



“The Calling Voice”

Ka Leo Kāhea

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65th Jr. YBA Convention: AMIDA, I CHOOSE YOU!

By **MANAMI ALSPACH** (2021-2022 HAWAII FEDERATION OF JR. YOUNG BUDDHIST ASSOCIATIONS (HFJYBA) PRESIDENT) AND **NAHO UMITANI** (2021-2022 HFJYBA SECRETARY)

On June 17-19, the Hawaii Federation of Jr. Young Buddhist Associations (HFJYBA) had their 65th Jr. YBA State Convention in Hilo, Hawai'i. The theme was “Amida, I Choose You!” which was, of course, inspired by the popular anime *Pokemon*. Although the name originally started off as something that would make a good play on words, there is a deeper meaning to this year's theme.

“Amida, I Choose You!” relates to the never ending love, kindness, and warmth from the teachings of Amida Buddha. The teachings of Amida Buddha relating to patience, kind words, and treating all living things with love and kindness has led to all of us choosing Amida Buddha to be our guiding light as well as follow along as a link in the golden chain,” said Manami Alspach and Sarah Igawa, convention co-chairs.

Kieran Maesaka, 2021-2022 United of Hawai'i President, also had an insightful perspective; “The story of *Pokemon* revolves around the improvement of oneself and those around you. Just as one uses their *Pokemon* to



Jr. YBA Members and Ministers pose on the steps of the Honpa Hongwanji Hilo Betsuin at the 65th Hawaii Federation of Junior Young Buddhist Associations State Convention.

battle the forces of evil, we must use the Dharma to combat ignorance.”

Following two years of online conventions, the 65th State Convention offered a refreshing opportunity for four of the five Hawaii Federation “Uniteds” (chapters)—Honolulu, Oahu, Maui, and Big Island—to connect. “This was my first in-person convention and it did not disappoint! It was great to see all our united's come together and be able to experience an actual real

convention that wasn't over Zoom,” said sophomore Kaya Blum, United of Honolulu Delegate.

Convention activities included a message from guest speaker Rev. Blayne Higa, pie crust manju making with Mr. Burt Tsuchiya, onenju making for the Sadako Sasaki Legacy Project, a bon dance workshop, and a Saturday night awards dinner and movie night.

The convention also included a

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Infant Initiatory Rite: A Marvelous Life



Hilo Betsuin welcomed five children into the Sangha. Honorees from left to right: the Onishi Family and their daughter; the Nitahara-Moses Family and their son; the Onishi and Tanabe Family and their daughter; the Taniguchi and Inouye Family and their daughter; the Takahashi Family and their son.

By **REV. JOSHI KAMURO**
ASSOCIATE MINISTER
HONPA HONGWANJI HILO BETSUIN

The Honpa Hongwanji Hilo Betsuin held an Infant Initiatory Rite Service on Sunday, May 22, 2022. We welcomed three little girls and two baby boys into our Sangha and into the world of Jōdo Shinshū teachings. We started the service with the offering of candles, flowers, and red and white *omochi*. The children's parents were presented with a *shikisho*, *onenju*, *mochi*, and a certificate by our President Burt Tsuchiya.

Last year, in preparation for the infant initiatory rites service, I found a book titled “Encountering Life / *Inochi no deai*,” which was published by Hongwanji Press in

Kyoto, Japan. There is a really interesting message from Rev. Ekyo Yono, a nursery school director in Shiga prefecture. His brother was Rev. Shinsho Fuji (Yono), who was a resident minister at Waianae Hongwanji from 1977 to 1981 and at Kailua Hongwanji from 1981 to 1983. The title of his message is “Looking at a Marvelous Life.” Let me introduce it to you.

“The life of the baby was inherited from the history of life on earth, in the far distant past, and was now born from a father and mother united by the Buddha's connection. It is said that the probability of being born into this world as a human being is one in hundreds of millions or one in billions. The origin of life dates back to the ancient sea, which was under extreme heat and deadly

poison about 3.5 billion years ago. Microscopic life forms in the sea evolved from sea to land in many forms over a long period of time and eventually evolved into us human beings. Strangely enough, babies are born into this world after experiencing these 3.5 billion years of evolution of life in just 10 months in their mother's womb. Isn't it strange that the fluid in the mother's body where the baby grows, is said to have the same concentration of salt as the ocean? Babies are not simply created by their parents, but they are truly blessed and given to the parents by the Buddha.”

After reading this message, I really understood how hard it is to be born into human life, and how precious my life is because it was

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BWA Hawaii State Conference Goes Virtual

By **LOIS TOYAMA**
IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT,
BUDDHIST WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION



Keynote speakers, Deidre Tegarden (left) and Janet Umezu.

The first all-virtual Buddhist Women's Association (BWA) State Conference was hosted by Maui United BWA on April 23 – 24, 2022. The Maui team demonstrated the conference theme, “Building Healthy Sanghas – Connecting with Others,” when they changed from the hybrid conference, which was originally planned, to a virtual conference, when an upsurge in COVID cases made that seem the safer option. Concerned with the health of the Sanghas, they found ways to connect about 130 BWA members to the event and to each other.

The keynote speaker on Saturday was Deidre Tegarden, Executive Director of the Nisei Veteran's Memorial

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In Memoriam

Rev. Midori Kondo
(1934-2022)



It is with deep sadness that we had to part with our dear Dharma friend and colleague, the late Rev. Midori (Ogawa) Kondo, a retired minister of the

Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii. She departed for the Pure Land in March of this year at the age of 87 at her home in Keaau, Hawaii. A Hawaii Kyodan-sponsored funeral service in her honor was officiated by Bishop Eric Matsumoto at the Honpa Hongwanji Hilo Betsuin, with representatives from across the State in attendance.

Kondo Sensei was born in Pasadena, California. She journeyed to Hawaii with her late husband, the Rev. Ryosho

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Bon Dance Held



After a two-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, several temples celebrated Bon Dance this year. For more photos, see Page 7. (Courtesy of Robin Sato)



By Rev. ERIC MATSUMOTO
BISHOP
HONPA HONGWANJI MISSION
OF HAWAII

Editor's note: This is the second and final part of "The Three Treasures" from the May 2022 issue.

