



# Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii

## HEADQUARTERS UPDATE

1727 Pali Highway, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Phone: (808) 522-9200 Fax: (808) 522-9209

Web: [www.hongwanjihawaii.com](http://www.hongwanjihawaii.com) Email: [hqs@honpahi.org](mailto:hqs@honpahi.org)



**FEBRUARY 2016**

### HONPA HONGWANJI MISSION OF HAWAII THE 104<sup>th</sup> GISEIKAI LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

February 12 – 13, 2016  
At Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin



The 104<sup>th</sup> Giseikai, the Legislative Assembly of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, was held at Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin on February 12-13, 2016. A total of 148 delegates and observers (temple representatives) from throughout the Hawaiian Islands had gathered to discuss the resolutions including the Kyodan budget for the year 2016.

*Picture, front-row, from left; Mr. Roy Miyamoto (Past Kyodan President), Mr. Frederick S. Nonaka (Past Kyodan President), Ms. Shizue Yahata (BCA Fed. BWA President), Dr. Kent Matsuda (BCA Kyodan President), Mr. Pieper Toyama (HI Kyodan President), Bishop Eric Matsumoto (Bishop of HHMH), Mr. Alton Miyamoto (Immediate Past Kyodan President), Rev. Thomas Okano (Former Bishop), Rev. Hiromi Kawaji (Retired Minister), Rev. Shigeaki Fujitani (Retired Minister), Rev. Tatsuo Muneto (Retired Minister), and Rev. Toyokazu Hagio (Hawaii Betsuin Rimban)*

## **Message from Bishop Chiko Iwagami, the Governor General of Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha**

On the occasion of the 104th Giseikai of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, I humbly extend my appreciation to you the ministers, and sangha representatives from throughout the state of Hawaii, for gathering here to discuss the many concerns being faced. In gratitude, I would also like to commend you for your continuing efforts in propagating Jodo Shinshu and maintaining temples within your respective districts.

Reflecting on our world, it appears that we are further deepening the confusion on global issues we face. Terror attacks in particular have brought about great fear to everyone throughout the world. Although it may be said that acts of evil exploit religion, we must not exclude or disregard other religions, becoming fundamentalists, and think one's own religion as being supreme.

It was brought to my attention that the Parliament of the World Religions was conducted in Salt Lake City from October 15–19 last year, with delegates from the Buddhist Churches of America, Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, and Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temples of Canada in attendance and exchanging dialogue with participants of other religious groups. In conjunction, the Salt Lake Buddhist Church hosted a Jodo Shinshu seminar with a presentation of the Ojo Raisan ritual and conducted active interfaith discussions.

'Dialogue' is a task which requires time and patience. But is it not the way for people to recognize and acknowledge each other's differences? It is my belief that we are here through our many encounters that enable us to look beyond our differences and endeavor for world peace.

Beginning on October 1 this year, the Dento Hokoku Hoyo, or Commemoration on the Accession of the Jodo Shinshu Tradition to the 25th Monshu Sennyo, will take place. We look forward to welcoming as many overseas members as possible to Hongwanji.

In closing, it is my hope that the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii will continue to prosper and that many fruitful results will arise from this annual meeting.

## **Bishop Eric Matsumoto's Opening Message at 104<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly**

Good Morning and Aloha!

I would like to welcome everyone to this year's Legislative Assembly with a special welcome of Aloha to our guests from BCA, Dr. Kent Matsuda, President of BCA, and Ms. Shizue Yahata, BCA Federation BWA President. Thank you for joining us! Although the day ahead is long and the schedule full and your visit is short, I hope that you will be able to experience some of Hawaii's Aloha. But then both of you already know Hawaii in that it is not your first visit to the Islands. But, still, welcome to Hawaii! Also, welcome to Rev. Joshin Kamuro, Rev. Mieko Majima and Rev. William Masuda to your first Legislative Assembly and as a returnee to Giseikai.

I want to take this opportunity to thank those who served as Officers, Directors, Advisors, Honorary Advisors, Committee Chairs and Committee members of the various Standing and Special Committees of Hawaii Kyodan and the Board of Directors of Hawaii Kyodan including ministers and volunteers who helped us in 2015. Further, a special thank you to Rev. Tatsuo Muneto who retired in December 2015 after 50 years of service to Hawaii Kyodan. Thank you very much to each and every one of you!

