



# Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii

## HEADQUARTERS UPDATE

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MAY 2019

### MESSAGE FROM HIS EMINENCE GOMONSHU KOJUN OHTANI ON THE 850TH ANNIVERSARY OF SHINRAN SHONIN'S BIRTH AND 800 TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE JODO SHINSHU TEACHING

The year 2023 will mark the 850th anniversary of Shinran Shonin's birth and 2024 will be the 800th anniversary of the establishment of the Jodo Shinshu teaching. To commemorate these occasions, we will be having the joint celebratory observance in 2023.

Shinran Shonin was born in 1173 and entered the priesthood at the age of nine. However, after devoting many years to monastic Buddhist practices on Mt. Hiei, he decided to descend the mountain at the age of 29. Following the guidance from his new mentor Honen Shonin, who introduced him to the Primal Vow of Amida Buddha, Shinran Shonin came to entrust himself to the Nembutsu teaching preached by his master. Several years later, their Nembutsu teaching was banned and Shinran Shonin was exiled to Echigo, present Niigata. Following his pardon, Shinran Shonin moved to the Kanto region where he engaged in propagation of the Nembutsu teaching of Other Power, namely the working of Amida's great wisdom and compassion. It is believed to be then when he began writing his main literary work, *The True Teaching, Practice and Realization of the Pure Land Way*, known as *Kyōgyōshinshō*. Since the essence of his teaching that emphasizes entrusting oneself to the Buddha's working of Other Power and recitation of the Nembutsu was clarified in the composition, the *Kyōgyōshinshō* is also referred to as *gohonden*, or the most foundational scripture of the Jodo Shinshu teaching. Based on Shinran Shonin's own inscription in the writing stating that he was 52 years of age at the time, the year 1224 became designated as the year when the Jodo Shinshu teaching was established.

Buddhism began approximately 2500 years ago when Śākyamuni became a Buddha, awakening to the true reality of this world, such as, the principles of dependent origination, impermanence, and no-self. However, ordinary people like us are neither able to realize the truth of enlightenment nor practice a life of nonattachment. To the contrary, we see things from our egocentric viewpoint and because of that we constantly suffer, encounter hardship, and fight with one another. That is why Śākyamuni Buddha informs us of the existence of Amida Buddha who had vowed to save all ordinary and foolish beings like us, by guiding us to supreme enlightenment. Furthermore, Shinran Shonin clarifies that we, as the recipient of Amida's working, have already received the Buddha's wish in the form of the Name, *Namo Amida Butsu*.

As the manifestation of the ultimate wisdom and compassion that accepts everything as it is, Amida Buddha's working equally embraces every living being, never to abandon us no matter how egoistic and filled with blind passions we may be. When truly realizing how vast the Buddha's compassion is, we cannot help but feel ashamed of our way of living that is a far cry from Amida Buddha's wish. That is why Shinran

Shonin laments, “How ugly it is! How wretched!” in referring to himself. However, this feeling of shamefulness could motivate us to endeavor to lessen the Buddha’s sorrow even if only limited results were expected. Furthermore, that sentiment should synchronize with our efforts of sharing the Buddha’s Vow with as many people as possible and feeling others’ grief and joy as our own, because these acts are in accord with the wishes of Amida Buddha, and also Shinran Shonin who aspires for peace and tranquility and the Buddha’s teaching to spread throughout the world.

Let us appreciate the Dharma and Nembutsu teaching even more deeply, and together strive to realize a society in which everyone can live in peace and harmony, resonating in the hearts and minds of all. As the first step of this movement, I would like to ask for everyone’s cooperation in continuing our organizational plans for the future and successfully conducting the joint celebration of the 850th Anniversary of Shinran Shonin’s Birth and the 800th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Jodo Shinshu Teaching.

January 9, 2019

SHAKU SENNYO  
OHTANI Kojun  
Monshu  
Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha

## **Service Schedule**

### **Joint Celebration of the 850th Anniversary of Shinran Shonin’s Birth and the 800th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Jodo Shinshu Teaching**

At the conclusion of the annual commemorative ceremony of the establishment of the Jodo Shinshu teaching on April 15, 2019, Sennyo Monshu unveiled the schedule of the Joint Celebration of the 850th Anniversary of Shinran Shonin’s Birth and the 800th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Jodo Shinshu Teaching, which will be conducted in 2023 as follows:

#### **March 29 to May 21, 2023 (5 sessions / 6 days per session)**

<b>1st session</b>	<b>March 29 (Wed) – April 3 (Mon)</b>
<b>2nd session</b>	<b>April 10 (Mon) – April 15 (Sat)</b>
<b>3rd session</b>	<b>April 24 (Mon) – April 29 (Sat)</b>
<b>4th session</b>	<b>May 6 (Sat) – May 11 (Thu)</b>
<b>5th session</b>	<b>May 16 (Tue) – May 21 (Sun)</b>

***\*\*Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii will form a State Committee to plan a special tour to attend the service in Honzan.***