From the feelings and thoughts of lamenting shamefully my imperfect self which receives though totally undeserving of Amida Buddha's great compassion

(*mooshiwakenai, mottainai*) and in gratitude for it (*arigatai*), arise the aspiration to try to live in a way that is more in accord with the Dharma. It is true that Amida Buddha accepts us just as we are, full of imperfections. However, this does not mean that it is okay to wantonly contribute to suffering and live selfishly.

The All-Compassionate Amida realizes that we, *bonbu*, are trapped and chained by our blind passions (*bonno*). Amida has compassion for us, offering the promise of enlightenment without the severing of blind passions. At the moment of realizing Shinjin, lamenting our imperfect self and feeling grateful for Unconditional Compassion, an aspiration to cast off evil in themselves arises in the Person of Nembutsu.

The Three Treasures! Part 2

BISHOP'S CORNER

In Buddhism, the goal is to realize true liberation or freedom (for self and others), which is Nirvana. In Jodo Shinshu, we say this is to attain birth in the Pure Land of Enlightenment at the end of this finite life. We fully acknowledge our limitations, but even a limited person like myself in this imperfect world can aspire to try to live according to some of the ideals of Buddhism. This is due to the workings of Other-Power/ Amida Buddha.

A simple story which may convey this point is Aesop's fable, "The North Wind and the Sun." The North Wind and the Sun were trying to determine who was stronger. The North Wind insisted it was stronger because it could cause clouds to block

out the sun's light. As they debated, a man was seen below. The Sun proposed they have a contest; the one who could make the man take off his coat would be declared the strongest. The North Wind went first, and blew with all its might, hoping to blow off the man's coat. However, the man grabbed onto his coat even more tightly. (The North Wind is like our ego or blind passions.) Then it was the Sun's turn. The Sun came out from behind the clouds and warmly shed its light upon the man. Feeling warm, the man took off his coat.

In a similar way, Amida Buddha moves us forward through gentle persuasion and encouragement, not force and fear. Amida Buddha is able to make a difference by tempering our blind passions. Like the

North Wind, our blind passions do not disappear. They will continue to blow for the rest of our life, but we will be able to perhaps shed a thin layer or find respite because of the Buddha's warm, nurturing, and compassionate light.

If one truly encounters the Nembutsu Dharma, one becomes more aware of how self-centered one's thoughts, words, and actions are and can make an honest attempt to try to change for the better, even while still realizing that one remains a *bonbu* or spiritually foolish being with egocentric attachments. One also understands that other people are often the same in their self-centeredness, so instead of always being upset at others, a sense of

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Opportunity and *Kansha* (Gratitude)

By Rev. SHINKAI MURAKAMI
WAILUKU HONGWANJI MISSION

Namo Amida Butsu
"Ah, hard to encounter, even in many lifetimes, is the decisive cause of birth, Amida's universal Vow! Hard to realize, even in myriads of kalpas, is pure shinjin that is true and real!" (*The True Teaching, Practice, and Realization of the Pure Land Way*, pg. 3, *Collected Works of Shinran*)

As a Hongwanji minister, I have read this passage many times. Each time, I read it in both Japanese and English. Without fail, I always realized a deep feeling of appreciation for Amida Buddha's great wisdom and compassion as if I received a tremendous, positive assessment from the Buddha himself. I wish to share this feeling with everyone.

I have been serving as the Wailuku Hongwanji's minister since July 1, 2004. For nearly 20 years, I have encountered many wonderful experiences and learned many great things while serving on the island of Maui. I have been fortunate to participate in many public events as a representative of the Buddhist faith, including several official ceremonies by the County of Maui. The committee usually asks several clergy

members to assist with the ceremonies.

For example, at the opening ceremony of a senior center, clergy from three different faiths were invited to participate: the Hawaiian Kahuna (a Native Hawaiian priest), a Catholic priest, and I from the Buddhist faith were invited to do the blessing, invocation, and benediction. The Hawaiian Kahuna chanted his blessing, the Catholic priest prayed sincerely to his God, and I did the traditional Buddhist sutra chanting. Though each blessing was unique, we all shared our thoughts and honestly expressed our sincere minds of gratitude as we have been guided to by the teachings of our faiths.

I am sincerely honored to assist with offering aspirations or invocations at public events. These great opportunities are made possible by our Hongwanji members who, over 125 years, have built an excellent reputation throughout our Maui community. Even though I feel the pressure of responsibility when representing the Buddhist community at these events, our Hongwanji members' spiritual voices give me incredible energy and courage.

Moreover, these opportunities genuinely speak to the uniqueness of Hawaii. As you know, Hawaii has a distinct multiethnic,

blended culture where people live together in harmony. Living in our state, we sometimes forget that we have these unique opportunities to experience such diverse cultures and faiths. Where else in the world can you receive a Hawaiian, Catholic, and Buddhist blessing for a new facility at the same time?! Our mainland and international visitors learn about our beautiful lifestyle, our unique and valuable cultures, and how we share our daily lives together. Participating in a multi-faith blessing is just one of those multi-cultural opportunities that I am proud to be a part of.

As Buddhists, it is easy to share our faith with many; our doors are always open to all! It is like being in a bathtub. For example, have you ever been in a hot water bathtub (a Japanese *furo*)? When we immerse our entire body in the bathtub, we are surrounded by hot water, which feels so good! Attending temple services is similar to being in a *furo*. At the temple, our minds and bodies are surrounded by the Dharma "waters"; it feels good to be peaceful and serene. This reminds me of when I served at Pearl City Hongwanji. I met an outstanding member who was deaf, but she continued to attend the temple services. She said, "Sensei, even if my ears are

not working, my body, my hair, my nose, my eyes, and my pulse are still receiving the Buddha's great guidance." She was immersed in the Dharma "water," and it made her feel great. That comment touches me, and I sincerely feel *arigatai* and *kansha*, which means to be genuinely grateful.

