

Musical Notes

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Office of Buddhist Education Music Committee



July 2010 Issue

A MUSICAL MIRACLE-WORKER

This article was written by Eunice Watanabe of Waialua Hongwanji. The information was taken from photos and news articles sent by Rev. Charles Hasegawa of Stockton Buddhist Temple. Translations from Japanese to English were done by Osamu Kawabata of Moiliili Hongwanji.

Hospitalized and recovering in a Japanese hospital in the fall of 1956, a hope and a plan for the youngsters in Hawaii formed in the many thoughts of Mrs. Kaori Hasegawa, wife of Rev. Kenryu Hasegawa. With her collegiate background in Music Education, Mrs. Hasegawa, upon her discharge from the hospital, researched various musical instruments that youngsters would be able to play. She also went to listen to a well-known music band of the Suzuki No. 7 Elementary School and was truly inspired to pursue her plan.

The Rev. Kenryu Hasegawa was at Pahala Hongwanji when Mrs. Hasegawa left Japan after her hospitalization. In 1957, she started the Little Symphony at Pahala with 68 students, only to be disrupted in August 1958



Kaori Hasegawa



when Rev. Hasegawa was assigned to Waialua Hongwanji. That must have been an extremely sad and trying time for the members of Pahala Hongwanji and the children, as well as for Rev. & Mrs. Hasegawa.

Waialua Hongwanji soon realized that we had received an immeasurable gift in the form of Rev. and Mrs. Kenryu Hasegawa. Mrs. Hasegawa was multi-talented, multi-gifted, energetic, mentally agile - - with a keen wit and keen intellect. She greeted everyone with a ready smile and made a person comfortable and at ease. She wore many, many hats - - helpmate to Rev. Kenryu Hasegawa, mother to daughter Nancy and son Charles, Japanese Language school teacher, symphony conductor, music teacher of various instruments, choir director, dance creator/teacher, artist, music score arranger, Dharma school teacher and ordained minister.

(continued on page 3)

Music Editorial



NOTE-PERFECT RECORDINGS?

By Francis Okano

At both the 2008 and 2010 conferences of the Music Teachers National Association I had the great pleasure of enjoying beautiful piano playing and stimulating talk – and of being outnumbered by the fair gender about seven to one. I will, however, remember this year's event for its one off-tune note. Distinguished Canadian musicologist Dr. Alan Walker, discussing Chopin's playing style, abruptly digressed to bring up his pet peeve. Today's digital technology, he said, permits recording companies to easily 'correct' wrong notes in a CD. This can make all recordings sound equally note-perfect, the mark of virtuoso playing, when they actually are not. When compared with past recordings (which did not or could not correct mistakes), today's digitally enhanced performances have an unfair advantage. They somewhat belittle past artists' pinnacles of technique, quite aside from considerations of interpretive fidelity or originality.

High standards of note-perfection have historically kept the number of recording artists to a select few. Splicing was resorted to sparingly with tapes. And certainly before recordings came about, all you had were live, unedited performances you had to go to...no holds barred. It's said that Ignaz Paderewski, the lionized pianist, after playing an extremely old and worn upright in the countryside, looked chagrined after the concert. Asked why, he pointed out that while the ladies politely admired his playing, they were absolutely gushing over his tired assistant who, on request, had seated himself *behind* the piano, furiously pushing back those hammers that did not spring back instantly when the keys were struck!

Walker's proposal is simple: devise a system that acknowledges how much note-correcting, if any, was done on the recording and show it on the CD cover, a sort of industry self-policing, a kind of product disclosure, if you will (almost as alcohol content is disclosed on most labels of liquor!). If done tactfully and diligently, it should satisfy most parties' need for integrity. Any product without the discreet note or label would be suspect. This will surely add a small cost, and if the casual listener couldn't care less for this information, the purist most likely would.

Technology, however, cuts both ways. While some may complain of an uneven playing field, others may see an opportunity for more performers who might not quite be superstars to also enter the fray. If these musicians end up charging lower fees than the super virtuosos, maybe a resulting price spread of CDs can serve to eventually right the playing field. And, with increased choice, more households could end up owning classical CDs of affordable quality, while the discriminating consumers continue to scrutinize the high end. If market price were to mirror value, it will need honest information, and Walker's idea of disclosure could well be a step in the right direction. If recordings eventually trend this way, they may just prove the saying that, in the music industry as even in the temple, every dark cloud – or off-tune note – has a silver lining.

