



Nola Nahulu:



“KULIA I KA NU’U...WE STRIVE TO ALWAYS DO OUR BEST”

by Gail Taira

From the first time Nola rehearsed the Hongwanji statewide choir for the first Choralfest in the Bet-suin social hall in 2005, I loved how she was able to immediately take control, and so engagingly lead the 100-plus choir members in warm-ups. At that first Choralfest rehearsal, Nola led us through different gathas for warm-up, and we could all feel the close relationship and



**Choralfest 2014
Linda, Aunt Morime & Nola**

genuine fondness she had for gathas. It was a wonderful beginning as we all fell in love with her!

Since that time, Nola has graciously served as the choir director for all of the statewide Choralfests and in 2013, Nola was declared a “Living Treasure” by the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii. This article attempts to help us get to know Nola a little bit better.

The bulk of the information contained in this article came through an email interview with Nola. I would like to extend my sincere thank you to Nola for so graciously providing the information contained in this article. Nola included an opening general statement which reads, “Both my sister Linda B. Nahulu, MD, and I were brought up in Wai’anae with the same opportunities afforded us by our parents. We truly believe in “Okagesama de” ... we are thankful for our Ohana, community and all that surrounds us including the Wai’anae

district because we have become who we are because of ALL ~”

Nola and sister Linda Nahulu, spent their first four years in Nanakuli, and later in Wai’anae and Makaha, where their family home is located. Nola’s father was Thomas Kalelehuapanaewa Nahulu, 16th child of Elia Eleakala Nahulu and Kanoe Nahola Nahulu. Nola’s mother, Chiyoko Nozaki was the oldest child of Kimiyo and Goro Nozaki, both from Hiroshima. The Nozaki family had seven children, six who lived to adulthood. Chiyoko was “Oneechan” to Terume # 2 daughter, Eiko # 3 daughter and (Aunt) Morime # 4 daughter, and Norito # 5 son and Teruyuki #6 son.

According to Nola, “Ojiichan” was a true believer in Jodo Shinshu and was adamant that his family attend Wai’anae Hongwanji. The Nozaki Family was very close to Wai’anae Hongwanji minister, Matano Sensei and his family. Nola and Linda attended Wai’anae Hongwanji services and Japanese Language School all through elementary school years. In fact, to this day, Nola said, “In our lives, we have never missed Obon or New Years. Our dad, Thomas, was even the President of the Japanese School PTA and kokua with putting up the yagura.”

Both Nola and Linda attended Wai’anae Elementary School from kindergarten until the sixth grade. They were both accepted to and attended Kamehameha School from seventh grade to graduation. Speaking on behalf of Linda, Nola acknowledged their gratitude and said, “Okagesama de ...

we are truly grateful to our parents who literally afforded us the opportunity to attend all of our schools. They also gave us experiences in the arts which were totally extra, outside of school as well as an exchange program to Japan one summer where we were able to meet our Hiroshima Ohana. At Kamehameha, we met friends for life from the neighbor islands. Our undergraduate years gave us the experiences of living somewhere

(continued on page 2)



Thomas and Chiyoko Nahulu



Music Editorial

On Writing Gatha Lyrics

by Francis Okano

At a local temple music seminar recently, I was delighted to attend a session that encouraged participants to compose lyrics to a tune provided by the facilitator. Already harmonized and recorded on CD, the melody suggested the lyrics' structure, such as meter and length. Participants simply had to come up with the message. I enjoyed the session, particularly as the facilitator gently guided and encouraged the group to dare to capture feelings in song.

I grant that personal experience, particularly those moving moments that bring "Namu Amida Butsu" to one's lips, speaks most eloquently. Crafting lyrics, however, reminds me of a remark heard years ago. A prominent temple musician once said that a ready source of lyrics lies right under our nose – in Shinran Shonin's output of some 350 *wasan*, or religious poems. In three volumes, the *Jodo Wasan* (Hymns of the Pure Land), *Koso Wasan* (Hymns of the Pure Land Masters), and *Shozomatsu Wasan* (Hymns of the Dharma Ages), I am told, distill elements of Shinran's thoughts in concise poetry. Consisting of four couplets of seven- and five-syllable lines, the *wasan* has inspired a number of lyrics or served themselves as gatha lyrics in Japanese. Examples include ***Sambo no on***, ***Mida daihi no seigan wo***, ***Seiya***, ***Sougou no hyaku senbon***, and the ever-endearing ***Ondokusan***, to name a few. Among English gathas, a literal translation of the *wasan* we sing as ***Ondokusan*** was set to music as ***Dedication***.