The late Rev. Yoshiaki Fujitani also mentioned how far the Amida Buddha's reach could be. Referring to the world's largest dormant volcano and highest mountain on Maui he once said, "Rev. Murakami, Ohara Sensei (a former Bishop of the Hawaii Kyodan) once told me that 'when we want to see Haleakala, we see it. However, even if you cannot see Haleakala, Haleakala always sees you, as long as you are on the island of Maui.' Similarly, Amida Buddha is always sending his infinite wisdom and compassion to you, even if you cannot see him." I sincerely agree with this great statement!

We all receive Amida's infinite wisdom and compassion, regardless of the conditions we face. Our Shin Buddhist founder, Shinran Shonin, concluded his preface with the words:

"How joyous I am, Gutoku Shinran, disciple of Shakyamuni! Rare is it to come upon the sacred scriptures from the westward land of India and the commentaries of the mas-



By Rev. Shinkai Murakami

ters of China and Japan, but now I have been able to encounter them. Rare is it to hear them, but already I have been able to hear."

We all are genuinely receiving great opportunities to meet and receive the excellent guidance of the Nembutsu, Namu Amida Butsu.

Living our life by reciting Namu Amida Butsu enables all of us to encounter the profound guidance of the Nembutsu and receive the infinite light and life of Amida Buddha. It is so wonderful to meet with Amida Buddha's Namu Amida Butsu. We are so grateful to share this profound guidance with our children, grandchildren, and wonderful community with a true mind of *kansha*, or gratitude.

Namu Amida Butsu

Have Gratitude Each and Every Day

By Rod MORIYAMA, WAHIAWA HONGWANJI MISSION

As a manager in the prime of my career, I was facilitating a planning session at IBM in Los Angeles when I collapsed. I was rushed to UCLA Medical Center. Following a biopsy, my gastroenterologist came to me with a grim look on his face. My liver was so damaged that he didn't know how to express it. He gave me the feeling that I didn't have much longer to live. I was 35 years old and married, with two young children ages 6 and 4. Would I get to see them grow up?

This was no surprise, but I never thought that it would happen to me. Seven years before, my brother and I went to donate blood during a drive at our workplace. We were both rejected — hepatitis B was found in our blood. We weren't alone. Fifteen percent of the Asian population had it. My mother's side of the family all had it.

At that time, hepatitis B was incurable. Almost everyone who had it in our family died at an early age. My mother died at 57, still in her prime of life in 1980. Her sisters and brother also died early of liver failure or cancer. My brother would later die at age 61.



After my collapse, I was in bed for two months as my wife took care of me. It was a time to reflect and wonder what to do with what time I had left. Miraculously, I survived. I realized then that I had two options: live with disappointment and regret at the pain this disease caused my family — or be grateful that I was still alive.

Living optimistically and in gratitude had been part of my upbringing. This incident gave me a new commitment. Daily appreciation of the moments with my family brought balance to my life and gave me the energy necessary to pursue a successful business career. Acquiring healthy habits made a difference, too: living frugally and healthily, exercising, and consuming no alcohol or fatty foods were essential ingredients.

I am now enjoying my grandchildren. Who would have thought? The preciousness I feel for this life provides a perspective I probably wouldn't have had, if not for the potential of dying early. I am grateful to be alive every day.

Born and raised in Wahiawā, Rod Moriyama worked for IBM on the mainland and abroad before returning to Hawai'i. He is an active member of Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawai'i as a board member, and president of Wahiawā Hongwanji.

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Moving Onward in Spite of COVID-19



BY DR. WARREN TAMAMOTO
PRESIDENT
HONPA HONGWANJI MISSION
OF HAWAII

Aloha kākou! Welcome to the fourth edition of our *Ka Leo Kāhea* (The Calling Voice). I hope that you are doing well physically, mentally, and spiritually in this stressful period of the COVID-19 pandemic. When the COVID-19 vaccines were announced, then delivered, then proven to be very effective at reducing serious illness and death, many thought (myself included) that the pandemic would soon be under control and life could return to normal.

However, it is apparent that while many of us think that we are “done” with the virus, the virus is not “done” with us. Our

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

country is in the middle of another surge and at this writing, three of four counties in Hawaii have HIGH rates of COVID-19 transmission. There are multiple reasons for the current surge. The virus has adapted (mutated, as viruses have done for millions of years). The new variants are highly transmissible and are better at evading our immune response. At the same time, travel restrictions have eased and personal restrictions (mask-wearing for example) are no longer mandated. HHMH HQ is aware of the problem of the changing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, we also believe that temples and individual Sangha members are much better informed about the COVID-19 pandemic than they were a year or two ago. People are able to make up their own minds about the relative risk of temple activities and decide on their level of participation in various temple activities.

To be clear, we strongly recommend that you follow accepted public health guidelines which include full vaccination (basic and boosters) and

wearing of masks, particularly when indoors or in large gatherings (N-95 mask preferred). Staying home when sick, social distancing and hand-washing are also highly recommended. We continue to advise that everyone follow state and county guidelines. As always, we invite your questions or comments via telephone or email.

The 110th Legislative Assembly (Giseikai) was held on February 11-12, 2022 via Zoom. One of the important resolutions that was passed by the Assembly was a Resolution to Establish an Annual Endowment Campaign. I would like to briefly review with you the intent of the resolution and briefly share how it could help Hawaii Kyodan now and in the future.

It may not surprise you that the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii (HHMH or Hawaii Kyodan) statewide organization requires financial support to carry out its programs. The primary sources of income for the HHMH are 1) prorated assessments contributed by each temple (each temple pays a certain amount to HHMH based on its membership) and 2) fund transfers (withdrawals) from investment funds that we

(HHMH) own. The primary investment fund of Hawaii Kyodan is the Capital Fund and every year, a certain amount of money is withdrawn from the Capital Fund to be inserted into the budget. The money withdrawn from the Capital Fund reduces the amount assessed to each temple (therefore it helps every temple).