As we observe Shinran Shonin's Birthday (Gotan-E), this year, let us turn our attention to the recent Message from His Eminence Kojun Ohtani about the upcoming Eight Hundred Fiftieth Anniversary of Shinran Shonin's Birth and Eight Hundredth Anniversary of the Establishment of the Jodo Shinshu Teaching which will be observed in 2023, in that message, he states,

"When truly realizing how vast the Buddha's compassion is, we cannot help but feel ashamed of our way of living that is a far cry from Amida Buddha's wish. That is why Shinran Shonin laments, "How ugly it is! How wretched!" in referring to himself. However, this feeling of shamefulness could motivate us to endeavor to lessen the Buddha's sorrow even if only limited results

were expected. Furthermore, that sentiment should synchronize with our efforts of sharing the Buddha's Vow with as many people as possible and feeling others' grief and joy as our own, because these acts are in accord with the wishes of Amida Buddha, and also Shinran Shonin who aspires for peace and tranquility and the Buddha's teaching to spread throughout the world."

As I reflect on Gomonshu's guidance, I recall the phrase "...to live the Nembutsu" as found in *Lamp for the Latter Ages*, Letter 16 in which Shinran Shonin's says "One must seek to cast off the evil of this world and to cease doing wretched deeds; *this* is what it means to reject the world and to live the Nembutsu." To be sure, it says "to live the nembutsu." "Rejecting the world" does not mean to abandon the world as meaningless and worthless. It means lamenting one's negativity and grateful responding in gratitude to Amida Buddha's Unconditional Compassion and thus care about this world by trying, imperfect and inconsistent as I am, to live my life according to the Dharma.

Speaking of gratitude, in the Pali language, gratitude is defined as "knowing what has been done." In the Chinese language, one of the Chinese characters for gratitude is comprised of two parts, one which means "cause" and the other refers to the "heart-and-mind." Thus, it reminds us to keep the cause (of why we are grateful) always in mind and moves the heart. A well-known expression goes "Knowing Gratitude, Respond in Gratitude." In the Japanese language, the word "arigatou" comes from the word "arigatai" literally meaning "difficult to have" with the implication of how precious and rare. It can be about a person, an object, an encounter and even being or existence (life) itself.

Gratitude is such a powerful force. It is more than just a feeling or emotion. True gratitude is life changing. Life transforming. In *The Teaching of Buddha*, it shares that the Wise show appreciation not only to the person(s) who helped (them) by returning some act of kindness, but to all those around them. Thus, expanding the circle of gratitude. Gratitude can change us and the world. In our current times with so much uncertainty, fear, violence, hatred and negativity what we need is a positive universal force in society to bring about more peace, harmony and kindness in the world. Truly, illuminated by Amida Buddha's Nurturing Light, encouraged by Shinran Shonin, may we "live the Nembutsu" motivated by the power of gratitude for Amida Buddha's Great Wisdom and Compassion. Namo Amida Butsu.

## MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR GENERAL OF JODO SHINSHU HONGWANJI-HA BISHOP CHIKO IWAGAMI FOR 2019 PBA BACCALAUREATE

*\*\*The following message was read at the PBA Baccalaureate Service which was held on May 9, 2019 at Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin. Ten seniors graduated PBA this year.*

Congratulations class of 2019! As you are seated here, I am sure that you are reflecting on the many memories you have of the time you have spent here until today.

Graduation marks the end of one of many chapters in one's lifetime, and at the same time, it is also the starting point as you set off toward a new goal. As you take flight from Pacific Buddhist Academy, you will carry the memories of your days here at PBA together with your hopes and dreams in the next phase of your life.

On this special occasion, I would like to share with you the spiritual legacy of this school, that is, the Buddhist concepts of *kansha* and *shōjin*, each of which refers to "gratitude," and "devotion."

For the first concept of "gratitude," Hongwanji has been encouraging people to recite the "words of gratitude before meal," which go as follows,

**We are truly grateful for this opportunity to share this wonderful meal thanks to all living beings who have made this occasion possible. In deep gratitude, Itadakimasu.**

Our lives are supported by a number of elements, such as the nature including the sun, the earth, the water, as well as other lives that we actually take, including those of vegetables, meats, and fish. In addition, through the uncountable causes and conditions, we are enabled to receive each meal. Being aware of this fact and appreciating everything that allows us to be alive, let us express our gratitude by placing our palms together. This is the feeling of gratitude, or *kansha no kokoro* that we would like to promote among people.

Let us now reflect on the second concept of "devotion," or *shōjin*. *Shōjin*, is a Buddhist term which encourages people to devote themselves to something as a way leading them to happiness.

According to records, Sakyamuni Buddha's last words were as follows, **"Fellow practitioners, this is the message I would like to leave for you. Nothing remains the same. Work ceaselessly and do not stop doing so."**

Through these words, Buddha implies the importance of dedicating one's lifetime to learning. Giving it your all, while being mindful.



