WHM. Members of the board played the roles of the dharma school students by taking over various service assignments. A special treat was a presentation of two numbers by the board and church members: *Edelweiss*, accompanied on the organ by Florence Tanaka, and *Amida's Guide to Life*, ukulele accompaniments by church member, Eric Ikeuchi, and students Donna, Kristi, Kami, Layce and Layke.

NOTABLE PERFORMANCES AT FUJIMATSURI SONGFEST

Maui district's unique Fujimatsuri program is a celebration of Shinran Shonin's birthday. And an excellent program it was as Reverend J. Soga and members of Kahului Hongwanji Mission commenced with a special service honoring our founder and viewing a powerpoint presentation of Maui's role in the Aloha Initiative to aid the Japan tsunami victims, followed



Lahaina members get direction from Rev. A. Hironaka.

by SongFest singing, obon dancing, making cards to send to victims, eating "ono" food, and playing bingo games. The much anticipated SongFest showcased performances by all

four temples. Under the direction of newly assigned minister, Rev. A. Hironaka, **Lahaina** sang *Arigato* and encouraged audience participa-



Makawao members sing under the direction of Ed Yamamura.



The congregation takes part in *On This Morn.*



Kahului members sing under the direction of Rev. J. Soga.

tion (hand motions) for the gatha, *On This Morn.* It was an apropos way of limbering up after the service. With a large, diverse group of young and old, **Kahului** presented *In Praise of Shinran* and *Walk On As You Are* so beautifully and expertly. **Makawao**, in their

poised group serenaded the audience with gathas, *The Beckoning Hand* and *Seiya*. Student flutist, Ry Damaso, was featured with the **Wailuku Choir** in the ChoralFest song, *Flying Free*. Also with Dale Sugiki accompanying on the organ, the choir sang another ChoralFest favorite, *When I Look Up at the Sky*, in honor of Shinran Shonin. Indeed music warmed the hearts of all on the birthday of our profound teacher.



Wailuku Choir members sing under the direction of Joan Tamori.

HAWAII DISTRICT by B. J. Soriano



BIG ISLAND CELEBRATES GATHAFEST AT HILO BETSUIN



United Jr. YBA



Kamuela Hongwanji



Ministers join in on the fun!



Hatsume Tanaka

Temples from the Big Island celebrated Gatha Fest in February 2011 at Hilo Betsuin. A number of sanghas participated including all the temple ministers and United Jr. YBA. The Sangha Hall was indeed overflowing with delightful music that day!



Rosana Berkoff



Puna Hongwanji



Honoka'a Hongwanji



Kona Hongwanji