The Capital Fund was established decades ago from contributions by lay and minister Sangha members like you who wanted to ensure a healthy HHMH. Periodically we have organized fund drives to increase the Capital Fund. The Capital Fund has slowly grown over the years (even as we withdraw a small percentage from the account yearly), due to periodic contributions, good management and careful planning. However, it does not cover all of our expenses.

The intent of the resolution is to empower Headquarters and the HHMH Board of Directors to develop and coordinate such a program in conjunction with one of the Standing Committees of Hawaii Kyodan. Fortunately, Irene Nakamoto has agreed to co-chair this fledgling committee. She has recruited a voluntary focus group that is meet-

ing regularly to outline key elements of this program and we hope to share their work with the Hawaii Kyodan Board of Directors at a future meeting.

My hope is that the money raised by this campaign will be used to start programs and objectives that can help us in the immediate future as well as many years from now. For example, improving electronic communications statewide so that temples can participate in Zoom meetings and conferences remotely. Temple members should have access to Buddhist education seminars, workshops and conferences of interest anywhere in the world. Also, we need to share more of our Buddhist perspectives and teachings with the general public—a very important source of new members. Bishop Matsumoto and I strongly support this resolution and will do our best to support the committee as they move forward.

Thank you again to our statewide Sangha for all that you do to support your temples and share your Buddhist values with your family, friends and community.

Mahalo and Namō Amida Butsu.

Forward Thinking at West Kauai Hongwanji Mission

Coffee House, Property Donation Offer Financial Sustainability

BY REV. TOMO HOJO
RESIDENT MINISTER AND
ALTON MIYAMOTO, WEST KAUAI
HONGWANJI MISSION

Recently, three westside temples on Kauai (Waimea, Hanapepe and Koloa Hongwanji) decided to consolidate and incorporate, and chose the name West Kauai Hongwanji Mission. The former Koloa Hongwanji Mission that had been vacant for almost 20 years was converted into a coffee house called Dark Horse Coffee Kauai, under a lease with the new tenants.

“The Koloa Mission, which was founded in 1910, social hall built in 1938 (now a coffee shop), and temple (which burned down in 1994), would be more beneficial as an income producing property for WKHM,” said Alton Miyamoto, spokesperson for the West Kauai Hongwanji temples. “In considering the lease, it was important to us that the lessee utilizes the property in a manner appropriate to our values and supports the general community in its endeavors, just as Koloa Hongwanji and its members did. In other words, top market lease

dollars was *not* the most important thing.”

Miyamoto added, “Also, the lease includes space at the entrance of the social hall for WKHM to install a storyboard for Koloa Hongwanji’s history and impact on the Koloa community. We have installed a storyboard sign as well as a statue of St. Shinran. We hope that when visitors from all over the world visit the coffee shop, they will understand that after 112 years, Koloa Hongwanji and its members are still a part of, and contributing to, the Koloa community.”

Rev. Tomo Hojo, resident minister of the West Kauai Hongwanji Mission stated, “There were a lot of discussions before we decided to lease the Koloa Hongwanji property. A West Kauai Hongwanji Mission board member and I visited members house to house and listened to their opinions before the temple board proceeded with this lease. Now, this project provides financial support for sharing Dharma to our Sangha and Kauai community.”

He added. “We are going to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the West Kauai Hongwanji Mission on Nov.

13, 2022. We express our deep appreciation to former resident ministers, members, and community who were dedicated to our temples and left us wonderful teachings of Nembutsu. We promise them that we will keep sharing the teachings in the future.”

Hironaka Property Donation to WKHM

A related event further helped the WKHM. Shinji and Sumako Hironaka were dedicated members of Hanapepe Hongwanji (now West Kauai Hongwanji Mission). Much of their life was centered around the temple. After Shinji passed away, Sumako continued going to temple, cleaning, bringing flowers, and helping with fundraisers. She held a close relationship with the ministers’ families and often visited the late Reverend Yoshiko Shimabukuro.

Sumako was born in Oshimagun, Japan on May 11, 1925, and was a dedicated homemaker. She passed away on December 25, 2020. Sumako bequeathed her residence to the West Kauai Hongwanji Mission. WKHM believes that the unexpected donation should be used in a way that would leave a permanent reminder of the Hironaka family’s dedication to the Dharma for future generations. This



(Above) The former Koloa Hongwanji Mission social hall now houses the Dark Horse coffee shop. (Below) Rev. Tomo Hojo presides over a ceremony at the site of the new coffee shop. The West Kauai Hongwanji Mission is now located in the original Hanapepe Temple building.

could be temple improvements, scholarships, and support to our ministers. WKHM decided that, rather than upgrade and rent the property, it was best to sell it since the market was good.

The Hironakas’ generosity has given WKHM the

opportunity to make a positive impact on our temple, the Hawaii Kyodan, and the local community. We have yet to decide what project(s) we will proceed with to honor the Hironaka family, but we are truly grateful for their years of support and generosity.

HQ Bookstore Offers Two New Books

HHMH Bookstore introduces two books which were published in 2021.

Be The Refuge: Raising the Voices of Asian American Buddhists by Chenxing Han and *Shinran and Pure Land*

Buddhism by Rev. Jerome Ducor.

Be The Refuge: Raising the Voices of Asian American Buddhists, published by North Atlantic Books, is priced at \$15.

Chenxing Han, a Bay Area-based writer, holds a bachelor’s degree from Stanford University and a master’s degree in Buddhist studies from the Graduate Theological Union. After studying chaplaincy at the Institute of Buddhist Studies in Berkeley, California, she worked in spiritual care at a nearby community hospital in

Oakland.

She was a guest lecturer for the 22nd Annual Bloom-Futaba Memorial Lecture, which was held on Oct. 16, 2021, at Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin and online. “In this impressive debut, Buddhist chaplain Han offers an illuminating analysis of the intersection of race and privilege within American Buddhist com-

munities.” *Publishers Weekly Shinran and Pure Land Buddhism* is published by the Jodo Shinshu International Office and is priced at \$20.

