



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 Email: hqs@honpahi.org



April 2022

BISHOP'S CORNER

“Dharma Message for a 49th Day Service in honor of the Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh” (Part 2)

Bishop Eric Matsumoto

This message was given at a 49th Day Service in honor of the Venerable

Thich Nhat Hanh at Honokaa Hongwanji on March 12, 2022

(Continued from Bishop's Corner for Headquarters Update March 2022)



In the Mahayana Pure Land Tradition, there is the story of Honen Shonin who founded the Pure Land Tradition centered on verbal recitation of the Name of the Buddha Amitayus-Amitabha or Amida Buddha in Japanese, as an independent school in Japan. When he was about to pass away over 800 years ago, a similar conversation took place in which a disciple said, *“From olden days, memorial temples were built for distinguished masters. However, there are none in praise of your great achievement. Where shall we build a temple in honor of you?”* Honen Shonin replied, *“The Nembutsu Teachings will not permeate among the people if you build a temple in my honor. I have devoted my entire life to spreading the Dharma because I want people everywhere to receive the Nembutsu teachings. Therefore, any place, whether a king's palace or a thatched hut, any place where people recite the Nembutsu is my temple.”*

Shinran Shonin of Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji probably inherited this perspective from Honen Shonin for as we know Shinran Shonin did not attempt to build any temples nor did he have any attachments to his physical body. According to records left by Shinran Shonin's grandson, Shinran Shonin is known to have requested that after he dies his body should be left in the Kamo River as food for the fish. His understanding, probably based on interdependency, was that during his lifetime the fish he consumed provided him with sustenance, at least, at minimum, now as he discards his body, let him be of benefit to the fish.

For Shinran Shonin too, his main focus was the Dharma or Teachings, in his case it was living the life of Shinjin-Nembutsu or to Realize the Buddha Endowed Awakened Mind of True Entrusting-Reciting the Nembutsu of Awareness, Joy and Gratitude in response to the Buddha of Immeasurable Life and Infinite Light, Amida Buddha's Great Wisdom and Compassion, which promises this “spiritually foolish being” that I am assured the great enlightenment at the end of this finite life by the Compassionate 18th Vow of Amida Buddha by simply wholeheartedly entrusting in Great Compassion.

For Shinran Shonin, for people everywhere to rejoice in Amida Buddha's Great Wisdom and Unconditional Compassion was most important. Thus, we have records of Shinran Shonin having exclaimed, *“If you are rejoicing in the Nembutsu know that there are two people rejoicing, if there are two people know that*

there are three people, for that other shall be I, Shinran." Shinran Shonin's unending gratitude and also his commitment and dedication to sharing the Nembutsu Dharma, in response to Amida Buddha's Great Compassion, is expressed by his words known to us today as "Ondokusan" which goes like this *"Such is the benevolence of Amida's great compassion, That we must strive to return it even to the breaking of our bodies; Such is the benevolence of the masters and true teachers, That we must endeavor to repay it even to our bones becoming dust."* These words have been dearly embraced by our Jodo Shinshu predecessors, both minister and lay, for centuries and has brought us to the present. Honokaa Hongwanji Temple, Temple of Amida Buddha's Primal Vow, is a testament of it.

Again, from the perspective of many great Buddhist leaders throughout the ages, more important than holding memorial rites, more important than even passing on a physical structure of a temple, is our living the Dharma or Teachings and passing the Dharma on to future generations. I believe this is what the Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh also said when he had to flee Vietnam that most important is that Buddhism remained alive in people's hearts and minds.

To me, the words of the Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh *"I am not in here.", "I am not out there either."* and especially the third and last phrase, *"I may be found in your way of breathing and walking."* is emphasizing that he continues to exist, live on when people continue their practice, continue to live their lives in the Dharma. This is his encouragement. This is his last teaching to those who follow the path that he dedicated his whole life to. Generally speaking, due to the truth of interdependence, while we do have our individual existences, at the same time, we are all interconnected and interrelated as the metaphor of Indra's Net shares and we are not as separate and completely independent of each other as we think we are. The Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh often referred to "interbeing." We are all a part of each other's life regardless of our current state of being. Thus, today, while it is sad that the physical presence of a revered Buddhist Teacher respected by so many around the world can no longer be seen by our human eyes, but his presence is still here. He has not completely disappeared forever.