For 2016, for those returning and for those who are new and just coming on board, thank you for your dedication and commitment to the Buddha-Dharma and Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii. My gratitude to Pieper Toyama, our State President for his dedication and commitment. I am grateful to be able to work so closely together to accomplish our goals! Also, gratitude to the HQs Staff for their hard work especially at this time of the year. Truly, without all of your support nothing including this Legislative Assembly would be possible, but ultimately, all is possible because of Amida Buddha's Wisdom and Compassion with our responding in

gratitude to that Wisdom and Compassion. Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii is one way in which Amida Buddha's Wisdom and Compassion is making a difference in the world. I would like you to know that we are continuing to receive many requests from the larger community seeking our cooperation, participation and the guidance of Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii or Jodo Shinshu Teachings. I can say with confidence that more people in the community are becoming more aware of Buddhist perspectives and also understanding and appreciating them and thus seek our cooperation and/or participation in their programs, projects and events. Dharma and Hongwanji is making a difference!

As the main part of my message today, I would like to share more in detail the *Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha General Promotion Plan* which is the organizational policy which will guide us in our endeavors for a 10 year period from 2015-2025. In many areas, we (in Hawaii) have already begun and so they should not seem unfamiliar to you. (\*\*Editor's Note: Please refer to the attached file "*Summary of the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha General Promotion Plan*")

As part of this Promotion Plan, there are two observances: *The Commemoration on the Accession of the Jodo Shinshu Tradition* by the 25<sup>th</sup> Sennyo Gomonshu in 2016 and 2017 and *The Joint Service of the 850<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Shinran Shonin's Birth and 800<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Establishment of the Jodo Shinshu Teachings* scheduled for 2023. As stated in our Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha Constitution, the basic purpose of our organization is that "*The organization transmits the wisdom and compassion of Amida Tathagata to all people, and in doing so, contributes to the realization of a society in which everyone, both within and outside of the organization, is able to live a life of spiritual fulfillment.*" Our Hongwanji Constitution makes clear that the basic outcome of our efforts is that all people of the world are able to live a life of spiritual fulfillment. It is not only the happiness and well-being of current Jodo Shinshu followers which we seek, but all of humankind. How do we accomplish this arduous task? By sharing the wisdom and compassion of Amida Buddha so it can become a guiding force and inspiration for Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike. I firmly believe that one can be inspired by Amida Buddha's wisdom and compassion even though one is not a Buddhist by faith. I cite the example of a Franciscan-Episcopalian Minister who said and I partially quote her. "...my own conception of Christ has been changed and deepened through my encounter with Amida Buddha. Amida Buddha symbolizes the universal embrace of compassion and in doing so, calls and inspires us to follow in the Buddha's footsteps." "...to be a Buddha is not merely to attain enlightenment for one's self--it is to strive to bring all people into the light and life of true enlightenment... Amida Buddha sacrificed everything...he vowed and aspired never to reach full enlightenment unless all beings would join him in enlightenment upon hearing and entrusting in his name. To me, this symbolizes the ultimate end of faith and life not only for Buddhists, but for all people on the spiritual journey. Like Amida, I desire to embrace this level of compassion that I may touch and know what it means to truly love others. And this is grace...to be drawn irresistibly by the light and life of true compassion. I find inspiration from Buddhism--with its universal hope in humanity...its path of humility, non-attachment, liberation, wisdom, and peace...but above all, its compassion and grace."

Although we are concerned about declining membership and dwindling revenues, our ultimate goal is not converting everyone to Buddhism, but sharing Buddha's wisdom and compassion so it can make a difference in all people's lives. Again, so wisdom can guide and compassion can inspire us. The Buddha-Dharma promotes mutual understanding, appreciation, caring and respect for each other. It tries to cultivate the awareness of the oneness and preciousness of all life and this message is not only for Buddhists, but for all people. But a lot hinges on whether we (the Sangha) can embrace and even if minimally and even if imperfectly try to exhibit these qualities. Buddhism has a message for all of us! As Buddhists, let us share the message of mutual respect, equality, interdependence and the preciousness of all life. As part of the Legislative Assembly, we will have a special presentation later today in which we will witness the actions of two individuals Mr. Takejiro Higa and Mr. Herbert Yanamura who realizing the preciousness of all life or "Nuchi du Takara" helped save thousands of lives in Okinawa. Yes, we live in the Last Dharma Age, mappo, but we cannot give up. Please remember we have the compassionate Amida Buddha continually encouraging us!