We all know the linguistic hurdle the *wasan* presents for us English-speakers, since we peek into this window to Shinran's thoughts through the lens of translation. It is unlikely that a single translation can convey both a *wasan*'s gist as well as its poetic nuance. If *The Collected Works of Shinran* (1997) by the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha offers perhaps the clearest English explication of each *wasan*, I find myself, as a browser, drawn to the remarkable rendition in English verse of the *wasan* by Kosho Yamamoto in *Shinshu Seiten* (1955), a work commissioned by the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii. Each *wasan* appears there -- if in perhaps "olde English" and with some problematic clarity -- in iambic tetrameter and rhyme! Undertaken at a time (1951-1954) when general English fluency in Japan -- and among most Hawaii ministers -- was far below what it is today, this volume in translation of the essential writings of Jodo Shinshu by Yamamoto seems nothing short of amazing and probably deserves wider readership than it may now have. Today, with a number of translations and English commentaries at hand (even at websites as "The Udambara Flower" or the "Adelaide Shin Buddhist Dojo" and its links), Shinran's writings, including *wasan*, seem more accessible than ever.

What inspires, of course, depends upon the individual. If the *wasan* does not resonate, the aspiring lyricist should, by all means, seek out what causes her the poetic "wound" that moves her to write. Be the source the expressions of a *myokonin* or a favorite poet or a minister in sermon, or be it a reflection on one's life, what matters, as the music seminar facilitator encouraged, is that one dare to express a Jodo Shinshu thought or feeling in a poem for all to enjoy.

(Nahulu: continued from page 1)

else outside of Hawaii, and UH Manoa gave us the ability for higher education here in Hawaii."

After her graduation from Kamehameha, Nola went on to Whitman College, where she received her B.A. in Psychology and then went on to the University of Hawaii at Manoa where she received her M.A. in Music Education with a concentration in Choral Music. Sister Linda attended Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota and the John A. Burns School of Medicine in Hawaii.

Nola wears many hats. We know her best as an amazing, outstanding choral director who has garnered many accolades. Nola is well known and very well respected in the music community here in Hawaii, and has many accomplishments to her name. What is not as widely known is that Nola, along with sister Linda, also owns and operates Bete Mu'u, providers of classic, traditional Hawaiian dresses, made in Hawaii. When these sisters acquired the company in 1994, foremost in their minds was to uphold the integrity of Bete's designs and the quality of its manufacture. Part of Nola and Linda's business decision to acquire and run Bete Mu'u had to do with their desire to honor their mother, Chiyoko, who was a trained, professional dressmaker. Bete Mu'u fashions can be found at Na Mea Hawai'i, Fashions by Nake'u Awai, and at Princess Kaiulani Fashions.

(continued on page 3)

When asked the question, "What do you value most in your life?" Nola's answer is, "*Ohana...family...this includes blood, colleagues, bffs.*" That leads to another one of Nola and Linda's responsibilities that they both signed up for with grace and love. Aunt Morime never married, and so when she needed help, Nola and Linda invited her into their home. Today, Nola and Linda lovingly care for Aunt Morime. Nola describes it this way, "*Aunt Morime always took care of us when we were children in elementary school. Always kind and loving. She does not have children of her own, but has nieces who know that she appreciates her life now. We have found that she has a great sense of humor, loves to sing and cares for her family and Hongwanji deeply. She taught Sunday School for many years. We would not have learned as much about her or our Nihonjin family had we not invited her into our home to care for her. We are truly lucky that we have found a great adult day care center which she absolutely loves... and they love her too!!! It gives us time to attend to our professions, have respite and truly engages Aunt Morime with other folks and activities we would not be able to provide. The staff is fantastic!*" Aunt Morime has attended most if not all of the statewide Choral festivals. On a personal note, I remember Aunt Morime as a warm, kind and welcoming member of Wai'anae Hongwanji when we would get together for our annual Oahu District Sangha Days. She was always especially kind to my daughters, and I am sure, to all of the children she met at Sangha Day.