(Hasegawa—continued from page 1)

The instruments of the Little Symphony were not like the instruments played by a high school band or a regular symphonic orchestra, for those instruments would be beyond the financial reach of the temple and the parents. Then, what sort of instruments did the youngsters play? There were xylophones, flutophones, superior alto, superior pipe, clavietta, castanets, drums, cymbals, tambourine, triangle, organ, and piano. Initially harmonicas were one of the instruments but were replaced by the clavietta. The instruments were purchased from Japan or locally. The majority of the 120 youngsters ranging from Grade 2 to Grade 12 had no music education background. Once a week on Sunday after Dharma School, the children spent time learning music. With great patience and skill, Mrs. Hasegawa had the students referring to the notes and rests on the music sheets she created for each instrument. For each piece they played, Mrs. Hasegawa wrote the score.

Parents in great numbers turned out to assist Mrs. Hasegawa in varying capacities in this tremendous undertaking. Some parents helped the students in learning to follow the notes and to have the correct music sheet. Undoubtedly, the parents themselves must have learned along with the students. Some parents were responsible for hauling, setting up, and returning the chairs, music stands, and music sheets. Others probably constructed and painted the signs that were set up at formal concerts - - - signs much like those used by orchestras. Some parents provided transportation for students and instruments that could not be accommodated on the hired bus.

The performers were dressed in white shirts/blouses with a black bow tie for formal concerts. Two larger-than-life performances were their appearance on the famous "HAWAII CALLS" show at the Moana Hotel and on the grounds fronting the Honpa Hongwanji Mission Bishop's residence, televised by Fuji TV's "EAST IS EAST" show sponsored by Shiseido. There were other performances as well whenever requested.

Unknown to most of us in Waialua, Mrs. Hasegawa was in frail health. Because she was always engaged in so many activities which required much time and energy, she seemed a picture of health.

The last concert performance of the Little Symphony was a Memorial Concert for Mrs. Kaori Hasegawa at the Joseph R. Farrington Community Auditorium on the Farrington High School campus on January 19, 1964. Mrs. Kaori Hasegawa lived a lifetime of hope for the children's future through music in the brief five years she lived in Waialua. To meet her and to know her was to receive a lifetime of unforgettable memories and experiences.



Kaori Hasegawa conducts the Little Symphony as they perform for the "East is East" show on November 19, 1961.





Takeko Kujo and Buddhist Songs

Kikuko Mabuchi, Honzan Research Assistant
from *Buddhist Music* (2007, No. 4)

translated by Osamu Kawabata



In 1933, *New Buddhist Music*, a periodical of the Japanese Association of Buddhist Music for Children, featured a Buddhist song with lyrics by Takeko Kujo and music by Ryutaro Hirota. It was entitled *Seiya* [meaning “Quiet Night,” a different work entirely from the *Seiya*, or “Holy Night,” with music by Shimpei Nakayama, of Hawaii’s gatha book – ed.]. It was significant because Lady Takeko Kujo, who contributed many Buddhist lyrics, was a celebrated poet in her own right during the Taisho era (1912-1926).

It appears Takeko Kujo and Ryutaro Hirota collaborated intimately to produce a number of songs that were premiered by Hirota’s Lumbini Choir, a group formed at the close of the Taisho period. There are concert programs, for example, featuring *Muyūge no Hana*, a choral piece, and *Seiya*, a solo, as having received their premieres in the first (March 1925) and third (March 1927) concerts, respectively, of the Lumbini Choir. *Seitan no Uta*, a solo, was also premiered on April 8, 1927 in the Choir’s program, “A Hanamatsuri Evening”.

To our dismay, all the music scores of the Lumbini Choir, except *Seiya*, appear lost, and we are unable to appreciate how the songs sounded. Time and manpower are needed to unearth the many talents that appeared in Japan during the rare and short period known as Taisho.

TRANSLATION SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT

By Mitsuyo Saito

Presently, the committee has been translating the following gathas:

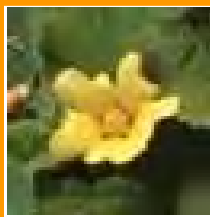
PROJECT #3



Arigatou (Thank you)
Hikari Afurete (Over Flowing Light)
Inochi (Life)
Iroha Uta (Song of Impermanence)
Kosumosu no Hana (Cosmos Flower)
Chikkaino Uta (Bodhisattva’s Vows)
Shinshu Shuka (Shinshu Anthem) New lyrics

HEARTWARMING NEWS

I often receive very heartwarming letters from the Buddhist Churches of America, Japan, the neighbor islands and choir organizations. It seems that the beautifully translated gathas are well received by many. By spreading translated gathas throughout the world, we will be able to build strong relationships between the East and West.



