



# Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii

## HEADQUARTERS UPDATE

1727 Pali Highway, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Phone: (808) 522-9200 Fax: (808) 522-9209

Web: [www.hongwanjihawaii.com](http://www.hongwanjihawaii.com) Email: [hqs@honpahi.org](mailto:hqs@honpahi.org)



APRIL 2021

### BISHOP'S CORNER



#### May Day is Lei Day in Hawaii

Bishop Eric Matsumoto

Reminiscing, one of my dearest memories from childhood is making lei every year in May. Growing up in Hawaii, making lei for Memorial Day is a common memory for many of us. Today, being able to participate in Memorial Day Ceremonies at Punchbowl reinforces this childhood memory.

Further, every May 1 (or possibly the weekend closest to May 1) is the day that many schools with festive celebrations continue to put on a May Day Program which honors the Indigenous culture of Hawaii and also recognizes the many and varied cultures and ethnic groups which comprise our beautiful Hawai'i Nei. My elementary school, Honaunau Elementary, had an elaborate May Day program with the traditional Hawaiian Royal Court, ethnic and cultural entertainment put on by each grade including the faculty and staff of the school, a huge country store which featured Kona's famous pickled mango or, as we called it, "Mango Pickle" and also many exhibits and contests including a lei contest. I remember enjoying looking at all the lei laid out on tables for display. Of course, everyone also wore a lei too. At May Day, I fondly remember the various performances put on by the different grades or classes. It was a beautiful display of the rich heritage of various cultures from around the world. Now that I think about it, it was a way that students would, first hand, learn about and experience other cultures. In this way, probably without realizing it (at the time), we learned, recognized and accepted the fact that there are many different people and cultures in this world. Also, having learned some of the songs, music and dances of other cultures they didn't seem so foreign. Upon reflection, May Day might play an important role in promoting cultural understanding. It wasn't just fun and games. It would lead to a recognition and acknowledgement of others and showed that we are all part of a very diverse global human family and on May Day in Hawaii, we all come together in mutual harmony.

As I think about it, we, the human race, could be likened to a lei. We, individuals could be likened to the petals of each flower. A flower could represent an entire culture, ethnic group, nation or even more. However, there is a part of the lei which is not easily seen that is also vital. The string or twine which passes through each flower connecting all the flowers and thus giving the lei its beautiful shape and form is also a very important part of the lei. The string represents the



*Mary Foster Plumeria*



teaching/dharma of interdependence that we are all interconnected and interrelated. One flower does not make a lei. For a lei, we need each other (all the flowers) and only when we come together do we have a beautiful lei. Let us not forget to appreciate the gift of a lei, not only for its beauty, but also the attitude of respect with which it is being given and the feeling of deep gratitude with which it should be received.

To conclude, as I thought about the lei and the beautiful flowers which abound in Hawaii, the following Buddhist quotes came to mind. From “The Teaching of Buddha,” “The fragrance of a flower does not float against the wind, but the honor of the virtuous goes even against the wind into the world.” and the following excerpts taken from “The Collected Works of Shinran,” from some hymns by Shinran Shonin extolling the beautiful flowers of Amida Buddha’s Pure Land of Enlightenment, “Beams of light,...shine brilliantly from within each flower; There is no place they do not reach.” “Buddha-bodies...emerge from each flower...” “...the Buddhas constantly teach and spread the excellent dharma. And lead beings into the Buddha’s path.” Namo Amida Butsu and Thank you.



## OBITUARY NOTICE

**Mrs. Sonoe Motoyoshi**, the wife of the late Rev. Sachihide Motoyoshi and the mother of Rev. Yukiko Motoyoshi, passed away at the age of 104 on Sunday, March 28, 2021, at her residence in Stockton, California. At this time, there are no other details regarding funeral service plans because of the pandemic.

## LIVING TREASURES OF HAWAI’I SPECIAL PROGRAM

Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii’s Living Treasures of Hawai’i program, established in 1976, has recognized over 200 individuals who have demonstrated excellence and high achievement in their field of endeavor and who have made significant contributions toward enriching our society.