Rev. Jerome Ducor is curator emeritus of the Asia Department of the Musee d’ethnographie de Geneve, Switzerland and

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Archives Give Us Insight into Ourselves

By DAVID ATCHESON, CHAIR, ARCHIVES COMMITTEE, HONPA HONGWANJI MISSION OF HAWAII

Do you see anything contradictory in maintaining an archives for a Buddhist organization? Archives may seem a way to hold onto the past, while Buddhism is in part about change and letting go. I have pondered this apparent contradiction.

Prior to the COVID-induced shutdowns, I had the opportunity to poke my nose into nearly every shelf and box at Honpa Hongwanji's Honolulu headquarters that contained archives-related material. I needed to know what, at least in general terms, we had. A rough inventory of archival materials was the product of that investigation, a document that has already served numerous times as a finding aid.

Delving into the archives -- often pausing to study especially interesting photos, booklets, and other documents -- served another function as well. It helped me appreciate why archiving is anything but contradictory to Buddhism and Jodo Shinshu.

In Buddhism we seek to know the true nature of ourselves. We deepen our appreciation that our selves are not permanent, isolated units but instead inextricably linked to and interdependent with other beings -- and that we are defined in part by the historical, cultural, and environmental contexts in which we exist.

That is why the archives are so important: they give us insight into ourselves. All around us are ripples that emanate from past events, including acts of courage and sacrifice, ambitious building projects, organizing and advocacy, key decisions and

commitments, and, yes, acts of treachery rooted in the three poisons, too. The archives give us a window onto those precipitating events and thus help us to better understand the ripples around us.

Gratitude is a pillar of Jodo Shinshu and is reflected in familiar phrases and activities such as *okagesamade*, Bon dance, *itadakimasu*, and of course Namu Amida Butsu. Many recitations in our tradition reinforce the centrality of gratitude, including "Our Pledge," written by the current Gomonshu. As translated in the Hawaii version, "Our Pledge" concludes, "Realizing that I live because of others, I will strive to live life to the fullest with an attitude of gratitude. Just like the Buddha, who promises to embrace us all." In addition to recitations, some Buddhists may practice gratitude meditation.

In a sense, archiving is a kind of gratitude meditation. It may sometimes seem tedious, and our pressing schedules may lead us to put it off. But when we understand archiving as practicing gratitude for those who have come before and a way to share living history with others, we can find the will to keep going. I know I find inspiration from the commitment of past and current committee members, including Ruth Tokumi, Aiko Oda, Rev. Joshin Kamuro, and Bishop Eric Matsumoto.

Archiving also provides the occasional excitement of an especially good find, akin to finding treasure. Here is a small sampling of the diverse treasures we have found in the HQ archives:

- A 1906 photo of Bishop Imamura at Aiea Hongwanji
- A 1930 YMBA Conference Book
- Ruth Tabrah corre-



An archives display case at Makawao Hongwanji Mission (Courtesy of Rev. Kerry Kiyohara), and a 1953 Young Buddhist Association (YBA) convention poster are some of the treasures that have been archived.

spondence

- A rare 1932 *Hawaiian Buddhist Annual*, co-edited by Bishop Imamura

- Legislative Assembly photos going back to 1908

- Photos of Ernest and Dorothy Hunt

- HHMH founding

documents

- Dharma talks on audio cassettes, including by Taitetsu Unno in the mid-1970s

Digitizing is an important goal for the archives, both for preservation and for accessibility. We are archiving to share -- with researchers, with members, and with future generations. Two-dimensional items may be scanned, and some AV materials may be converted to digital formats. Prioritization is a key consideration due to the volume of material.

One recent project on which Hawaii Betsuin and the Archives Committee collaborated was digitization of the *Hongwanji Newsletter (Goji)* archive, which goes back to 1948. Thanks to a referral from Guy Hironaka, we connected with AMI Systems in Honolulu to have the newsletters scanned professionally (many old, bound volumes required special care). The result was a collection of text-searchable PDF files that provide for a kind of time travel

back into HQ and Betsuin history. Uploaded as a collection to the "cloud," they provide for searches of specific text across the entire collection, a true boon for research. The current collection is in a temporary, access-limited location. If you would like a demo or have questions, please contact archives-chair@honpahi.org.

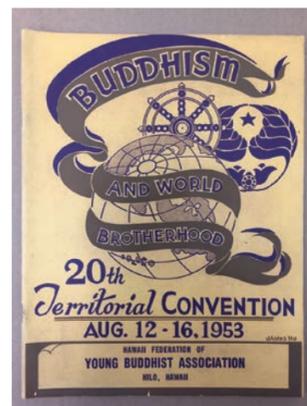
A few members and volunteers on the Archives Committee are working on a basic guide for temples on archiving. Until then, let me balance the philosophical opening of this article with a short list of practical tips on archiving:

- Acid-free archival boxes, folders, and plastic sleeves are available. So are special gloves for handling photos and other items.

- Freezing materials is one way to deal with silverfish and other pests. A special process that includes airtight bags and towels during thawing are necessary (ask us for details).

- Unrolling rolled up panoramic photos is a specialized process; seek professional assistance or a workshop.

- If you are overwhelmed, start small. Pick one box or sub-collection (like your newsletter archive). Consider both



urgency (deterioration) and what is likely to generate enthusiasm.

The Archives Committee is a lightly budgeted, all-volunteer effort and our available space is currently very limited. But we are here to share suggestions, referrals, and have sometimes provided boxes and folders, workshops, and even fundraising guidance. You may reach us at archives-chair@honpahi.org.

Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii and its temples are truly treasures in Hawaii and its many communities. The practice of archiving can grow awareness now and in the future of Hongwanji in Hawaii, deepen our gratitude and appreciation for those who have gone before, and help us to better know ourselves. Happy journeys of discovery!

Ryukoku University - Buddhist Study Center Ministers Spring Seminar Held

By PROFESSOR REV. KENSUKE OKAMOTO

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, FACULTY OF POLICY SCIENCE, RYUKOKU UNIVERSITY

Ryukoku University is a Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-affiliated University with three campuses: the Fukakusa, Omiya and Seta campuses.