HONOLULU DISTRICT

By
Mitsuyo Saito

SPREADING THE JOY OF "ONEMBUTSU"

Sharing and spreading the joy of the Onembutsu through singing in various services and activities, has helped to increase the Hawaii Betsuin Choir membership to about 35 members now. We are so fortunate to have very talented and hard working choir members. The choir members experience utmost enjoyment in embracing Amida's Compassion and Wisdom through song. After participating in the double commemorations of the past year, the Hawaii Betsuin Choir began another busy year of activi-



Hawaii
Betsuin
Choir

ties in the first half of 2010. The choir has participated and will be participating in all six major services along with enjoyable gatherings like Mother's Day and Father's Day celebrations. In February, the Association of International Buddhist observed its annual membership meeting at the Hawaii Betsuin. The choir sang three songs, *Peace Begins with Me*, *Flying Free*, and *The Golden Chain of Love*. It was a good way to spread the teaching of the Dharma to the community through music.



HAWAII BUDDHIST COUNCIL'S HANAMATSURI CELEBRATION



The Hawaii Buddhist Council's Hanamatsuri Celebration was held on April 4, 2010 at the Hawaii Betsuin, and it was a great success. The massed choir from Jikoen Hongwanji, Moiliili Hongwanji, and Hawaii Betsuin, sang in perfect pitch with well balanced harmony. The most noticeable singer was Skyler Shinji Nishiyama from the Jikoen Hongwanji. He is just 12 years old. His soft but very sweet voice blended beautifully with the massed choir. We sang, *Flying Free*, and *Splendor of an Evening Sky*.



Jikoen
Hongwanji
Choir



Jikoen Hongwanji, Moiliili Hongwanji, and Hawaii Betsuin choir members form a massed choir for the Hanamatsuri Service.

More Honolulu District News...

KAUFFMAN SPEAKS AT MEMORIAL DAY SERVICE

Dr. Kaethe Kauffman, Ph.D., was the guest speaker for Hawaii Betsuin's Memorial Day Service. Her message was well received by the congregation. She is not only talented as a speaker but also as a singer. She is a dedicated member of the Hawaii Betsuin Choir.



HAWAII BETSUIN CHOIR'S HIDDEN EFFORTS

Behind the scenes our devoted Betsuin Choir members helped make practice CD's for the BWA State Conference, and also for the upcoming Choralfest 2010. For the sake of spreading the Dharma, the Betsuin Choir will be continuously working and singing for everyone's mutual enjoyment and happiness. 😊



KAUAI DISTRICT

By Gladys
Fujiuchi



In Memoriam

Lihue Hongwanji Choir mourns the loss of its two youngest members, Richard (Ricky) Tokunaga and Cynthia Matsukawa in January 2010. Ricky loved to sing and held up the men's section. He also participated in one of the choral fests, as did Cynthia.

Both, staunch members of Lihue Hongwanji, attended the Ohana Conference in September 2009 despite their illnesses. The choir never sounded better than they did singing at their services. We will miss their participation.



In Other News: There will be seven members from Kauai who will be participating in the Hilo Choralfest.



HAWAII DISTRICT

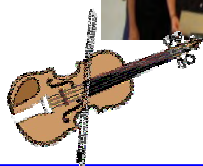
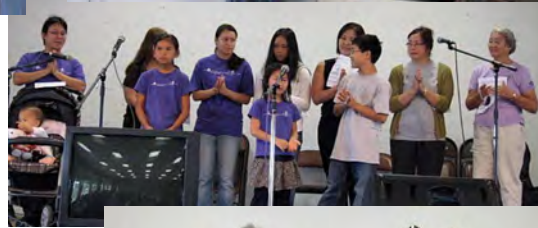
By B.J. Soriano



