



MUSICAL NOTES

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

July 2012 Issue

For the Love of Music and Service to Others

...featuring Kauai District organists

By Gladys Fujiuchi

Holding up the musical front on Kauai are the organists of the various temples. The definition of an organist is a "musician who plays any kind of organ". A professional organist, however, is one who has been trained and understands the intricacies of the instrument, use of stops, the settings, techniques and the pedals, etc. On Kauai, our "organists" may be more accurately described as pianists obliged to play the organ for services. However, the word "pianist" connotes someone accomplished, such as in Hawaii Betsuin's Francis Okano. Simply put, our organists have "had piano lessons" and for this article we will refer to them as organists...someone who plays the organ. None are professionals, but they bravely do their best to accompany the congregations at their services.

Kauai is down to four active Hongwanji temples, Kapa'a, Lihue and West Kauai Hongwanji, which consists of Hanapepe and Waimea temples. Koloa closed down permanently last year. We on Kauai are very grateful for our volunteer organists !!!!!

Here is an introduction to our organists who serve the temples.

Kapa'a Hongwanji's organist, **Kalani Murakami**, is a fresh faced sixteen year old who has played the organ for his church for two years. He has taken lessons for seven years from Lois Ricciardi, a choral director, music teacher and professional organist. Kalani's favorite gathas are *The Wondrous Gift of Peace* and *On this Morn*. Besides playing the piano, Kalani's interests are in tennis, cross country and riflery. He is blessed with three sisters. Rev. Takahashi says that Kalani is always receptive to his suggestions of which gathas to sing.



Kalani Murakami



Shirley Kakuda

Shirley Kakuda is a retired school teacher who has been playing the organ at Hanapepe Hongwanji for about 20 years. She has had piano lessons from fifth grade through high school, and also completed music courses at the University of Hawaii for elementary school teachers. Some of her favorite gathas are *Hotokesama (II)*, *Arigatai*, *Namu Amida Butsu (I)* and *White Lotus Flower*. She encourages the congregation to study the words of a song in order to sing with feeling. She thanks the music committee for the translations, because now "we can get the meaning of the songs and enjoy singing, even if sometimes it's too high or too low. Also, please keep the melodies simple and singable where the melodies can stick in the mind. For piano players like me, accompanying parts should be as easy as possible."



English Gathas in Hawaii

In May, I was privileged to speak at the Hawaii Book and Music Festival at Honolulu Hale. On a panel on Buddhist music, I traced the outlines of how English gathas in Hawaii came to be. I share my remarks in the hope they may shed light on where we are today:

"I am delighted by this opportunity to share with you, as best I can, the growth of Buddhist songs in the Hongwanji in Hawaii.

"Asian vocal and instrumental music has a very long and very rich history -- and I am glad *that is not* my topic! Rather, my subject goes back not thousands but only one hundred years or so. My focus is the Buddhist hymn, as a borrowed form from the Christian church. In Hawaii these hymns are called gathas, or "verses in praise of the Buddha." In Japan, they are referred to as *sanbutsuka*, or "songs in praise of the Buddha." And what distinguish them from other songs are the Buddhist lyrics.

"In Meiji Japan, the fascination with things western probably led Honzan (Jodo Shinshu Headquarters) in Kyoto to try western-style singing in the service. Competing against centuries-old chanting, however, the *sanbutsuka* probably got off to a slow start.

"In Hawaii, however, English gathas must have taken off like a rocket in the mid-1920s when the progressive-minded Bishop Yemyo Imamura, looking to Americanize the Hongwanji in Hawaii, encouraged Ernest Hunt and English-fluent Caucasian Buddhists to create gathas. Rev. Ernest Hunt was a Hongwanji minister ordained by Bishop Imamura. Rev. Hunt worked tirelessly to spread general Buddhism to the English-speaking.

"In the *Vade Mecum*, a liturgical guide assembled by Hunt in the 1920s to mid-1930s, are listed over 100 lyrics, of which many were set to music and sung. These flowing, if Christian-sounding, words and tunes had titles as *Lord Buddha Speaks to Me*, *When We See the Golden Sun*, *How Glorious is Thy Dharma*, *Buddha Lord in Thine Embrace*, *Climb the Path with Gladness*, etc. Lyrics were by the talented Ernest and Dorothy Hunt, Paul Carus, Raymond Zorn, Gloria Wall, and others. Music was mainly by the St. Andrews Cathedral organist, R.R. Bode, who was broad-minded as to also direct the first Hawaii Betsuin choir. Among early composers were also two Nisei band teachers, C. Izumi and Y.M. Uyeda, whose *Right Meditation* and *Evening Gatha*, respectively, are still beloved today.