The key word, I believe, is "share." As I look over the 10 Year Plan, it is about sharing- sharing the Dharma, sharing ourselves as Buddhists, mutually sharing our life together as human beings and in that sharing

is, also, caring for one another. In addition to the two special observances, the 10 Year Plan has 3 other components to it. Namely, Roman numeral I, “contribute to social concerns based on Buddhist principles.” We are encouraged to connect with other entities within of our own organization and also with other Buddhist groups outside of the Hongwanji organization and together share Buddhist values with the non-Buddhist world so they can come to know more about Buddhism in general and specifically Jodo Shinshu as a spiritual tradition and Hongwanji as an organization. By the way, the Honzan’s helping Hawaii Kyodan with PBA is part of this component that is Roman numeral I A 1 in the chart.

Now, with Honzan’s assistance, we are able to build the new classroom building and have attained a significant milestone for PBA and also Shin Buddhism in Hawaii. An important point is that PBA is no longer just a Hawaii Kyodan project, but with its inclusion in the 10 Year Plan became a denominational project. Also, as part of I A 1 is the establishment of a Central Overseas Office outside of Japan to aid in propagation overseas or outside of Japan. Possible action oriented ideas for us to consider from the Plan include deepening relationships with other Buddhist entities in our respective communities, address social issues or concerns in the community like suicide, bullying, death with dignity and so forth by proposing possible solutions based on Buddhist values or teachings. Also to cultivate a deeper relationship with the media and the General Public is also encouraged. In Hawaii, we have are in the midst of drastically improving our website and also have contracted with a firm to help us in the area of PR and marketing and advertising of Hawaii Kyodan. The 10 Year Plan further speaks of working together with governmental agencies and other private sector organizations to better society. It is encouraging us to work with other sectors of society to better our communities. This is being encouraged not only at the State level, but at the local temple level too.

For I B 2, it talks about identifying Jodo Shinshu followers who are actively involved in the larger community and to connect them with like individuals so they can network and we can further become a prominent entity in the community which will highlight the value and contributions of Buddhism and Hongwanji.

Roman numeral I B 3, speaks of doing more in the area of elderly care and/or the dying. For us, it is Project and the endeavors of the End of Life Committee/Compassionate Care Committee in which we become more involved in people’s lives at an earlier point in time in that we do not limit ourselves to death and post-death rituals and services.

Moving on to Roman numeral II, “Live a life of compassion together with others”, the emphasis here is how we live our life as Jodo Shin Buddhists both ministers and lay people. In Hawaii, it is our emphasis on Sangha and building a warm, open and welcoming Sangha. Please gain hints or insights on what we must do to truly be a Sangha by referring to “Passages related to (nurturing) the Sangha” which I have compiled which the ministers have and will soon be in the hands of the Commissioners of Buddhist Education too.

As part of Roman numeral II, C 4 for ministers, I am placing emphasis on the importance of knowing the role and expectations of religion and clergy in the West and knowing the thinking process of westerners to be able to effectively propagate/share the Dharma. In the 10 Year Plan, it mentions ministers should polish their skills in propagation, rituals and liturgy, and also be able to actively listen or engage in deep listening. It mentions how important it is for ministers to be reliable and trusted by lay people. In Roman numeral II D 5, about lay followers, it talks about doing daily devotions at home, going to the temple for services, regularly reciting Words of Thanksgiving before and after meals and in general living a life of gratitude guided by the Dharma. It talks about creating opportunities and programs for young people at the temple and also hold programs at the temple which will be educational for the General Public. The temples should become a focal gathering place for the people of the community. Let us ask ourselves “Is my temple a gathering place for my local community?”