Nola's professional life revolves around her musical commitments. The following is an excerpt taken from the 2014 Choral festival booklet. "*She is currently choral director for the Kawaiaha'o Church Choir (since 1990), Hawaii Opera Theatre Chorus (since 1992), Pearl Harbor Hawaiian Civic Club (since 1977), and Kawaiolaonapukanileo (since 1997). She is also a lecturer in Hawaiian choral music at the University of Hawaii, Manoa, Music Department (since 1982) and the Executive & Artistic Director of the Hawaii Youth Opera Chorus (since 1986). Since she became Artistic Director for the Hawaii Youth Opera Chorus, the chorus has grown from twenty singers to over 200 children in grades K-12, with offerings in eight graduated ensembles and choral conducting internships. In 1997, having attended several international/national choral conventions, Ms. Nahulu noticed the non-representation of Hawaiian choral music. This was the impetus to develop an a cappella choral ensemble, Kawaiolaonapukanileo, whose mission is to perpetuate and promote Hawaiian choral literature.*"

I also asked Nola if she had any advice or suggestions about how Buddhist music might be made more relevant. Her reply is as follows, "*Never forget the original language and it's poetry...read the poetry, even in translation and interpret how it relates to this century and surrounding culture, whether in Hawaii, mainland or abroad. Feel free to edit/adjust as needed from your temple.*" Well, that gives all of us a lot to ponder on.

In the next few months, Nola is excited to let everyone know about the Hawaii Opera Theatre's production of Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* by Benjamin Britten on February 12, 14 and 16, 2016 at the NB Concert Hall. This will be the first time that the chorus is entirely made up of children. Check with Hawai'i Opera Theatre for tickets. Following that, on February 20, 2016, the Hawaii Youth Opera Chorus will have their Choral Festivals which will feature elementary school, middle school students as well as the Hawaii Youth Symphony II at Kawaiaha'o Church. On March 12, 2016 there will be a Hawaiian Choral Festival "Ke Ahe Lau Makani" featuring the music of Lili'uokalani and paying tribute to Prince Kuhio. This concert is also at Kawaiaha'o Church. Both festival concerts are free to the public.

When asked about how she manages all of her personal, business and professional commitments so well, Nola includes her sister Linda and says, "*We are so fortunate to have a strong support system of people who believe in what we do...**KULIA I KA NU'U...WE STRIVE TO ALWAYS DO OUR BEST.***" And, when asked what she values about Buddhist teachings Nola replied simply, "*Eightfold Path...says it all.*" She further adds, "*Okagesama de...I am truly grateful for all of the opportunities I was afforded...(I am)hoping that I am able to share some of those experiences with others....becoming the best that you can be.*"

We are all looking forward to once again, enjoying the experience of Nola conducting at our next Choral festival on September 24 and 25, 2016 at the Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin as the chorus members **Kulia I Ka Nu'u ... We Strive To Always Do Our Best!** Hope to see you all there!



JIKOEN CHOIR

by Lily Horio



After losing our accompanist, the Jikoen Choir has been experimenting using other instruments such as the guitar. We have also attempted to sing a cappella, an uphill battle because most of our singers do not read notes. After much contemplation, we decided to go on a break until we are able to find a capable director. An appeal for a volunteer director will appear in our next Jikoen Newsletter.

MUSIC AT MOILIILI

by Francis Okano and Lily Masuda

Moiliili Hongwanji hosted a fun music seminar on Saturday, November 14, 2015, featuring B.J. Soriano of Hilo Betsuin. A two-hour session introducing five of B.J.'s beautiful gathas preceded a lyrics-writing workshop under her guidance and encouragement. Twenty-five participants enjoyed the morning seminar that ended with a delicious lunch prepared by the Dharma Enrichment committee.