"So who was this Japanese priest who inspired a burst of Anglican activity? Bishop Yemyo Imamura was officially the second bishop of the Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii. In over 32 years in office, he almost single-handedly sank deep roots for the temple in Hawaii. Born into a rural temple in Fukui Prefecture, Japan, Rev. Imamura received a progressive education at Honzan's Liberal Arts School in Kyoto. Later at Keio University in Tokyo, he came under the influence of educator Yukichi Fukuzawa who exhorted students to learn western thought. When he came to Hawaii in 1899, Rev. Imamura sought not only to nurture the Issei immigrants in a *foreign* land but also to make the Hongwanji a lasting 'abode of light' for future English-speaking generations in *their* homeland.

"In 1918, he started the Hongwanji English Department to which he later [in 1927] appointed Rev. Hunt as head. Also in 1918 Bishop Imamura installed in the new Hawaii Betsuin temple a pipe organ, the first ever in the world for a Buddhist temple. With such openness to the untried, Bishop Imamura enabled the flowering of western music in temples in Hawaii -- and possibly in Japan too.

"For 1918 was also the year three young men in Honolulu collaborated on a publication called *Raisan* ("Worship and Praise"), for the dedication of the new Hawaii Betsuin building. In *Raisan* were some twenty Buddhist songs in Japanese, fully notated for choir or accompaniment. Among them was the moving *Ondokusan*. When this publication reached Honzan in Kyoto, people were reportedly astounded at the sophisticated melodies, elaborately notated, and from tropical Hawaii no less! The three young men were two ministers at Hawaii Betsuin -- Rev. Yasuo Sawa, a composer, and Rev. Tokusui Kotani, a poet --

(continued on Page 3)

Music
Editorial

By
Francis
Okano



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Francis Okano--
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(Music Editorial—continued from page 2)

and a rising professional composer, Kosaku Yamada, who happened to be in Honolulu at the time.

"It is said that the book, *Raisan*, served as something of a wakeup call for Honzan. It was time a conscious effort was made to compose new *sanbutsuka*. A Buddhist Music Association was set up within the Ministry of Culture in the mid-1920s, and for more than a decade eminent Japanese composers, such as Kosaku Yamada, Ryutaro Hirota, and lyricists and scholars published an annual collection of Buddhist songs. In the 1930s Soai University was started by the Nishi Hongwanji with emphasis on music education. So, it may be said that Hawaii's *Raisan* was at least partly responsible for the sustained growth of Buddhist music in Japan from the late-1920s forward.

"Bishop Imamura's fatal heart attack in 1932 stunned Hawaii and proved a setback. For, a few years later, the Hawaii Hongwanji reversed course and closed the English Department. Coupled with World War II and the shutdown of most temples (from ministers' internment), music growth in Hawaii became stunted for more than a decade.

"After the War, as if by miracle, a refreshing musical breeze blew in from California. A few ministers' wives, talented musicians all, collected themselves after release from wartime internment and picked up where the Hunts left off. Among the composers was Bishop Imamura's daughter-in-law, Jane Matsuura, who was married to Kanmo Imamura, who would become the Hawaii Hongwanji's first Nisei bishop in 1967. This group of young and energetic composers produced a host of delightful gathas in English in the late 1940s through the 1950s that had a less Christian and more Jodo Shinshu flavor. As young mothers too, they created many children's gathas for Sunday School, such as *Sunbeams*, *Remember?*, *Buddha Loves You*, *Amida's Children*, etc. Hawaii gratefully embraced these gathas.

"And how did the Hawaii Hongwanji fare after the War? It also responded to the need for English gathas -- in at least two organized ways. First, around the late 1950s, the Hongwanji began sponsoring English lyrics writing contests. The winning entries were set to music by professional composers in Japan or Hawaii -- Osamu Shimizu, Toshiro Mayuzumi, Takeo Kudo, and others. This approach -- also used in Japan for special commemorative theme songs -- yielded such gems as *Diamond Faith*, *With These Hands*, *At Our Altar*, *Quest of Life*, *Flowers at Amida's Altar*, *Law of Change*, *May Peace Prevail*.