To summarize and slowly conclude, let me share a quote from "The Teaching of Buddha" by the Society for the Promotion of Buddhism/BDK in hopes that it provides some comfort and provides an aspiration. It says:

"When the moon sets, people say that the moon has disappeared; and when the moon rises, they say that the moon has appeared. In fact, the moon neither goes nor comes, but shines continually in the sky. Buddha is exactly like the moon: He neither appears nor disappears; He only seems to do so, out of love for the people that he may teach them."

"Whether Buddha appears or disappears, Buddhahood always remains the same. Knowing this principle, one must keep (to) the path of Enlightenment and attain Perfect Wisdom, undisturbed by the apparent changes in the image of Buddha, in the condition of the world, or in the fluctuations of human thought."

"Do not seek to know Buddha by his form or attributes; for neither the form nor the attributes are the real Buddha. The true Buddha is Enlightenment itself. The true way to know Buddha is to realize Enlightenment."

As a final reflection-aspiration, I would like to share a slightly adapted poetic rendition of how we honor the Buddha by A. Ferdinand Herold and translated from French by Paul C. Blum which is one of my favorite

quotes. Our remembrance of the Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh does not end at the conclusion of this 49 Day Service in his honor. Please join me in anjali/gassho.

“Listen: the air is joyous with songs in honor of the Buddha. But the Buddha is paid a more enduring honor. Monks, nuns, all believers, all those who see the Dharma. All those who live within the Dharma, they are the ones that do the Buddha supreme honor. Therefore, live according to the Dharma and even in the most trivial matters always follow the Sacred Path of the Dharma.”

For those who wish, please remain in gassho/anjali, as I end, today, as we traditionally do in our Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji Tradition of Pure Land Buddhism by reciting The Buddha Amitabha-Amitayus’ Name Which I Call in awareness and joy in grateful response to Namu Amida Butsu, The Buddha Amitabha-Amitayus’ Name That Calls Me to entrust. Namu Amida Butsu/Entrusting in All-Inclusive Wisdom and All-Embracing Compassion.

Thank you/Mahalo iā ‘oukou.

CONDOLENCES

Mr. George Takashi Okamoto, a member of Wailuku Hongwanji Mission, passed away on March 9, 2022. Mr. Okamoto served as the President of Wailuku Hongwanji Mission for 10 years. He was also active in statewide Hongwanji activities and served on many committees. The Ingo of SHOU-RYUU-IN 紹隆院 which means “One who contributed to the flourishing of the Buddha-Dharma” in recognition of his life of Nembutsu was conferred by Bishop Eric Matsumoto on April 3, 2022.

Mrs. Emiko Serikaku, a member of Waipahu Hongwanji Mission, passed away on February 3, 2022. Mrs. Serikaku served as a board member of Waipahu Hongwanji Mission for many years. She was also Waipahu Hongwanji BWA president and supported temple a lot. The Ingo of GON-GO-IN 嚴護院 which means “One who firmly protected the Temple” in recognition of her life of Nembutsu was conferred by Bishop Eric Matsumoto on April 9, 2022.

Reverend Midori Kondo, a retired minister of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, passed away on Sunday, March 27, 2022, at her home in Keaau, HI, at the age of 87. Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii sponsored funeral service is scheduled for Saturday, May 28, 2022, at Honpa Hongwanji Hilo Betsuin under the officiation of Bishop Eric Matsumoto. Visitation will be held from 9:30 am to 11:00 am, followed by the funeral service at 11:00 am. The family requests no flowers. Rev. Midori Kondo became a Kaikyoshi Minister in 2004, and served the following temples:

| | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| July 1999 – November 2004 | Honpa Hongwanji Hilo Betsuin |
| December 2004 – October 2009 | Lihue Hongwanji Mission |
| October 19, 2009 | Retired |

MINISTERIAL ASSIGNMENTS

Rev. Shinji Kawagoe, the Resident Minister of Papaikou Hongwanji Mission and also the Overseer Minister of Honohina Hongwanji Mission and Honomu Hongwanji Mission, will resign from Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii as of April 30, 2022. Rev. Kawagoe has been serving Hawaii Kyodan as a Kaikyoshi Minister since July 2013. During the absence of the resident minister starting May 1, 2022, ministers of Hawaii District are tasked with providing support and guidance.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Rev. Kazunori & Mrs. Noriko Takahashi welcomed a baby boy. Hironori Takahashi (高橋 弥法) was born on April 8, 2022, weighing 9lb. 1oz. He is their first child. Rev. Kazunori Takahashi currently works at Honpa Hongwanji Hilo Betsuin as Rimban. Congratulations to Rev. & Mrs. Takahashi!