According to its Mission Statement: "With its roots dating from 1639, Ryukoku University is one of the oldest Universities in Japan. Founded on the principles of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism, the University today has nine faculties ranging from the humanities to the natural sciences. Boasting a student population of approximately 20,000 spread over three unique, attractive, and accessible campuses in the ancient capital of Kyoto and neighboring Shiga, the university continues to preserve the past while at the same time press the boundaries of knowledge into the future."

At least twice a year, the ministers of Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii gather, fulfilling one of the functions and roles of the Buddhist Study Center (BSC)



One of the three Ryukoku University Campuses, Seta Campus in Shiga, Japan.

as a resource and training center at the facility in Honolulu.

The Ministers' Continuing Education Seminar is held in November and the Ministers' Spring Seminar is held in March. The Spring Seminar is a joint collaborative effort by the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii's BSC and Ryukoku University.

Each year, Ryukoku University designates a lecturer from the Department of Buddhist Studies or the Department of Shin Buddhism to present a lecture to our Hawaii Kyodan ministers for their continued learning and growth and to better share Buddhist teachings, including Jodo

Shinshu. This year, we were honored to have Professor Rev. Kensuke Okamoto present five lectures virtually on Zoom.

The 2022 Annual Ryukoku-BSC Spring Seminar, titled "Buddhist Tales in Non-Mahāyānic Buddhist Literatures," introduced stories about the Buddha contained in non-Mahāyānic Buddhist scriptures.

Five lectures primarily dealt with two stories: the story of Buddha's final nirvana (parinirvāṇa), which was covered in the first three lectures, and the story about a demon's defeat by the Buddha, covered in lectures four and five. Each story describes one of the four

major events in the life of the Buddha, referred to in Japanese as *shidaiji* 四大事. Each story contains many of the Buddha's teachings.

The first three lectures primarily focused on the Theravādin Pāli Nirvana Sutra (Mahāparinibbāna-suttanta; below, MPS) to introduce the teachings that the Buddha left behind before his final nirvana.

Lecture one discussed the Buddha's assertion that he had conveyed all of his teachings without concealing anything. For example, to his disciple Ānanda, he said, "What, then, Ānanda? Does the Order expect that of me? I have preached the truth without making any distinction between exoteric and esoteric doctrine; for in respect of the truths, Ānanda, the Tathāgata has no such thing as the closed fist of a teacher, who keeps some things back." Also, the lecture covered in detail the Buddha's famous words exhorting practitioners to rely on oneself, using the Dharma as a lamp.

The second lecture discussed how the Buddha taught his disciples that, after his own death, "the Dharma (teachings) and the vinaya are the teacher," and

the method he taught his disciples and followers for predicting their own posthumous destinations (a teaching known as the *dharmā-ādāsa*, or "mirror of truth").

Using MPS and other Buddhist scriptures, the third lecture examined how Buddhists overcame the absence of the Buddha.

Many teachings in MPS were meant to enable disciples to continue their practice after his death. These stories also taught Buddhists how to face his absence, which must have been a problem for Buddhists long before his final nirvana: As the number of Buddhists increased, the opportunities to see the Buddha in person would have proportionally decreased.

Long before the Buddha's death, Buddhism had become so powerful that the kings of Magadha and Kosala, as well as other influential figures, provided support to the religion. There must have been a considerable number of Buddhists at that point. Therefore, many Buddhists must have never met the Buddha. As if to prove this,

SEE PAGE 5

110th Legislative Assembly (Giseikai) Held Online

By **DR. WARREN TAMAMOTO**
PRESIDENT, HONPA HONGWANJI
MISSION OF HAWAII

The 110th Legislative Assembly (*Giseikai*) of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii (HHMH) was held on Feb. 11-12, 2022, virtually via Zoom.

All programs were conducted online. These included the opening service “a memorial service in honor of those individuals who, in 2021, received a posthumous title (an *ingo*, which expresses our organization’s deepest appreciation of the exemplary contributions and dedication of its recipients). *Ingo* are bestowed upon past ministers and members of HHMH. There was also a plenary session, presentations, installation of officers, directors, advisors, sanmu, and kanji ministers, and special recognition of the retirement of Rev. Kevin Kuniyuki and Rev. Toyokazu Hagio.

Delegates from the Hongwanji temples throughout Hawaii discussed and passed the following resolutions:

1. 2022 HHMH Budget
2. HHMH Bylaws Amendment Relating to Article VII: Board of Directors
3. Consolidation of Papaalooa Hongwanji and Honohina Hongwanji
4. Establish a Honpa Hongwanji Statewide Newsletter
5. Establish a Honpa Hongwanji Statewide Online Calendar
6. Establish an Annual Endowment Campaign
7. Provide a Permanent Annual Subsidy to Pacific Buddhist Academy
8. Provide Capital Funds for Hilo Hongwanji Preschool New Preschool Construction
9. Condolence and Appreciation: Rev. Yoshiko Shimabukuro, Rev. Yoshikazu Saito, Rev. Yoshiaki Fujitani, Yoshio Kijima, Kiyoko Imada, Earl Iwao



Bishop Eric Matsumoto (right) performed the Installation Ceremony for 2022 officers at Hawaii Betsuin Main Temple. Dr. Tamamoto represented all of the officers and others attended virtually.

Mukai, and Stanley Yoshio Oishi.

There were several interesting and informative presentations shared with Legislative Assembly attendees.

Joshua Hernandez-Morse, Head of School for the Pacific Buddhist Academy, and Ivan Nakano of Hilo Hongwanji presented updates on the Pacific Buddhist Academy and the soon-to-be built new Hilo Hongwanji Preschool. Both

institutions provide a curriculum based on Buddhist values with the goal of developing young adults who live and share these values with their communities.