"Second, if we want English gathas that taste of Japan's Jodo Shinshu heritage, why not translate Japanese lyrics so that they are singable? Why not aim for the best of both worlds -- Old World flavors in New World terms? In the 1980s, temples began singing Japanese gathas in translation, songs with titles as *Wondrous Gift of Peace*, *Splendor of an Evening Sky*, *On This Morn*, *Evening Bell*, *In Amida's Embrace*, and others. In the past decade, translators have produced English versions of contemporary Japanese choral arrangements that Honzan annually commissioned, as part of its annual choral fest in Kyoto. To date there are more than 50 singable translations of these beautiful contemporary-sounding arrangements and traditional gathas combined.

"Let us not forget that, throughout, there have stood talented individuals in the temple who have unselfishly offered their written songs for use by the temple. Delightful gathas from these composers bear such titles as *All Life is One*, *Offering*, *Like the Waves*, *Arigatai*, *Gentle Hands*, *Becoming Free*, *Awaken in Amida's Light*, and more.

"As you review the history of English gathas in Hawaii, you cannot help but feel the warmth and devotion with which people created gathas. A scan of gatha titles plainly shows gathas grew over time from a borrowed voice to a more authentic one. Even as Hawaii's *Raisan* may have helped kick-start Japan's phenomenal Buddhist music growth, we find today contemporary choral arrangements by Japan being sung in English in Hawaii. While the future is limitless, the past has given us the emotional nurturing and spiritual strength that are the gathas and *sanbutsuka*."

Translation Subcommittee Report

By Mitsuyo Saito

The Hawaii Betsuin Choir beautifully sang the newly translated gatha, *Lullaby for Children of the World (Nonnosama)* at the Hawaii Betsuin BWA's "Eshinni/Kakushinni Day Service." Mari Murakami accompanied the choir with her beautiful violin playing. The committee members are working hard to bring about another successful year of translated gathas for 2012.

(Organists—Continued from Page 1)

Lihue Hongwanji has four organists who share duties at the temple by rotation. **Diane Fukuyama** is a retired educator, who has served LHM for more than 15 years. Her musical background during her youth includes five years of piano, playing the trumpet and ukulele, and organ at Waimea Hongwanji. Her favorite gathas are *Byakudo*, *Floral Festival*, *Ondokusan*, *Shinshu Anthem*, *The Wondrous Gift of Peace*, *Nirvana's Bliss* and *A Thousand Winds*. She currently lives in Honolulu to babysit her grandson, but always manages to return to Kauai when she is scheduled to play.



Diane Fukuyama



Blaine Sasaki

Blaine Sasaki has the distinction of being the only male, nonschool teacher organist at LHM. He is into jewelry sales. His background in music started as a child with piano and ukulele lessons. His favorite gathas to play are *Quest of Life*, *Becoming Free*, *Namu Amida Butsu*, *Lord Buddha Speaks to Me*, *Buddha Lord in Thine Embrace* and *Mihotoke ni Idakarete*. He credits Rev. Midori Kondo who encouraged him to become an organist in 1969. Blaine has many varied interests: yoga, fishing, movies and plants.



Betsy Uyematsu, retired math teacher, has served for more than 15 years as LHM's organist. She has had about two and a half years of formal lessons and played at Hilo Betsuin while in high school. She also played the clarinet at Hilo High School and in the County Band. Her favorite gathas are *Lord Buddha Speaks to Me* and *Namu Amida Butsu*. She has also served on the state music committee representing Kauai. In her spare time she likes to go bowling and play golf which she undertook after she retired in 2000. She teaches math part-time at the Kauai Community College in the nursing program. She is also the chairperson for the Kauai United Hongwanji Buddhist Women's Association Scholarship Committee.



Betsy Uyematsu



Edith Ushio

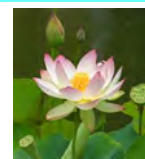
Edith Ushio, a retired chemistry and math teacher, states, "I am not an ORGANIST. I've played the organ at LHM for 35 plus years". She also creates the schedule for the assignments of the organists. Her favorite gathas are *The White Way* and *Nirvana's Bliss*. She comments, "I'd like to have simpler versions for some of the new gathas so that we nonprofessionals will be able to play them. Also, we're trying to do service to the church, but at times it's discouraging when we get music for which we have to practice so much and still not do a decent job."