This year, due to COVID-19 restrictions, in lieu of our traditional luncheon program recognizing new honorees, we produced a special one-hour program, “Life and Light: Wisdom of Hawai’i’s Treasures” featuring interviews with five past honorees. The program will air **on May 27, 2021, at 7:00 pm (K5 and live stream on Facebook), and May 30, 2021, at 8:00 pm (KHNL).**

**The Living Treasures of Hawai’i™: Life and Light - Wisdom of Hawai’i’s Treasures** brings together the wise sayings and teachings from five Living Treasures of Hawai’i™ honorees: Robert Cazimero, Puanani Burgess, Lillian Yajima, Rev. Yoshiaki Fujitani, and Nainoa Thompson. This inspirational television special highlights what makes the Living Treasures of Hawai’i™ program unique and shares the history of this prestigious honor that is part of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii.

## ORIGINS OF STATE RECOGNITION FOR BUDDHA DAY IN HAWAII

At the online Hawaii Buddhist Council Buddha Day Service on April 4, Bishop Eric Matsumoto made reference to a successful campaign in 1963 for state recognition of Buddha Day.

Back then, joint Buddha Day (or Wesak Day) celebrations were pan-Buddhist affairs too large to be held in a single temple. Kapiolani Park was sometimes the venue, as it was in 1963. In the Hongwanji Archives is a 1955 Wesak Day program booklet provided by Carolyn Uchiyama. The celebration was held at Kapiolani Park that year too, and downtown Honolulu store windows featured "Wesak Week."

While many are aware of Hongwanji youth involvement in the establishment Peace Day in Hawaii, fewer may be aware of the Buddha Day story. City newspaper archives reveal that the effort was much in the news from January to June 1963. HHMH Bishop Chitoku Morikawa was quoted in Honolulu papers about a petition effort, which in turn led us to the article pictured here from the January 1963 *Goji* newsletter.

Bishop Morikawa wrote, "It is our hope that you will all help by affixing your signatures to these petition forms when they are circulated, and thereby participate in an action that will have far-reaching benefits even beyond the confines of Buddhism or Hawaii." The effort attracted support outside of Hongwanji as well, including from Chinese Buddhist temples and associations. By March of 1963, 40,000 signatures had been collected and bound into an 8-inch-thick volume for presentation to the legislature.

While state holiday status was dropped from the bills, official recognition of April 8 as Buddha Day passed both houses of the Hawaii State Legislature in 1963. At that year's Honpa Hongwanji Lay Convention (attended by more than 700 delegates!) a resolution of appreciation honored the legislators who introduced the Buddha Day bills, Sen. Kazuhisa Abe and Rep. Jack K. Suwa. The final bill was signed into law by Governor John Burns on June 3, 1963.

- David Atcheson, Archives Committee Chair ([archiveschair@honpahi.org](mailto:archiveschair@honpahi.org))

*Two Archives Committee resources were especially important in the preparation of this article: 1) our Newspapers.com subscription, 2) digitized versions of archival Goji newsletters (searchable PDF files).*



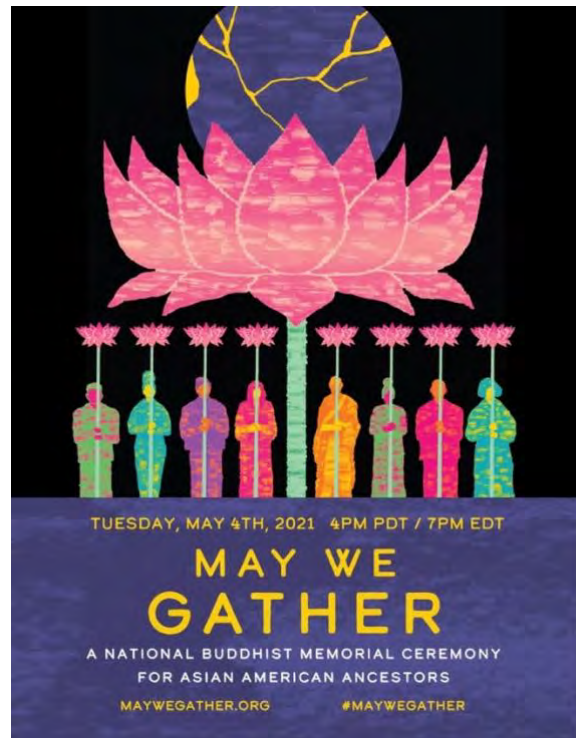
*In the January 1963 Goji, Bishop Morikawa introduced a petition effort for Buddha Day*