Under Roman numeral II E, it talks about making the temple a more welcoming place where members and non-members can comfortably gather for a variety of events and activities, religious ones to be sure, but including educational and informative ones. It also talks about how services including funerals should be

meaningful and inspirational. It also speaks of outreach to areas and people who have not had the opportunity to hear Buddhism. An example of this section is our wish for expansion in Leeward Oahu (the Kapolei-Ewa area) or other areas of growth and participating in events and functions of other community organizations. Another outreach program we have is the Dharma Light Project housed at BSC and Dharma Education being offered on Maui and Big Island. For spiritual matters, here in Hawaii, a new committee has been formed to come up with alternate methods of sharing the Dharma including music and ways to celebrate our Buddhist observances. The 10 Year Plan also talks about having district level services, seminars and workshops where more people can gather, bond and we create a larger group momentum of sharing and expressing the Dharma.

The third section, Roman numeral III *"Solidify the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha's foundation"* is about creating a solid foundation for the Hongwanji beginning with the local temples. It asks each temple to make an assessment on their present circumstances and situation and also make a prediction for their future (for the next 10 or 20 years). In particular there is a concern for temples in areas which are being drastically affected by the shift in demographics or population shifts in which young people are moving out of an area. In Hawaii, HQs is trying to assist by initiating initiatives and providing support, though very elementary at this point, to temples and districts and trying to steer the whole Hawaii Kyodan in a new direction. Some examples are the Temple Leadership Effectiveness Model, Compassionate Care, Embrace Change dealing with structural reorganization and new religious expressions, considering future joint conferences & conventions, R & P Central Committee's looking into alternate sources of income and even adopting the Shin Buddhist Ministry in Hawaii. The Plan also is encouraging affiliated organizations to review/revisit themselves and think about their role and objectives. Our Jr. YBA and Dharma School Teachers Association as is the Commission on Buddhist Education including the BWA are all revisiting themselves already.

Under Roman numeral III G 11, the importance of having a solid financial foundation and plan is emphasized. In Hawaii, Research & Planning Central Committee will be working on finding alternate sources of income for temples or districts or even Hawaii Kyodan so we can financially support ourselves without having to so heavily rely on assessments like we presently do. And finally H 12, is about looking at our facilities including maintenance and improvements and the efficient and effective use of all our facilities. The recent workshop by Rod Burylo of Canada and also the utilization of the new school building at PBA fall in this category of making optimal use of our facilities. Temples are also encouraged to see how their present facilities might benefit their local communities. Please examine your local community. Does it have a need? Is there a need which could be fulfilled by the temple? And fulfilling that need does not have to, necessarily, be non-profit. We must see what is possible at our temples. I ask for your cooperation.

The 10 Year Plan is an ambitious plan. But the Denomination is serious about it. We are designating 200 million dollars to carrying out the 10 Year Plan which includes the two special observances of which the Accession Ceremony is just around the corner. I would like to humbly request that you seriously consider attending the Accession Ceremony slated for October 2016 and March-April 2017. Please look at the display created by Rev. Umitani who is chairing it and also visit the website for more info. It is a dawning of a new age for Hongwanji! Let's begin together by going to Japan to celebrate the accession of our new Spiritual Leader, His Eminence Gomonsu Kojun Ohtani and his wife, Lady Ruzumi Ohtani as the new leaders of our Hongwanji.

Again, all committees and entities including affiliates are important, but there are certain committees or areas in which we really need to move forward. Some committees which I see as being especially important for us in 2016 are Research and Planning Central Committee, Embrace Change both ORC and NEC, the Office of Buddhist Education and the Commission on Buddhist Education, Membership & Proration focusing more on membership, Finance & Budget Committee, the Committee on Social Concerns, "Leeward Oahu Expansion" Committee and Temple Leadership Effectiveness Committee. Again, all committees are important. Please refer to the Hawaii Kyodan Committees List for appointments and thank you to everyone who accepted to serve on the committees or boards. Together, as a Sangha, let us move forward!

We all want to be happy. We all want peace. We all want to live in a safe world. We should be able to wish this for everyone! Let us take to heart the words of our Hongwanji Constitution, "...the realization of a

society in which everyone, both within and outside of the organization, is able to live a life of spiritual fulfillment.” Thank you and Namō Amida Butsu.