District of Hawaii

Gathafest: Dharma Through Music

By Ethel Miyashiro



For some, the 38th Annual Gathafest represented a testimony to a vision they had over 38 years ago: to bring Dharma School students together. For others, it started before they were born, others still grew into maturity participating in and attending Gathafest but, for all of us, Gathafest is an inspiring and uplifting event that unites this BIG Island in a day of celebration of the Dharma through music.

For this year's Gathafest, miles of travel from places faraway such as Kona, a drive that starts at early dawn, with winding roads and daunting rains could not dampen the spirits of the more than 200 attendees who brought their voices and energy to Puna Hongwanji Mission in Kea'au on February 26, 2012.

This year's program was entitled "Live the Nembutsu in Harmony" and was dedicated to the memory of the late Mrs. Jane Imamura whose legacy includes the writing of many gathas. In her honor, the congregation sang *Nirvana's Bliss*, a beautiful gatha reminding us of how we can all strive to reach that blissful state of Nirvana.



Kamuela



After a short service by Rev. David Fujimoto,



Pa'auilo

the musical program began with Kamuela's uplifting performance of *Flying Free* followed by Kona's rocking *Shin-ran, Supa' Man*. Always a crowd pleaser, the ministers sang *Arigato* accompanied by Rev. Hasebe on the piano, such a talented group!!! Creative Honoka'a did not let us down with a new song called *Universe* followed by *Dust in the Wind* with Miles Okumura playing the guitar. The congregation then sang *A Flower Grows*, the required gatha for this year's Gathafest. Pa'auilo sang the lovely *Offering* and the United Jr. YBA had people dancing in their chairs with *Everybody was Sutra Chanting* sung to the tune of *Everybody was Kung Fu Fighting*. Hilo sang the time honored *One Light, One Sun* and their Dharma School students sang *Children Like Me*. Last but not least, host Puna, sang *Hasu no Hana* and a sing-a-long gatha composed by temple member, Dwyna Potter, entitled *Harmony at Puna Hongwanji* with ukulele accompaniment.



Ministers and Rev. Hasebe



Jr. YBA

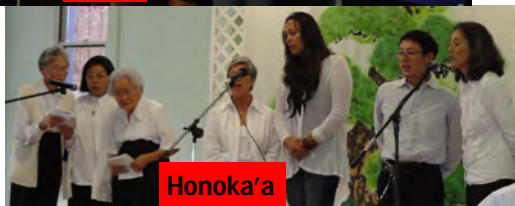


Puna



Dharma School Teachers

It still remains a magical time in the Spring, when this BIG, BIG Island unites and celebrates the Dharma through music and takes the opportunity to thank the much deserved Dharma School teachers for their



Honoka'a



Hilo

many, many years of dedication to teaching and the vision to bring us all together. We now look forward to the 39th Annual Gathafest to be hosted by Kona Hongwanji Mission. Please join us if you can!



Kona

District of Maui **SongFest: Celebration of Dharma in Music**

By Joan Tamori

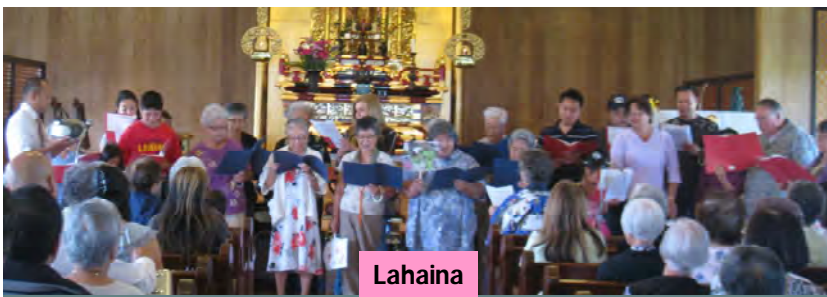
Maui district is once again proud to showcase its SongFest that was held at their FUJIMATSURI in May. Fujimatsuri (Wisteria Festival), a celebration of Shinran Shonin's birthday, is sponsored by the Maui Hongwanji Council and takes place annually at a hosting temple and its grounds. This year, members of Makawao Hong-

wanji Mission located in the fresh and verdant upcountry area of Maui, joyfully welcomed members from the other temples. The day commenced with a service followed by the SongFest with all members participating.