Other presentations: Doris Oshiro shared information about the Planned Giving Program at Jikoen called the “Legacy of Gratitude Fund”; Rev. Toshiyuki Umitani updated plans for the upcoming 850th/800th Commemoration in 2023 and 2024; and Rev. Kiyonobu

Kuwahara informed everyone of the work being done at the Jodo Shinshu International Office (JSIO) in San Francisco, California.

Cindy Alm and Stacy Bradshaw shared the changes that helped some temples respond to the financial crisis brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, and there was a virtual presentation by the youth of the Hawaii Federation of Jr. YBA.

Legislative Assembly attendees were asked to respond to two polls designed to assess interest in future events: a possible Joint Conference in 2024 or 2025 (similar to the Joint Conference held in 2018) and the State Lay Convention scheduled for Oahu in September 2022.

Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii expresses our deepest gratitude to all those who attended and supported the second virtual Legislative Assembly. Our next *Giseikai* will be Feb. 10-11, 2023.

Rural Temple Expands Connections to Community

By **MASAKO SAKATA**
NĀ'ĀLEHU HONGWANJI MISSION

“Change” was the topic of Reverend Satoshi Tomioka’s sermon given virtually from Puna Hongwanji on Sunday, January 30, 2022. There is no topic more fitting than change at this time in history, when COVID has impacted everyone’s lives. Everything came to a standstill—even temple activities abruptly came to a halt. The doors closed and we waited for guidelines and policies to be established for everyone’s safety and well-being.

Nā’ālehu Hongwanji Mission was no exception. Our tiny rural temple with a membership of less than two dozen had to follow suit, hunkering down like the rest. We ordinarily gathered for religious services once a month but with the advent of COVID, we were left with no in-person services at all. Luckily, for those who were equipped, religious services could be accessed online. Instead of just the once-monthly services, members discovered that they could participate virtually in a wide variety of temple activities, including weekly services that Reverend Tomioka skillfully prepared and delivered, Ring Your Bell for Peace Day, Mō’ili’ili Hongwanji’s Bon Festival, Hawai’i District Ministers Association Buddhist Education Seminars, and Buddhist Study Center’s Summer Dharmathon, among other opportunities.

Members have also been able to find different ways to stay connected. One member prepares weekly soups for the kūpuna Hongwanji members. Others share fruits and vegetables from their gardens or deliver home-cooked or baked goodies. Still others make regular phone calls or send emails to check on fellow Sangha members. These interactions continue to deepen our relationships and strengthen our practice of Buddhist ideals. Similarly, we have been able to estab-



Hawaii Food Basket’s community food distribution in the Nā’ālehu Hongwanji parking lot. Many people helped out at the community distributions, including Food Basket personnel and local units of the Hawaii National Guard. The local guards directed the cars and loaded the food. The mood was welcoming and warm.

lish new relationships with other community organizations and initiate additional ways of serving the people of Ka’ū. The COVID situation has compelled Nā’ālehu Hongwanji to redirect its focus to serving the greater community. During the past two years, the Food Basket has distributed an abundance of food using our Hongwanji parking lot and kitchen. The Internet Hub, in sponsorship with Vibrant Hawai’i, uses the temple facilities to offer free Internet service to the community and free meals for the hungry, averaging about ninety meals per day, three days a week. A local community service group called ‘O Ka’ū Kākou has joined forces with the Internet Hub to provide fresh produce, which they grow on private farmlands and in the backyard of the Hongwanji. The temple has also served as a COVID vaccination site, the venue for a virtual hula show, and a once-weekly charter school classroom. It generates a feeling of unity to be able to work closely with others to support the community.

We are “a link in Amida Buddha’s Golden Chain of Love that stretches around the world.” Nā’ālehu Hongwanji is grateful for these opportunities to put the Dharma to practice. Namo Amida Butsu.

Donations to the Buddhist Study Center

Mahalo for your donations to the Buddhist Study Center (BSC). BSC strives to bring Buddhist Education to all seekers. The Minister’s Spring Seminar (see page 4) was a recent BSC program. You can view the BCS’s 50th Anniversary Service and a slide show of nostalgic photos on the BSC YouTube Channel. Search “BSC Hawaii YouTube” or click on this link: youtu.be/Wmnl_eAN_GM

We gratefully welcome memorial donations and donations in all forms. We are now on Paypal! There is a link on our website. Please make all checks payable to the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii. Thank you for your continued support of the Buddhist Study Center and all of its programs.

Buddhist Study Center

- Terry Jean Arakaki, Honolulu
- Dorothy Bloom, Kailua
- Stephen Chinen, Mililani
- Hide, Honolulu
- Mildred Igawa, Rancho Santa Margarita, CA
- Roy Higa, May Imamura-Uruu, Aiea
- Patrick Jichaku, Haleiwa
- Jennifer Kane, Kailua
- Hugh Kawabata, Joanne Kealoha, Honolulu
- Rev. Kerry Kiyohara, Makawao
- Yukie Kohama, Kahului
- Nora Koyanagi, Holualoa

- Allen Kusano, Keith Masuda, Minneapolis, MN
- Marcia Mau, Vienna, VA
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- Rodney Moriyama, Honolulu
- Karen Murakami, Honolulu
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Metta

- Mike Clancy, Toronto, Canada
- Gail Dochin, Kamuela
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- June Matsumoto, Honolulu
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- Etsuko Osaki, Portland, OR
- Masako Sakata, Naalehu
- Francis Uyeno, Waipahu
- Dickson Yagi, Claremont, CA
- Dennis Yamashita, Seattle, WA

In Memory of Eleanor I. Sakamoto

- Edric T. Sakamoto, Honolulu
- In Memory of Yoshio Kohama**
- Yukie Kohama, Kahului
- In Memory of Barry Brennan**
- Barbara Brennan, Honolulu
- On Behalf of Janet Tatsuta-Byrnes**
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- In Memory of Melvin M. Murakami**
- Jean Sato, Honolulu
- In Memory of Judy Shoda**
- Lea Uehara, Waipahu

Ryukoku

Continued from Page 4

there are a number of stories in Buddhist scriptures about coping with his absence. The third lecture dealt with the story of a monk named Piṅgiya who appeared in the Sutta-nipāta, as well as the story of the Buddha’s descent from heaven. It introduced Buddhists’ practices for coping with the absence of the Buddha.