2022 LIVING TREASURES OF HAWAI'I™

The Living Treasures of Hawai'i™ Selection Committee has selected three individuals who have made significant contributions in their respective fields and positively impacted the quality of life in our local communities and the whole of Hawai'i. The Honorees for this 47th year event are Kenny Endo (Taiko Master), Patrick Kirch (Archaeology Researcher), and Keali'i Reichel (Kumu Hula, Musician Scholar and Community Leader). This recognition takes into account social and cultural impact, professional commitment, and character that embodies the values of our distinct and diverse homeland.

The Living Treasures of Hawai'i™ Designation, sponsored by the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawai'i, is traditionally conducted through a celebratory luncheon at Legislative Assembly (Giseikai). However, due to Covid safety concerns, Honorees will be recognized in a special TV program.



Kenny Endo



Keali'i Reichel



Patrick Kirch

The program will air on:

- **May 22, 2022, at 6:00 pm**
(KHNL and live streamed on the Hawaii News Now Facebook page)
- **May 26, 2022, at 7:00 pm**
(KFVE)

For more information on the 2022 Honorees, please visit our website:
<https://hongwanjihawaii.com/blog/2022/03/25/living-treasures-2022/>

NOMINATIONS FOR 2023 LIVING TREASURES OF HAWAI'I™

The Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawai'i is currently accepting nominations for the 2023 Living Treasures of Hawai'i.™

We invite you to nominate those in your community who have made an impact on those around them and continue share their knowledge and expertise with others. Candidates are selected based on their demonstration of continuous growth and learning their knowledge and understanding of their particular field, and their steady and significant contributions towards enriching our society.

An organization or person may nominate a candidate for this honor by submitting nomination form with information on the nominee, and a maximum of three letters of recommendation. The nomination form can be downloaded from our website: www.hongwanjihawaii.com and is also available at the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii Headquarters Office. Nominations must be received by the Living Treasures of Hawai'i™ Selection Committee no later than August 1st.

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 student attending or registered for enrollment in an accredited university, college, or a post-high school program in the State of Hawaii.
- The applicant must show interest in Buddhism, and be active in a Hongwanji program, either at the Hawaii Kyodan level or at a branch temple.
- The applicant must be a full-time student and registered for a minimum of 12 college credits per semester.
- The applicant, at the time of the application, must have a required minimum high school, college, or university in Hawaii GPA of 2.5.
(*Those who registered for enrollment and not yet received Hawaii college/university GPA must submit their GPA after the first semester.)
- The applicant must submit the application form with an essay on “Dharma and My Life”.

Application Deadline: July 31, 2022

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

SAVE THE DATE: UPCOMING EVENTS

2022 KAUAI HONGWANJI COUNCIL NEMBUTSU SEMINAR (Zoom)

Date & Time: Tuesday, April 26th, 2022, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. (HST)

Guest Speaker: Dr. Rev. Mutsumi Wondra, the resident minister of the Orange County Buddhist Church (OCBC) in California and the Institute of Buddhist Study instructor.

Topic: "Women in Buddhism - Historiographical Approach -"

2022 SPRING VIRTUAL NEMBUTSU SEMINAR (HONOLULU & OAHU HONGWANJI COUNCIL)

Date & Time: Saturday, April 30th, 2022, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. (HST)

Guest Speaker: Rev. Blayne Higa, the resident minister of Kona Hongwanji Mission

Topic: Building Sangha Together: Nurturing Dharma-Centered Communities

STATE DHARMA SCHOOL GATHERING (Zoom)

Date: Sunday, May 1st, 2022

Time: 9:30 a.m. Service

Dharma Message: Rev. David Fujimoto (Mililani Hongwanji Mission)

10:00 a.m. Breakout Room Sessions

Adult Session: Rev. David Fujimoto "The Pale Blue Dot" discussion

Dharma School Sessions: Jr. YBA Moderators

10:50 a.m. Dharma School Families/Adult Sessions End

11:00 a.m. Dharma School Teachers/ Educators Gathering Session (Open to all)

12:00 p.m. Done