### **President Pieper Toyama’s Report**

Good morning. I appreciate the opportunity to share my reflections on what it means to be a volunteer leader as my term as president ends.

After engaging with the Hongwanji community by attending temple services throughout the state, exchanging emails and conversing with temple leaders and members, speaking at temple and state events, joining discussions in Kyodan committees, meeting monthly with the Bishop and Rev Okamoto, the president of the Ministers’ Association, and participating in meetings at the international levels, I have concluded that we as volunteer leaders need to focus squarely on three tasks if we are to work effectively for the Hongwanji.

First, we must join with ministers in shaping the message of Jodo Shinshu so it is responsive and relevant and in shaping experiences that bring the message to life.

Second, we must share this message with our members and with the interested public so their lives may be filled with the joy of the Dharma.

Third, we must continuously improve our organizational capacity to share the message effectively; we must improve the personnel, policies, procedures, resources and organizational units that are tasked with sharing the Jodo Shinshu message.

This focus translates into every dollar we spend from the assessments paid by temples, every hour we spend in meetings, every program we implement, every action we carry out is directed to making the message of the Dharma relevant and sharing that message.

Over the next day and half, this focus translates into discussing, deliberating, and voting for the resolutions. Thus I suggest that we use these questions as criteria to guide our decisions:

1. Does this resolution help to shape our Jodo Shinshu message? Are our values clearly reflected in the resolution? Does it provide opportunities for us to live the message?
2. Does the resolution support actions to share our message with our members and with the public?
3. Does the resolution build our capacity to share our message more effectively?

Let me now turn to the work of the Kyodan in the light of the three tasks I outlined.

The following are highlights of activities the Kyodan is engaged in to shape a responsive and relevant Jodo Shinshu message and experiences to bring the message into our personal lives.

1. Rev. Umitani is working on a singular opportunity for us to experience the spirit of Jodo Shinshu. He has put together tours to the Hongwanji Accession Ceremony in October of this year and March of next year. Surely the experience of walking the grounds of Honzan and participating in the service to celebrate the accession of the Gomonsu will bring us closer to Shinran and his teachings. Please review the handouts in the back and plan to join one of the tours.
2. The Office of Buddhist Education (OBE) is preparing a publication with excerpts from ministers’ essays that address the question, “What is Jodo Shinshu?” OBE also dedicated its 2015 Summer Session to lay members and ministers addressing the question, “What does Jodo Shinshu mean to me?” I attended those sessions and found the presentations to be powerful and meaningful. And if you were unable to attend, OBE will make tapes of these sessions available to temples.
3. The Commission on Buddhist Education under the leadership of Carolyn Uchiyama and Rev. Kuniyuki is refocusing a portion of its energies on the Shin Buddhist message to make it understandable,

relevant, clear, and personal so our Buddhist message can reach more diverse audiences throughout the state more effectively.

4. The Pacific Buddhist Academy's knowledge and experience in sharing the Dharma with young people is now fully recognized by Honzan and will be enhanced with a new classroom building because of Honzan's support and more importantly because of your support.
5. This year, the Bishop is convening a committee named, Embrace Change: New Expressions. This committee will explore fulfilling and innovative ways of expressing and celebrating our commitment, gratitude, and joy in the workings of the Dharma in our lives. It will look at new service formats that translate the essence of the teachings into chants, music, oral recitations, Dharma talks and discussions, maybe even dance and poetry.

The next set of highlights reflect our continuous work to not only share the Jodo Shinshu message but also build our capacity to share that message:

1. Dave Atcheson has been contracted to redesign our website so it dynamically provides up-to-date information about events, Dharma messages, photos and videos, history. It will be a website that members and non-members will want to visit regularly.
2. We are engaging a publicists to train temple leaders on how to publicize events, network with community organizations, and share our message by highlighting the Bishop's presence in and messages to the larger community.
3. Glenn Hamamura is leading the Temple Leadership Performance Committee that is charged with developing strong relationships between ministers and members so they work in partnership as they engage with and share the Dharma.
4. Michael Munekiyo is chair of the Organizational Rethinking Committee that is working on simplifying the state organization to make it more efficient and effective in supporting temples in their efforts to share the Jodo Shinshu message.
5. The Ewa-Kapolei sanghas are developing a new temple to better share the Dharma in an area of West Oahu that is experiencing unprecedented growth. Along with this exciting development, the Bishop is forming a special committee to explore programs to intensify Hongwanji's presence in West Oahu.
6. Alan Goto and his Research and Planning Committee is focusing on the issue of exploring diverse sources of revenues to fund Kyodan activities.
7. The ministers are presenting a resolution at this Giseikai that outlines the work and role of ministers in Hawaii. It includes emphasis on the importance of sharing the Dharma with the community. It also defines the position of Ministers Lay Assistants. This is a powerful resource to support ministers in sharing the Dharma as has been proven at the Buddhist Churches of America.