**“MAY WE GATHER” A NATIONAL BUDDHIST MEMORIAL CEREMONY FOR ASIAN AMERICAN ANCESTORS ON TUESDAY, MAY 4<sup>TH</sup>, 2021 at 1PM HAWAII TIME**

May We Gather is the first national Buddhist memorial service in response to anti-Asian violence. This event is promoted by Dr. Duncan Ryuken Williams, Dr. Funie Hsu, and Ms. Chenxing Han and supported by many Buddhist partner temples, organizations, and individuals. Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii is also endorsing and supporting this event. The following is the press release for this event.

**May We Gather: A National Buddhist Memorial Ceremony for Asian American Ancestors** ([www.maywegather.org](http://www.maywegather.org)) is the first national Buddhist memorial service in response to anti-Asian violence. The ceremony will be livestreamed from Higashi Honganji Temple in Los Angeles, which was vandalized earlier this year. The event will be freely broadcast online and will bring together Asian American Buddhists and their allies to heal in community together.

On May 4th, 2021, exactly seven weeks, or forty-nine days, will have passed since the Atlanta shootings claimed the lives of eight people, six of them women of Asian descent, including the 63-year-old Buddhist Yong Ae Yue. In many Buddhist traditions, forty-nine days after death marks an important transition for the bereaved. May We Gather will feature Buddhist chanting and reflections from forty-nine Asian American Buddhist leaders of South, Southeast, and East Asian descent in a communal ritual to honor people who have died from acts of anti-Asian violence in the United States.



On May 4th, 2021, exactly seven weeks, or forty-nine days, will have passed since the Atlanta shootings claimed the lives of eight people, six of them women of Asian descent, including the 63-year-old Buddhist Yong Ae Yue. In many Buddhist traditions, forty-nine days after death marks an important transition for the bereaved. May We Gather will feature Buddhist chanting and reflections from forty-nine Asian American Buddhist leaders of South, Southeast, and East Asian descent in a communal ritual to honor people who have died from acts of anti-Asian violence in the United States.

The hourlong event will be held **on Tuesday, May 4th, 2021 at 4pm PDT (1pm Hawaii Time)**. We welcome Asian American Buddhist temples and organizations as well as allied communities and individuals of all backgrounds to participate in this ceremony by endorsing the gathering, sharing it widely, and watching the livestream on May 4th.

The livestream is free and registration is not required. Please visit the following page to participate in this service: <https://www.maywegather.org/livestream>

For more information, please visit the event website: <https://www.maywegather.org/>

## **KAHUKU HONGWANJI SCHOLARSHIP**

The Kahuku Hongwanji Mission closed its doors in February 2013 after serving its membership for 111 years. To maintain the legacy of the Kahuku Hongwanji Mission and to develop the future generations of the Hongwanji, Kahuku Hongwanji Mission established a scholarship to support students at the college level.

### **Eligibility:**

- The applicant must be a member of the BSC Fellowship Club or an active member of a Hawaii Kyodan organization.
- The applicant must be a full-time student of an accredited college, university, or a post-high school program in the State of Hawaii, and earn a minimum of 12 college credits per semester.
- The applicant must have a required minimum college GPA of 2.5.
- The applicant must be of college age up to 35 years old.
- The applicant must submit the application form with an essay on “Dharma and My Life”.

**Application Deadline:** July 31, 2021

**Scholarship Amount:** \$2,000.00 each / two recipients

For more information of this scholarship, please contact the HHMH Headquarters at (808) 522-9200 or email at [hqs@honpahi.org](mailto:hqs@honpahi.org)