B.J. Soriano with Moiliili's Nancy Shimamoto and Rev. Bert Sumikawa

HHH BETSUIN CHOIR

by Wendie Yumori

The annual Peace Day Interfaith Celebration was held on September



Hawaii Betsuin Choir singing *Shall I Dream a Dream?* Megan Pascual on violin

18, 2015 at Hawaii Betsuin. Multi-talented Pacific Buddhist Academy students served as MCs and performed taiko, hula, and song. The Hawaii Betsuin Choir presented a song of peace, *Live and Light the World*.

The Hawaii Betsuin Choir participated in the Nu'uanu 54th Interfaith Thanksgiving service on November 24, 2015, at the Community Church of Honolulu. Mari Murakami directed the Choir in singing *Shall I Dream a Dream?* in beautiful three-part harmony.

Megan Pascual and Francis Okano provided fine accompaniment on violin and piano, respectively.

Moiliili Hongwanji singers and Hawaii Betsuin Choir members combined to perform twice during one joyful musical weekend! The first event was the Hawaii Association of International Buddhists' Dharmachakra Festival on December 5, 2015 at Fo Guang Shan temple. The second was the Hawaii Buddhist Council's Bodhi Day



Moiliili and Hawaii Betsuin Combined Hongwanji Choir at HBC Bodhi Day rehearsal



Ohana Arts performers present selections from *Peace On Your Wings*

service on De-

cember 6, 2015 hosted by Hawaii Betsuin. The combined choir sang *May Peace Prevail* and *The Bodhi Tree* on both occasions and *White Lotus Flowers* only for Bodhi Day. Following the Bodhi Day service, the Hawaii Betsuin Dharma School performed *Live Amida's Love* in the social hall and then Ohana Arts presented a series of impressive production numbers from the musical, *Peace On Your Wings*.

December 6, 2015 was Megan Pascual's last day co-directing the Hawaii Betsuin Choir. She has served so admirably as Choir Co-Director for the past two years and will begin student teaching on Hawaii Island in January 2016. Thank you and we will miss you, Megan!

On Tuesday, November 24th, at the Church of the Holy Apostles in Hilo, the Interfaith Communities in Action Committee hosted their annual Interfaith Thanksgiving celebration. The theme for this year's musical gathering was "Give Thanks with a Grateful Heart", a belief that transcends all religious practices and one that the Hilo Betsuin and Puna Hongwanji members include in their daily living. This year, the home choir of the Church of the Holy Apostles, opened with a rocking hymn *Your Grace is Enough* featuring a soloist and accompanied by a drummer and keyboardist. The presentations by the various groups included a range of instruments which were sung in different languages to show the universality of music. In addition to the standard piano/keyboard accompaniment, we were treated to guitar, wind and percussion instruments. The International Young Adult Association performed a jazzy tune called *Rain Down* with an oboe in the background. The East Hawaii Jewish community, with Hawaii State Senator Russell Ruderman, accompanied a soloist on his guitar and had the entire congregation clapping and singing to *Hava nagila* (*Let us Rejoice*) a traditional folk song meaning showing once again the interconnectedness of worship and music. As always, a crowd pleaser, the Kosraean Fellowship that attend the First United Protestant Church sang, in their beautiful a capella voices, *God is Good All the Time*, in their native Micronesian language.



Choir members waiting in anticipation of evening's performance.



Singers are led by BJ Soriano.

The group demonstrated the unity of family with mothers holding their infants and youngsters singing along with the elders. Music is truly infused in their worship. The Hilo Betsuin choir joined by members of the Puna Hongwanji choir, festively attired in their red and black outfits, and led by the energetic, BJ Soriano, performed *Peace Begins with Me* as a reminder of our roles in spreading peace throughout the world. Through the efforts of the **Interfaith Communities in Action Committee**, the members of the participating temples have developed friendships and respect in Hilo community, by lifting up our spirits and reminding us of the true meaning of Thanksgiving.