When I think about the work we are engaged in, I am satisfied that we are keeping our focus on the right tasks. There is a momentum that we need to maintain.

Let us be creative and sensitive and relentless in translating the essence of our message into words and actions that are understandable, real, and relevant to Millennials, Generation X-ers, and Boomers of all ethnic backgrounds and cultures. Rev. Umitani recently told me that lay members should not be reluctant to share Jodo Shinshu messages that are borne out of their personal experiences and interpretation. He went on to point out that Jodo Shinshu would have died out long long ago if the sharing of the Dharma was the responsibility of ministers only. Of course, he reminded me that we need to continue learning from ministers so our understanding matures. But let's not say because we failed in our responsibility to share, Jodo Shinshu was diminished in Hawaii.

Let us be bold in sharing our message.

Let us not lose sight of the fact that all of the work we do, all of the work we do weekly in our temples, in our committees must be related to understanding the Dharma, living the Dharma and sharing the Dharma. As leaders with limited time and energy, we should do no less.



## Officers, Advisors, and Directors of Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii for year 2016

<b>President:</b>	Pieper Toyama (H)		
<b>Immediate Past President:</b>	Alton Miyamoto (K)		
<b>Vice Presidents:</b>	Nancy Shimamoto (H)	Glenn Hamamura (O)	Carol Valentine (K)
	Richard Nishihara (M)	Keith Yamanaka (HI)	
<b>Secretary:</b>	Carol Yamamura (M)		
<b>Assistant Secretary:</b>	Debbie Kubota (H)		
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Keiji Kukino (H)		
<b>Assistant Treasurer:</b>	Wayne Yoshioka (H)		
<b>Advisors:</b>	Alan Goto (H)	Roy Miyamoto (H)	Masami Nishimoto (O)
	Robert Asato (O)	Wayne Fujioka (K)	Sherman Thompson (M)
	Michael Munekiyo (M)	Barry Mizuno (HI)	Barry Taniguchi (HI)
	Richard Fujii (HI)		
<b>Honorary Advisors:</b>	Edward Fujimori (H)	Norman Hirohata-Goto	Rose Nakamura (H)
	Rev. Chikai Yosemori (H)	George Otani (O)	Yoshio Iwai (O)
	S. Stanley Okamoto (M)		
<b>Directors:</b>			
<b>Honolulu (7)</b>	Stacy Bradshaw	Dexter Mar	Wayne Yoshioka
	Debbie Kubota	Masuo Kino	Keiji Kukino
	Nancy Shimamoto		
<b>Oahu (5)</b>	Dean Sakamoto	Glenn Hamamura	Dale Shimauro
	Donald Matsumoto	Francis Uyeno	
<b>Kauai (2)</b>	Carol Valentine	Roy Nishida	
<b>Maui (4)</b>	Richard Fukumura	Richard Nishihara	Carol Yamamura
	Charles Hirata		
<b>Hawaii (6)</b>	Richard Onishi	Keith Yamanaka	Helen Shirota-Benevides
	Miles Okumura	Frederick S. Nonaka	Jason Hashimoto





## 41<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL LIVING TREASURES OF HAWAII

The Living Treasures of Hawaii is a program instituted by the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii to recognize and honor individuals for their sustained contributions toward enriching our society.