This is what we must always keep in mind. At times, things may go as planned, while other times it may be very challenging. In society, we have a tendency to value only the outcome. Therefore, it is natural to focus only on the results, however, though the results may not turn out as expected, do not let it keep you down for long, or continue dragging this feeling with you. The same could be said for when things go well. Boasting about your achievement and staying in that state will not get you anywhere. It is important to continue aiming for your next goal and being able to continue moving forward. Only then, can one truly become an admirable and beautiful person in the true sense.

As you, the graduating class of 2019, continue to expand your wealth of knowledge, it is my hope that you will continue to say "Thank you" with the spiritual legacy of this school expressing "gratitude" within each of yourselves throughout life, becoming a person of respect and characteristic beauty. Doing so, I am confident that a bright future will await you.

In closing, let me once again congratulate you on your graduation. Thank you.

May 9, 2019

Bishop Chiko Iwagami  
Governor General  
Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha

## CONDOLENCES

**Mr. Stanley Mitsuo Kunitomo**, a member of Kona Hongwanji Mission, passed away on April 9, 2019. Mr. Kunitomo served as Kyodan President from 2010 to 2012 and as active volunteer service to the temple. He was a Past President and active volunteer at the Keei Buddhist Church and Cemetery. The Ingo (Posthumous Title) of JOU-JU-IN 成就院 which means "One who realized his goal" in recognition of his life of Nembutsu was conferred by Bishop Eric Matsumoto on April 21, 2019.

## 61<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL HONPA HONGWANJI STATE MINISTERS' ASSOCIATION SEMINAR

The 61<sup>st</sup> Annual Honpa Hongwanji State Minister's Seminar will be held on June 4-6, 2019 on the island of Maui hosted by Maui District Ministers' Association. The theme of the seminar is "Secure Trusting Mind in Yourself and Guide Others on the Same Path." The guest lecturer will be Dr. Dennis Hirota, Professor Emeritus of Shin Buddhist Studies at Ryukoku University.

## 62<sup>nd</sup> JR. YBA STATE CONVENTION

The Hawaii Federation of Junior Young Buddhist Associations will be holding its 62<sup>nd</sup> Jr. YBA State Convention on June 28-30, 2019 at the Pagoda Hotel hosted by the United Jr. YBA of Oahu. The theme of this year's convention is "*Okagesamade: Oh, The Places We'll Go!*"

## HONPA HONGWANJI MISSION OF HAWAII WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE PAN-PACIFIC PARADE

Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii will march in the Pan-Pacific Festival Parade on June 9, 2019 from 5:00pm to 7:00pm. The Hongwanji Ohana will be humbly walking to celebrate the 130<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii and promoting Peace Day Hawaii September 21<sup>st</sup>, as we “Walk in Peace” (2019 Hawaii Kyodan Theme and Slogan), carrying the symbolic Sadako Cranes.

## BWA NEWS

**16<sup>th</sup> World Buddhist Women’s Convention:** A total of 139 delegates will be attending the 16<sup>th</sup> World Buddhist Women’s Convention in San Francisco from August 31<sup>st</sup> to September 1, 2019. There will be 55 going from Honolulu United, 29 from Oahu, 7 from Kauai, 24 from Maui, and 24 from Hawaii Island. The theme of the Convention is “Live the Nembutsu.” Carol Valentine of Kauai will be our panel speaker.

Keynote speakers will be Rev. Yukiko Motoyoshi and Keiko Toro.

Preceding the World Convention, there will be a meeting of the World Representatives. That meeting will be attended by Bishop Eric Matsumoto, Honorary Advisor; Tamayo Matsumoto, Honorary President; Rev. Shindo Nishiyama, Minister Advisor; Lois Toyama, HHMHFBWA President, and Linda Nagai, HHMHFBWA 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President.

**Eshin-ni – Kakushin-ni Endowed Chair at the Institute of Buddhist Studies:** Hawaii’s fundraising goal to support the establishment of this endowed chair was \$11,000. Thanks to the generosity of temple members and the efforts of BWA members throughout the state, we raised over \$14,000. We presented the check to Peggy Okabayashi and Janice Doi, the Buddhist Churches of America World Representatives, at our March 2, 2019 Federation Meeting.

**Honolulu Museum of Art:** Following the March 2, 2019 meeting of the BWA Federation, most of the attendees toured the Buddhist Exhibit at the museum. The docent-led tour, supplemented by comments from Bishop Matsumoto and Rev. Arthur Kaufmann, was very informative and interesting. This permanent exhibit is definitely worth viewing.





## WAILUKU HONGWANJI DHARMA SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL TRIP TO KAUAI

Wailuku Hongwanji Dharma School and parents went to educational trip to Kauai from April 19 to 21. We were able to visit two Hongwanji temples (Kapaa and Lihue) and learned many wonderful histories of the temples. Dharma school students participated in Lihue Hongwanji's Sunday morning service and shared skits with Lihue Hongwanji members. We all received a warm feeling of Aloha and Nembatal from both Kapaa and Lihue Hongwanji Members.