First up was Wailuku who rounded up its choir members, temple members and children to sing the beautiful *Peace Begins With Me* and Shinran's gatha, *Gratefulness*. Kahului members and children followed with their soothing renditions of their favorite, *Walk On As You Are* and *Shin-*

ransama. Lahaina came creatively prepared with motions and props as they cheerfully sang *Arigatai* and *Gratitude*. Last but not least, Makawao gathered its members to join in to sing two beautifully written and composed gathas, *Quest of Life* and *On This Morn*. It is heartwarming to have so many people come together in the temple to sing the



praises of the Buddha!

The festivities continued with a Quiz Bowl, activities for children, and volleyball, hanafuda and scrabble tournaments. A spread of delectable dishes cooked up by the Makawao Hongwanji women provided everyone with a hearty lunch.

Lahaina's Special Guest 🎵

Lahaina Hongwanji was treated to a special visit in April by **Mrs. Mitsuyo Saito** in commemoration of their BWA's Eshinni and Kakushinni Day. She spoke to the congregation about Eshinnisama, Kakushinni, and Lady Takeko Kujo, all important women in the history and philosophy of Shin Buddhism. Also, the temple members delighted in watching her lead the dharma school children in pantomiming a song.



District of Oahu

Musical Happenings from Oahu Temples

By Gail Taira



Waianae Hongwanji

Though Family Services are held just about once a month, the congregation at Waianae Hongwanji have been blessed to have the attendance of Nola Nahulu, Hawaii Youth Opera Chorus director as well as Choralfest 2012 choral director, and sister Linda Nahulu who have faithfully taken their aunt, Morime Nozaki to monthly services. Ms. Nozaki is well known to the Oahu district folks as a very friendly and warm Waianae Hongwanji member who currently resides in Honolulu with her nieces, Nola and Linda. Ms. Nozaki was a dharma school teacher for many, many years, and the Hongwanji is a very important part of her life. She loves to sing the gathas to which Nola graciously accompanies on the organ during their services. One more interesting note is that seven Waianae Hongwanji members will be participating in the upcoming Choralfest in August 2012.

Wahiawa Hongwanji: from their "Temple News"

"On July 22nd we are celebrating Family Day so we'd like to invite the young and the young at heart to temple service. The special Dharma speaker will be Laurie Rubin, a remarkable young lady who has overcome many challenges and yet has gone on to accomplish tasks we would think impossible. You'll be able to hear first hand how she has been able to do it. Also she'll be singing a song, with lyrics she has written about her struggles, and the music composed by Jenny Taira. Presently she is working with Cari Taira Lee and Jenny Taira on the Ohana Arts program at the Hongwanji Mission School."

note: The name of the song Laurie and Jenny have composed is called, *The Girl I Am*.

Ewa Hongwanji

The Ewa Hongwanji Bon Dance drew a large audience as well as many bon dance enthusiasts, and it was truly a festive night of bon odori as well as unbelievable food! And, the evening was made more special because of the Hawaii Youth Opera Chorus students who came to sing a medley of folk songs: *Molihua* from China, *Toraji* from Korea and *Hole Hole Bushi* from Japan.

Mililani Hongwanji

The Mililani Hongwanji Choir graciously sang at its Ho-onko, Ohigan and Gotan-e services this year. Their last performance was on June 17 at Mililani Hongwanji's 35th Anniversary Celebration and the dedication of their new kyodan office addition. For this special service, the choir sang two of their favorite pieces, *Flying Free* and *Nembutsu*. The choir is made up of 16 dedicated and talented singers, as well as piano accompanist, Raimi Reisen, flutist, Arynn Ishikawa, and choir director, Gail Taira.



Piano accompanist, Raimi



Mililani Hongwanji Choir sings at 35th Anniversary Celebration



Featured flutist, Arynn

District of Honolulu

Hawaii Betsuin Choir Makes Music

By Mitsuyo Saito



The Hawaii Kyodan Music committee has released a practice CD which was sent along with booklets with gathas to all ChoralFest participants. The practice CD was recorded by the Hawaii Betsuin Choir with technical assistance by Joy and John Nishida. The choir sang very harmoniously and impressively and made an excellent recording.