*Rev. Tatsuo Muneto receiving the Certificates of Appreciation for his retirement recognition.*



*Mrs. Edna Muneto receiving a flower bouquet from Mr. Pieper Toyama.*



*Mrs. Lillian Noda Yajima, the Living Treasures of Hawaii 2016*



*Dr. Dennis Masaaki Ogawa, the Living Treasures of Hawaii 2016*



*Mr. Paul Leland Breese, the Living Treasures of Hawaii 2016*



*Mr. Muthukumar Sooriyakumar (Sooriya Kumar), the Living Treasures of Hawaii 2016*



*Dr. Puakea M. Nogelmeier, the Living Treasures of Hawaii 2016*



*Master of Ceremonies, Mr. Dennis Sekine*



## JINJI (Ministerial Assignment)

**Rev. Jay Shingo Okamoto**, the Resident Minister of Waipahu Hongwanji Mission and also the Oversee Minister of Ewa Hongwanji Mission and Waianae Hongwanji Mission, will resign from Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii as of March 31, 2016. During the absence of the resident minister after April 1, 2016, ministers of Oahu District are tasked with providing spiritual care such as conducting funeral services, memorial services, Sunday services, etc. and also provide guidance at meetings and any other gatherings for Waipahu Hongwanji Mission, Ewa Hongwanji Mission, and Waianae Hongwanji Mission.



**Invitation to  
everyone!**

## THE ACCESSION CEREMONY (DENTO HOKOKU HOYO)

**The Accession Ceremony** (The Commemoration on the Accession of the Jodo Shinshu Tradition; *Dento Hokoku Hoyo* 伝灯奉告法要) will be conducted from October 2016 through May 2017 (a total of 80 services) at our mother temple (Honzan) in Kyoto, Japan.

The Accession Ceremony is conducted before Amida Tathagata and Shinran Shonin to formally announce that the newly-inducted Head Priest (25<sup>th</sup> Gomonsu Kojun Ohtani) shall take on the responsibilities as Monshu, following in the footsteps of his predecessors to spread the Dharma to new generations and embracing the opportunity to spread the Nembutsu teaching to a greater number of people. It is also a festive occasion welcoming everyone to celebrate the inauguration of the new Monshu. Over 2,000 people are expected to attend the ceremony each day from both within and outside of Japan.

Honzan has designated two dates for overseas members (BCA, HHMH, and Canada) to participate in this auspicious observance; **October 21, 2016** and **March 31, 2017**. The Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii would like to invite you to join in the Special Tours with a spiritual significance to participate in the Accession Ceremony and to enrich your spiritual understanding and appreciation of the Jodo Shinshu Tradition as well as sightseeing and fellowship with your fellow Sangha members from Hawaii and also from other parts of the World. English translation will be provided during the Accession Ceremony and throughout the tour.

Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii has arranged the following four (4) options for you to participate in the Accession Ceremony.

- #1 Join in the "HHMH Spiritual Enrichment and Fellowship Tour" from October 14 to 23, 2016 which is arranged by Kintetsu International Hawaii to attend the Accession Ceremony on October 21, 2016. Registration deadline has been extended until March 31, 2016. Rev. Toshiyuki Umitani (HQ) and Rev. Kazunori Takahashi (Kauai) will serve as the chaperones to assist your trip.
- #2 You will make your own travel arrangement, and join in the tour group in Kyoto from October 20 to 22 to attend the Accession Ceremony on October 21, 2016. Two nights' accommodation at Kyoto Shin Miyako Hotel with breakfast (2) and dinner (1) will be arranged by Kintetsu. Registration deadline has been extended until March 31, 2016.
- #3 Join in the "HHMH Spiritual Enrichment and Fellowship Tour" from March 29 to April 7, 2017 which is arranged by JTB USA to attend the Accession Ceremony on March 31, 2017. Registration deadline is May 13, 2016. Bishop Eric Matsumoto (HQ) and Rev. Yuika Hasebe (Honolulu) will serve as the chaperones to assist your trip.
- #4 You will make your own travel arrangement, and join in the tour group in Kyoto from March 30 to April 1 to attend the Accession Ceremony on March 31, 2017. Two nights' accommodation at Rihga Royal Hotel in Kyoto with breakfast (2) and dinner (1) will be arranged by JTB. Registration deadline is May 13, 2016.