GATHA FEST 2010



Hosted by Papaikou/Honomu/Honohina/Papaaloa temples, Gatha Fest 2010, chaired by Ken Okimoto, was a wonderful celebration of inspirational music and exceptional participation by many of the big island temples. Over 240 children and adults participated in this year's Gath Fest, held on February 28th. Temples participating included Puna Hongwanji Mission, Kona Hongwanji, Kamuela Hongwanji, Kohala Hongwanji, Honoka'a Hongwanji, Paauilo Hongwanji and Honpa Hongwanji Hilo Betsuin. Although Papaikou, Honomu, and Honohina Hongwanjs did not field a performance group, they came to support all of those who came to sing. Of special note is the great care and effort by almost all groups to include many forms of instruments, from the 'ukulele to guitars to violins to pianos to taiko to enhance the many songs and dances that were shared that day! A great big mahalo to all who participated in this year's event. See you all next year in Hilo, as Honpa Hongwanji Hilo Betsuin will serve as 2011's Gatha Fest host.





Happy Birthday, Shinran Shonin!

MAUI DISTRICT

By Joan
Tamori



Maui's annual Fujimatsuri celebration of Shinran Shonin's birthday was held at Lahaina Hongwanji Mission on May 30. Kahului, Makawao, and Wailuku temples joined together with Lahaina to participate in various activities beginning with a service, a SongFest, a sharing of Jodo Shinshu commercials by temples, games, and a scrumptious lunch. The SongFest began with a blending of ministers' voices as they sang the traditional gatha, *Shinshu Shuka*. Maui temples are so fortunate to have their ministers supporting them in all activities. Kahului Hongwanji followed with *The Beckoning Hand* and *Remembrances* under the guidance of Rev. Daien Soga and accompanist, Irene Imada. Makawao Hongwanji, under the choir direction of Ed Yamamura and accompanist Karen Muraoka, added a serene and lovely rendition of *Shinran Shonin*. New to all congregations in attendance was the gatha, *Into the Breeze*, sung by the Wailuku Hongwanji choir directed by Florence Tanaka and accompanied by Dale Sugiki. The choir also sang the gatha, *The Golden Chain of Love*, a gatha that still strikes the inner being with its stunning melody. Host Lahaina Hongwanji ended the SongFest with *I Say Namu Amida Butsu*, *Hikari no Nakani*, and *World Wherein We Dwell*. They were guided by Rev. Mariko Nishiyama and accompanied by Dale Sugiki. Their effort in performing three gathas was certainly appreciated by all. On this festive day, Shinran Shonin would indeed have been touched by the lovely melodies and remembrances of his profound teachings resounding in the hondo of Lahaina Hongwanji Mission!

Wailuku Hongwanji Mission Choir News:

On January 10, the Wailuku Hongwanji Mission Choir participated in its Ho-onko service by singing the gathas, *Shinran Shonin* and *In Praise of Shinran*. Rev. Eric Matsumoto shared his dharma talk with the congregation. March 14 was WHM's Ohigan service with Rev. Koho Takata as the guest minister. The choir sang the memorable, *May Peace Prevail* and also stepped out of their comfort zone as they sang the gatha, *The Beckoning Hand* in a capella. It turned out to be a wonderful rendition and experience.



Fujimatsuri Host,
Lahaina Hongwanji



Kahului Hongwanji



Wailuku Hongwanji



Makawao Hongwanji

Welcome to CHORALFEST 2010 in Hilo!

Temple members on the Big Island are invited to attend a special Music Family Service on August 1, 2010, at the Sangha Hall of Hilo Betsuin. Beginning at 9:30 am, the service will feature a massed choir of over 100 voices that will sing a selection of choral gathas as part of Choralfest 2010.

What is Choralfest 2010? It is a celebration of temple choral singing put together by the Hawaii Kyodan Music Committee. One hundred ten singers from throughout the state have signed up for an all-day rehearsal on Saturday, July 31, 2010, and for the music service on Sunday, August 1, 2010. For this year's event at Hilo, the selections to be sung are the following:

Each Day Anew (Inochi Mainichi Atarashii)
When I Look Up At the Sky (Ano Sora Mireba)
A Lotus Pure (Mimegumi no)
Amida Is Such (Mihotoke wa)
Flying Free
Gratefulness I (Ondokusan I)



Members of Big Island temples will not want to miss this unique chance to hear favorite gathas that have been rendered into English and into choral form. This dharma in music is bound to be a most memorable event.

Music Committee

Francis Okano, Chairperson
Gladys Fujiuchi, Kauai
Osamu Kawabata, Honolulu
Mitsuyo Saito, Honolulu
BJ Soriano, Hawaii
Gail Taira, Oahu
Joan Tamori, Maui



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