The Betsuin Choir participated in the 20th Anniversary Celebration of the Hawaii Association of International Buddhists which was observed on March 24 at the Myohoji Nichiren Temple. They sang *Hana, Arigatai* with a beautiful hula accompaniment, *Kawa no Nagare no yoni* and *Each Day Anew*. The appropriate songs were well received by everyone.

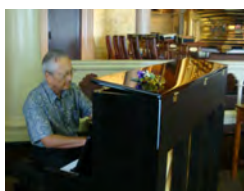
An Auspicious Day for the Betsuin Choir

Eshinni/Kakushin Day was observed by the Betsuin BWA on April 29. The choir was delighted to sing along with the accompaniment of talented pianist, Francis



Hula accompaniment to *Arigatai*

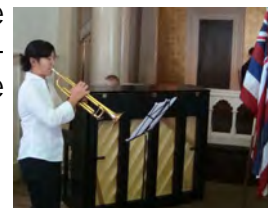
Okano, on a brand-new W. Hoffmann piano which was originally founded in Berlin, Germany in 1893. The European manufactured W. Hoffmann pianos have received recognition worldwide. This stylish upright piano has been standing in the Hawaii Betsuin hondo, charming audiences and choir members with its ultra-harmonious sound.



Francis on the W. Hoffmann

Alyssa's Trumpet

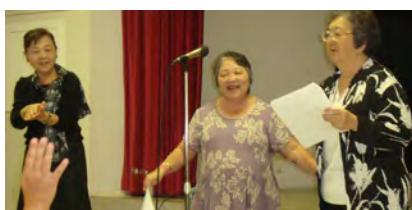
Alyssa Leim played *Go For Broke* skillfully on her trumpet at the May 27 Betsuin Memorial Day Service. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Leim. With the addition of instrumental accompaniments, the choir has sounded more attractive, active and alive! Many talented young players in our Sangha are willing to play with the choir to make a big difference.



Alyssa plays *Go For Broke*

Sharing the Musical Legacy of the Late Mrs. Jane Imamura

On Sunday, March 11, the Moiliili and Jikoen Hongwanji choir members who previously sang under the direction of the late Mrs. Jane Imamura, joined in with the Betsuin choir and sang nine gathas that were composed by Mrs. Imamura. Her music continues to be alive and well in Hawaii although she left Hawaii almost 38 years ago. She was a remarkable woman not only in the music field but also in promoting the study of Shin Buddhism in western society.



Mitsuyo, Laura, and Donna enjoy the day's program.

We are indeed fortunate to be working with Mr. Francis Okano, who had also accompanied the choir during Mrs. Imamura's days.

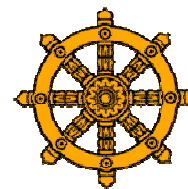
The Joint Hongwanji Choir

The Joint Hongwanji Choir participated in the Honolulu Buddhist Council's Buddha Day Celebration on Sunday, April 8, at the Nichiren Mission of Hawaii. With the whole-hearted cooperation of the Jikoen and Moiliili Hongwanji Choirs, the congregation thoroughly enjoyed the three gathas that were presented: *Hana, Hana no Kokoro* with violin

by Mari Murakami, and *A Lotus Pure*. A get-together to continue to build ties amongst the Joint Hongwanji Choir members, was held at the Maple Garden restaurant on May 27. Together, they enjoy spreading the Dharma message through singing of beautiful gathas.



Jikoen, Moiliili and Hawaii Betsuin Choirs

**District
of Kauai****Kauai Dharma School Students
Create "Dharma Quilt"****By Carol Valentine**

The students of the Lihue Hongwanji Dharma School have created a (paper) Dharma Quilt, to hang in the social hall. The quilt was based on the song *Dharma Quilt* by Misaye Abiko. The students were asked to create pictures based on stories from Buddha's life or based on Buddhist concepts. They were allowed to create their own pictures and encouraged to use as much color as possible. To create their "Dharma Quilt", the students also created the intermediate squares for the quilt. The teachers and students put the quilt together and it was hung in the social hall for all to see.



Students (from L-R)
Jana Ogle, Mie Miller, Taylor
Nishimoto, Akira Takabayashi
and Rina Takabayashi proudly
pose around their Dharma
Quilt that's not only beautiful
and creative but teaches les-
sons as well!

**Choralfest 2012****August 3-5, 2012****Hawaii Betsuin****Cosmos Flower****Entrusting Heart****Life****Overflowing Light****Amida's Compassionate Vow****Shinshu Anthem**