**Please see the website for more information and registration;**

<http://hqs963.wix.com/hhmhdhhtour>

If you have any questions or requests, please contact your resident minister or Rev. Toshiyuki Umitani at [hqs@honpahi.org](mailto:hqs@honpahi.org) or call (808) 522-9200. We sincerely hope that you will join in the Accession Ceremony at the Honzan in Kyoto, and take this wonderful opportunity to deepen and share your appreciation and joy of the Nembutsu teaching together with the fellow Dharma-friends. In Gassho,

## A REMEMBRANCE OF COLONEL ELLISON ONIZUKA

Message from Bishop Eric Matsumoto on January 28, 2016

To the Family, Relatives and Friends of the late Colonel Ellison Onizuka and the Members and Supporters of Kona Hongwanji,

As you gather at Kona Hongwanji, on the occasion of the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the passing of the late Colonel Ellison Onizuka and his fellow Astronauts in remembrance of them, I am sure there are many who can still vividly recall the scene of the exploding Space Shuttle Challenger on January 28, 1986 which left us in shock and disbelief. For the people of Hawaii, it was sad, to say the least, as we lost one of our greatest home grown heroes. A local boy who grew up in rural community, but through education, perseverance, personal commitment and diligence went on to become a national hero as an elite NASA astronaut recognized by the world for his contributions and especially his encouragement to the youth to ever aspire for bigger and better things for the sake of humankind. In a message he delivered to Konawaena's Graduating Class of 1980, he said,

*"If I can impress upon you only one idea . . . Let it be that the people who make this world run, whose lives can be termed successful, whose names will go down in the history books...are the adventurers, the explorers, and doers of this world. When they see a wrong or problem, they do something about it. When they see a vacant place in our knowledge, they work to fill that void." "Every generation has the obligation to free men's minds for a look at new worlds . . . to look out from a higher plateau than the last generation." "Your vision is not limited by what your eye can see, but by what your mind can imagine." "... your education and imagination will carry you to places which we won't believe possible." "Make your life count – and the world will be a better place because you tried."*

As I reread his words and as a Jodo Shin Buddhist, the life of Sakyamuni Buddha and Shinran Shonin come to mind. These two individuals were, to use Ellison's words, explorers and doers, when they saw a wrong or problem, they did something about it. When they saw a vacant place in our knowledge, they worked to fill that void. Sakyamuni Buddha addressed the sufferings of the world by sharing the Wisdom of Enlightenment. As Prince Siddhartha, he realized that there was a void (ignorance or lack of true understanding) and sought to fill that void. By virtue of his attaining Great Insight, the void was filled with the Wisdom of Enlightenment which continues to guide people to this day bringing meaning to people's lives. Shinran Shonin having experienced the Great Compassion of Amida Buddha shared the Nembutsu Teachings which has brought hope and joy to countless people for centuries. They are perfect examples of Ellison's words "Make your life count-and the world will be a better place because you tried."

It is this expression "Make your life count-and the world will be a better place because you tried" which lingers in my mind on the occasion of the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. This, I believe, is Ellison's encouraging message to us. As we listen to the news, nowadays, we may feel overwhelmed and helpless with all the negative things that are happening around the world and even in our own Hawaii, but his encouraging words ring in my ears. Let's try to make that difference. Let us try to be that difference. Challenging, and maybe impossible, as it may be for me as bonbu/ordinary foolish being, I should not give up. Just as Amida Buddha does not give up on this bonbu I (Eric), let us not give up on ourselves and our world. Let us live life of nembutsu in which we aspire to cast off our negative qualities in grateful response to Amida Buddha's Unconditional Compassion and continually go to the Buddha-Dharma for guidance.

To conclude, I wish I could be there today in Kona with you all of you to remember and honor Ellison not only the famous astronaut, but a fellow Jodo Shin Buddhist, but even though I am not, I would like to ask you to please join me in gassho to recite "Namo Amida Butsu" in grateful response to Amida Buddha's Great Wisdom and Compassion which is reaching out to embrace all of us and seeking the happiness, in the truest sense of the word, the happiness of all life, all existence. Truly, how fortunate we are to have encountered Namo Amida Butsu or All-Inclusive Wisdom and All-Embracing Compassion. Namo Amida Butsu. Entrusting in the Buddha of Immeasurable Life and Infinite Light.