In other news: BJ has been a busy bee these past few months, travelling statewide and also to California, doing workshops. Not only has she been teaching others to sing her gathas but she has also been encouraging others to write their expressions of love and appreciation for the Dharma in what may become their own gatha.

Upcoming events: From Helen Shiota-Benevides of Papaikou Hongwanji - Gathafest will be held on Sunday, February 21, 2016 at Hilo Betsuin, Sangha Hall. The "Four Temple Council" will be hosting the event. Announcement of the required gatha will be made shortly. Please mark your calendars and have your temples begin thinking of a gatha they want to share. For those of you that will not be actively participating, please come and join us for a fun day of music and fellowship.

Music Committee

Francis Okano, Chairman

Gladys Fujiuchi, Kauai

Rev. Shinji Kawagoe, Hawaii

Laurie Rubin, Oahu

Jennifer Taira, Oahu

Osamu Kawabata, Honolulu

Ethel Miyashiro, Hawaii

Gail Taira, Oahu

Joan Tamori, Maui

"Musical Notes" is published biannually by the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, Office of Buddhist Education Music Committee.

Francis Okano—Chairman

Joan Tamori—Edit, Layout & Design

Yoshiko Umitani—Distribution

BJ SORIANO'S MUSIC INSPIRES "THE JOY OF SINGING" AT BWA CONFERENCE

The Kauai United Buddhist Women's Association held its annual Conference on October 18, 2015 at the Kapa`a Hongwanji Mission. The keynote speaker was Mr. James Jung and the workshop, entitled "The Joy of Singing" was presented by Gladys Fujiuchi.

Using BJ Soriano's music and CD as the foundation of the workshop, we touched upon some basic musical notation to help us navigate the tempo, and to perk it up we used rhythmical instruments. The workshop helped refresh the memories of those who attended BJ's workshop in March, and was an opportunity for others to get acquainted with her music. Hopefully, more of BJ's music will work its way into the temple services.



Gladys Fujiuchi presents
"The Joy of Singing" to a captive audience.

Choralfest 2016

Please mark on your calendars the dates, September 24 and 25, 2016, when the sixth Choralfest of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii will be held at Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin, 1727 Pali Highway, in Honolulu, Hawaii. Singers from all Hawaii temples, plus a few from Japan and BCA, will assemble at noon on Saturday for an afternoon of rehearsal, followed by a welcome banquet at night, and a music service the following morning. Selections this year will include *Touched by Kindness* (*Shiawase ni deattara*), *Entrusting Heart* (*Marui kokoro*), *Buddha's Great Light, Where Oh Where?* (*Hotokesama wa*), *How Happy I Am* (*Go on ureshiya*), and *Gratefulness II* (*Ondokusan*). The festival choir will be conducted by Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii Living Treasure Nola Nahulu. **Close of registration is April 30, 2016.**

Maui District by Joan Tamori



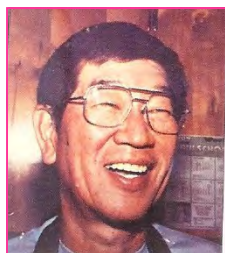
Kahului Hongwanji Mission: Sing and Strum Along with Patsy, a.k.a. SSP! Oops—and Jake! Oops—and the Kids! by Earlyn Ginoza

Thank you, Jake! As the karmic forces would have it, SSP had a sparkling visit with THE JAKE! Yes, a sparkling visit it was—Jake Shimabukuro always manages to share his sparkling personality and sparkling ukulele virtuosity with all who are so fortunate to cross his path. Though most of the SSP group are of the senior generation, Jake always manages to make all feel like little kids again—so much fun. Our heartfelt gratitude and giggles go to Jake. Mahalo and aloha!



fun instruments too! SSP thanks the children for the special treat they prepared for them—how precious!

