



Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii

HEADQUARTERS UPDATE

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SENNYO GOMONSHU: SUCCESSION TO ACCESSION TO OFFICIAL VISITATION (2014-2017)

On June 6, 2014, the world-wide Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji of Mahayana Pure Land Buddhism welcomed our new Spiritual Leader, Sennyo Gomonshu. He is, also known by his secular name Ohtani, Kojun Gomonshu. In both cases, "Gomonshu" refers to his title as the Spiritual Leader of our Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji Denomination and Resident Minister of the (Nishi) Hongwanji Temple in Kyoto. He is the 25th Spiritual Leader of our Denomination which begins with Shinran Shonin (1173-1263) whom we revere as our Founder. The announcement of Sennyo Gomonshu succeeding the Jodo Shinshu Tradition was joyous news for the Jodo Shinshu Followers throughout the World.

On January 16, 2015, a message by Gomonshu, announced the start of the Commemoration on the Accession of the Jodo Shinshu Tradition of His Eminence from October 1, 2016 to May 31, 2017. Thus, from October 2016-May 2017, a series of 80 commemorative services were held at the Nishi Hongwanji or Honzan (Main Temple) to celebrate the Accession. From Hawaii, two official Accession Ceremony Pilgrimage Tours traveled to Kyoto to take part in the ceremonies with each group also traveling to different parts of Japan to learn and experience Jodo Shinshu, its history and also its culture. One of the highlights of the Accession Ceremony was being greeted by 3 Generations of the Ohtani Family.

On September 4 and through September 12, 2017, His Eminence Ohtani, Kojun Gomonshu honored the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii with His Official Visitation to Hawaii. In the 9-day Visit, His Eminence traveled to Hawaii Island, Maui, Kauai and Oahu. He visited not only larger temples, but smaller temples like Honohina Hongwanji which was his first stop. He met with temple members both young and older as his visits included preschools at Kahului Hongwanji and Hilo Hongwanji, and also Hongwanji Mission School and the State Lay Convention attendees gathered at Aiea Hongwanji. On Kauai, to the delight of the Members he participated in the concluding entertainment in the spirit of oneness and togetherness. He met with community leaders like Interfaith leaders of Hawaii to promote religious understanding and harmony at which a Hawaiian oli was chanted in his honor. Further, he visited community sites like the Pahoia Cemetery which was partially covered by a lava flow to pay his respects. He also conducted Confirmation Rites in the Islands for 134 Hongwanji members. In addition, at the Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin, he participated in a special unveiling of two large murals in the altar area of a phoenix (a bird which is said to appear on auspicious occasions and places) and the famous "Two Headed Bird" or Gumyocho (which symbolizes interdependency and the importance of living harmoniously) at the Special Kickoff Commemoration Service which begins a year-long celebration of commemorating the centennial of the Main Sanctuary which was completed in 1918. Further, His Eminence honored the Pacific Buddhist Academy by being present for the special ceremony which commemorated the completion of the new school building and dedication of the unique altar at PBA featuring olive branches, the western symbol of peace, and two impressive dragons which are depicted as protectors of the Dharma.

Needless to say, all those who met His Eminence were touched by his kind and gentle demeanor and his grace and nobility. Truly, an experience which will be treasured for a lifetime. We look forward to his continued guidance as our Spiritual Leader.



REFLECTIONS ON THE GOMONSHU'S VISIT

If I had to choose words that express my thoughts and feelings about the Gomonsu's visit, I would choose words like thoughtful, caring, approachable and compassionate. His most recent visit to Hawaii and our local temples was a rigorous schedule and yet he was committed to visit as many of our Hawaii temples and spend quality time with each of us. The Gomonsu's willingness to engage with those who came to see him was very thoughtful. He took the time to be caring and I observed him immersing himself in every opportunity he was presented with to get to know the members of his temples.

His willingness to share his thoughts and words in English was another example of his sincere wish to reach out to international Hongwanji members. I feel I have a deeper understanding and bond with Honzan. I can more concretely connect with the Honzan and relate to a "head teacher" that I feel is willing to lead the Hongwanji into the 21st century. I enjoyed the service at our temple. He had a sincere message of challenging each of us to strive beyond our individual limitations and desires. His message asks us to accept the world as it is and focus on the importance of listening to the Dharma and grow an understanding of how Amida Buddha works to reach all of us. Gomonsu Ohtani encouraged us that through such efforts of listening and understanding, our views of living will change and thus how we relate to the world. He asked us to continue our efforts at our temples and to share the dharma through our livelihood.

I think (along with many others) that the Gomonsu's visit was successful and significant for the Hongwanji and its members. His willingness to be approachable, to interact with as many members as possible gave each of us new purpose and energy to the Dharma. I feel he is looking beyond the Honzan and truly wants to be an ambassador for the Jodo Shinshu religion. The Gomonsu's visit shows me that he is willing to put into action that outreach.

(Claire Tamamoto, Aiea Hongwanji Mission)

MINISTERIAL ASSIGNMENTS (JINJI)

REVEREND BERT SUMIKAWA, the Resident Minister of Moiliili Hongwanji Mission, will retire from active ministry as of January 31, 2018. Rev. Sumikawa served HHMH as a Kaikyoshi-ho Minister from December 2007 to March 2011, and as a Kaikyoshi Minister from April 2011.

Rev. Sumikawa will be assigned to be the minister in charge of Kailua Hongwanji Mission, as well as the Chaplain of the Pacific Buddhist Academy. Both Assignments as a Retired Kaikyoshi Minister will begin as of March 1, 2018.