SSP also spent some merry time with the Kahului Hongwanji preschoolers singing holiday carols together with ukulele strumming. The children sang and joined in with their



Henry S. Tasaka Memorial : ("Guri-Guri Man") BUDDHA FEST 2015



Henry S. Tasaka was known as the "guri-guri man" as he owned and operated Tasaka Guri-Guri, a landmark destination for over 50 years on Maui. Henry passed away in January of 2015 but his legacy to the Maui community continues as his daughters now operate the shop. In memory of Henry, his wife Florence, a member of Kahului Hongwanji Mission, created the Henry S. Tasaka Memorial from which the idea of the Buddha Fest was born. On October 24, 2015, the first Buddha Fest was held at Kahului Hongwanji Mission which hosted workshop speakers Rev. Ai Hironaka, Rev. Shinkai Murakami, Rev. Bert Sumikawa, Rev. Richard Tennes, and Joan Tamori. Included were activities for children conducted by Sandy Hirata and Kelly Kohatsu, niece of Henry Tasaka. Kelly chaired the event along with the guidance of Rev. Tennes. A committee comprised of church members from various temples assisted. I was humbled to be asked to conduct a music workshop entitled "Joyful Song, Buddhist Gathas" where I shared a brief history of Buddhist music in Hawaii and also taught attendees the gatha, *Listen to Amida With Your Heart*. I was grateful to have the Wailuku Hongwanji Mission choir sing the following gathas, *Ondokusan*, *World Wherein We Dwell* and *Becoming Free* which were referred to as part of my talk. They were backup singers for the teaching of BJ Soriano's gatha as were Irene Imada and Patsy Saki of Kahului Hongwanji and Eric Ikeuchi and Florence Tanaka of Wailuku who accompanied on their ukuleles. A Buddhist-inspired vegetarian lunch followed the workshops which offered traditional Indian curry with vegetables and tofu, jasmine rice, raita sauce and garlic-flavored naan. Of course dessert included the famous Tasaka guri-guri.

Joan Tamori presented a brief history of Buddhist music in Hawaii and taught a gatha at the Buddha Fest workshop.



Maui District (continued)

Wailuku Hongwanji Mission Choir

The dedicated members of the Wailuku Hongwanji Mission choir have been steadily preparing for its churchwide events beginning with the BWA's 110th anniversary celebration service on July 5. After a number of practices, the choir confidently rendered two Choralfest favorites, **Amida's Compassionate Vow** and **Cosmos Flower**. Also making their first debut in front of an audience during the entertainment portion in the social hall, were Florence Tanaka's ukulele group playing and singing **Hongwanji Ga Mieta, Oh, Susanna!**, and **Yellow Bird**. Barbara Parr played an organ grinding song on the keyboard, Marie Wong did a beautiful **Sanshin no hana** on the ichigo-ichie instrument, and Donna Ikeuchi played **Danny Boy** and **Traumerei** on the flute.

Obon season arrived for WHM at the end of July when the choir sang for the services held on two evenings. They comfortably sang **Amida's Compassionate Vow** followed by **Listen to Amida With Your Heart** composed by BJ Soriano. For BJ's gatha, Eric Ikeuchi and Florence Tanaka, skillfully accompanied the choir on their ukuleles.

The BWA held its annual memorial service on December 13, 2015, honoring dedicated members who passed on during the year. Following numerous practices, the choir did a wonderful job in singing Carrie Kawamoto's beautiful **Buddha's Great Light**. They ended with a favorite, **Listen to Amida With Your Heart**.



Choir singing **Buddha's Great Light** and **Listen to Amida With Your Heart** with heartfelt dedication.

Oahu District by Gail Taira

Monthly Memorial Service at Mililani Hongwanji

Whenever Carrie Kawamoto is the service MC at Mililani Hongwanji, you can almost bet that she has something special planned. Sunday, December 13 was no different, as Carrie planned a special Monthly Memorial Service for the members of Mililani Hongwanji. Surrounded by a team of nine ukulele players, and enthusiastic leaders, Carrie and Dennis Kawamoto, the congregation sang **May Peace Prevail** to gentle and rhythmical ukulele accompaniment. The "surround sound" ukulele accompaniment is a departure from the usual keyboard accompaniment and was a new way to experience this wonderful gatha! Hmmm? Might this be a new avenue for gatha singing at Mililani Hongwanji in the future?