REVEREND TOSHIYUKI UMITANI, the Executive Assistant to the Bishop, will oversee Moiliili Hongwanji Mission from February 15, 2018 until May 31, 2018 while he continues his duties as the Executive Assistant to the Bishop. Rev. Umitani will then be officially assigned to the Moiliili Hongwanji Mission as its Resident Minister as of June 1, 2018.

Rev. Umitani will be relieved from the positions of the Oversee Minister for Kailua Hongwanji Mission as of December 31, 2017, and the Chaplain of the Pacific Buddhist Academy as of February 28, 2018.

HQ PERSONNEL

MR. ARTHUR NAKAGAWA, the Business Manager of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, will retire as of December 31, 2017.

HONPA HONGWANJI PAYS TRIBUTE TO QUEEN LILI'UOKALANI

The Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii celebrated a Queen Lili'uokalani Tribute Service on Sunday, October 29 at Hawaii Betsuin, the Hongwanji temple on Pali Highway. The service was an opportunity to express gratitude for the queen and her encouragement to the Shin Buddhist community in Hawaii over 100 years ago.

We were gratified to see the main temple hall filled to capacity by temple members and friends, special guests and participants, and members of the wider community. Attendees were privileged to be addressed by Queen Lili'uokalani through the performing artistry of Jackie Pualani Johnson and to hear performances by the Hawaii Betsuin Choir and the Hawaii Youth Opera Chorus.



Go to <http://hongwanjihawaii.com/blog/2017/10/30/hongwanji-in-hawaii-pays-tribute-to-queen-liliuokalani/> to read Bishop Eric Matsumoto's Dharma Message.

IN GRATITUDE

Gratitude is a cornerstone of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism. It is our humble honor to be able to express our appreciation to Her Majesty Queen Lili'uokalani in the form of a centennial tribute with this special service in her honor. In a difficult and challenging time, Her Majesty extended her compassion and kindness to the Japanese community and in particular the Hongwanji Buddhist Community by attending a special birthday service in honor of Shinran Shonin, the founder of Shin Buddhism, on May 19, 1901 at the Fort Lane Temple, the forerunner of this current temple. Her presence along with that of Mary Elizabeth Mikahala Foster who had extended the invitation to the Queen encouraged the Hongwanji to proudly move forward. Her Aloha for the people of Hawaii made a tremendous impact on society at the time. Last year, in 2016, a 100th Memorial Service was held in honor of the Queen at the Honpa Hongwanji Hilo Betsuin Temple in Hilo on the Big Island. This year, we hold a 100th Anniversary Tribute in her honor in Honolulu. Today's Tribute Service also contains elements of the 1901 Service at which the gatha or Buddhist songs "Sambo no On/The Wondrous Gift of Peace" and "Nori no Miyama/Deep in the Woods of Dharma" were sung. We humbly express our debt of gratitude to Her Majesty, Queen Lili'uokalani.

KAPA'A HONGWANJI THANKSGIVING LUNCHEON

In 2003 Kapa'a Hongwanji, with the help of Rev. Takata, began the Kapa'a Interfaith Thanksgiving Luncheon and hosted the luncheon for 3 years. The Interfaith luncheon has been held on Thanksgiving Day since 2003 and provides a hot Thanksgiving luncheon any community members in the Kapa'a area for families, for people without family in the area and for those who may be lonely and simply want someone with whom to share their meal. In addition, volunteers deliver Thanksgiving meals to individuals in the Kapa'a and Lihue areas who are elderly, homebound and may have no one in the area for the holiday. This year the Interfaith Thanksgiving Luncheon will be held at All Saints Episcopal Church in Kapa'a. The volunteers this year will deliver approximately 400 meals, in addition to the meals served. Social Concerns has helped with funding



this project for the past two years. This year the Social Concerns Committee generously gave \$1,000 to Kapa'a Hongwanji, through the Golden Chain Grant, to

help fund this worthy project. Thank you to Rev. Majima and Mrs. Roberta Yanagawa, Kapa'a Hongwanji President, for helping those in need in our communities.

Photo (L-R): Mary Margaret Smith (All Saints), Sarah Rogers (All Saints), Roberta Yanagawa (Kapa'a Hongwanji), "Dimples" Kano (Kapa'a Hongwanji), Carol Valentine (Kauai representative for Social Concerns) and Rev. Miekko Majima (Kapa'a Hongwanji).

KAUAI DISTRICT NEMBUTSU SEMINAR & JOINT SUNDAY SERVICE

Kauai Hongwanji Council held the Nembutsu Seminar on November 3 at West Kauai Hongwanji Mission and November 4 at Kapaa Hongwanji Mission. The Joint Sunday Service was held on November 5 at Lihue Hongwanji Mission.

The theme was "Jodo Shinshu Buddhism in Everyday Life." The guest speaker was Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara, Co-Director of the Center for Buddhist Education, Buddhist Churches of America.

In his presentations, he especially focused on lives of people who lived with the teachings and introduced the episodes of some Jodo Shinshu followers. Examples include one who encountered theft and the others who suffered from terminal illness. We sometimes encounter unfavorable events in our everyday lives, but some Jodo Shinshu followers lived calmly even in such situations.

It was emphasized that we can realize who we are and how we are living our everyday lives through listening to the teaching. This realization enables us to live more mindfully, brings us a sense of humility and gradually changes our everyday lives. Participants learned that the Jodo Shinshu Buddhism supports us in negative situations, amplifies joy and appreciation in positive situations and brings us more fulfilling life.

It was a great opportunity for everybody to deepen their understanding and appreciation of the Jodo Shinshu teaching.