The fourth and fifth lectures discussed demons appearing in non-Mahāyana Buddhist literature, focusing on the demon defeated at the time of the Buddha’s enlightenment. Many Buddhist scriptures describe such events, but these two lectures used Theravādin Buddhist scriptures.

The fourth lecture discussed the various types of

demons in Buddhist scriptures. Of them, we limited ourselves to ones with human nature or personhood, and focused on concrete scriptural descriptions of the one defeated by the Buddha.

The fifth lecture introduced depictions of that demon’s daughters, which appear in the aforementioned scene of the demon’s defeat. The lecture concluded by turning to the actual words of the demon, which normally do not receive much attention. A closer look at the demon’s statements reveals that they were in line with secular values — the common ideas of the people at the time — that we are also familiar with today. It seems that the compilers of the Buddhist scriptures saw such ideas as things that take away freedom and ensnare us. They saw them as “demons.”

Home Altar Kit

A new item from the HHMH Bookstore, the DIY (Do It Yourself) home altar, is now available for sale for \$12 from the HHMH Bookstore.

It is fun and easy to assemble. As you put on stickers and make your own personal Obutsudan, you will learn about Amida Buddha and his Pure Land. English instruction is included. It’s the perfect gift for preschool and Dharma School students, and of course, for adults.

The Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii Bookstore, 1727 Pali Highway, Honolulu, HI, 96813, offers books on Buddhism, Onenju, incense, gifts, and



much more. For more information, call (808) 522-9202 or email hqbooks@honpahi.org.



“Green Dreams” for Earth-Touching Sanghas

By **STEVE LOHSE**

CHAIR, GREEN HONGWANJI COMMITTEE
HONPA HONGWANJI MISSION OF HAWAII

EDITOR'S NOTE: Welcome to Green Dreams. This column will be a regular feature in Ka Leo Kāhea. The Green Hongwanji Committee (GHC) of the HHMH is a new entity that will provide content for this column. Based on the principles of EcoSangha, which was founded by Reverend Don Castro of Seattle Betsuin and reminds us to be mindful of our environmental impact as Buddhists.

Going to the Dharma for guidance, we learn that interdependence and impermanence characterize all of our relationships. Like the laws of thermodynamics, there are no known exceptions. However, too

often, we behave as though our relationships with ourselves, with each other, and with our planet are exempt from the universal principles of interdependence and impermanence.

Experiencing that this behavior isn't working so well we ask, on behalf of all beings, how can we translate our Dharma guidance into more effective organization and meaningful environmental action?

As a start, in Resolution 2016-03, the Hawaii State Lay Association approved “a program, the Green Hongwanji Initiative, to educate, set goals and develop an action plan to help temples and members live in ecological harmony within our communities, state and planet. This program would be led by a Kyodan committee charged with initial implementation by the 2016 Legislative Assembly.”

The Kyodan's Green



The Buddha in this statue is shown in the earth-touching gesture. This position symbolizes the moment when Buddha attained enlightenment under the Bodhi tree. By touching the earth he was calling the earth goddess to bear witness to the event.

Hongwanji Committee (GHC) currently includes the following members: Steve Lohse, Chair (Honolulu District), Ken Okimoto (Hawaii District), Dexter Mar (Honolulu District), Dave Atcheson (Honolulu District), and Van Velasco

(Pacific Buddhist Academy).

Our first task is to gather a GHC that truly represents a statewide Initiative. We're currently seeking recommendations for GHC members from all five District Councils, encouraging District Social/Green Concerns Committees, and establishing GHC/District/Temple connections necessary for effective statewide Green Hongwanji actions.

In the matter of Green Hongwanji connections, think of a singing bowl. A bowl with cracks or gaps merely goes *thunk* when tapped, while a whole bowl resonates with inspiration. We want a representative Green Hongwanji that resonates like a whole bowl when we tap it!

As a statewide GHC takes shape, our second task is to set goals and plan for Hongwanji Hawaii action that is appropriate and coordinated among our temple,

district, and state levels. We are blessed with a wealth of resources to draw on, including a growing body of environmental science, an ocean of experience within our Sanghas (calling all Dharma gardeners!), excellent community partners, an EcoSangha movement engaged with the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA), Kyoto leadership that embraces the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and of course, the Dharma for guidance.

Celebrating our interdependence with all life, mindful that our behaviors today impact all future generations, and inspired by the “Green Dreams” of engaged Buddhism, together we can create Earth-touching Sanghas statewide in Hawaii.

All comments and concerns are welcome. Contact Steve Lohse, green.committee@honpahi.org.

Jr. YBA

Continued from Page 1

number of meetings.

“Perhaps it was the use of seeing the federation officers ‘in action’ or not having a ZOOM screen to hide behind, that a majority of our delegates were very vocal in the meetings that were held,” said Manami Alspach, 2021-2022 Federation President.

Juniors had a productive time, filled with open-minded discussion regarding resolutions, such as *Inclusive Membership* and *Recognition and Awareness for Gender Neutrality*, to creating a

new HFJYBA motto, “Entrust. Learn. Give Back” (reflecting the three treasures). A non-profit organization was also voted on for the upcoming Hawaii Buddhist Youth (HBY) Month fundraiser and activity which is annually held in October.

Proceeds will be donated to World Central Kitchen, a charitable organization devoted to providing meals in response to humanitarian and climate crises occurring internationally.

There were a total of 57 attendees, including six guests, 19 advisors, and 32 juniors. We would like to thank those who made this

convention possible, especially the Hilo Betsuin Senior YBA for preparing delicious meals and Michelle Ojiri, United of Hawaii Advisor, for being the lead advisor in organizing this convention.

The 65th Jr. YBA State Convention has signaled an exciting return of in-person events for the Jr. YBA. As juniors begin to return to their temples to help with bon dance, organize community service projects, and continue to perpetuate our dharma teachings through everyday life, we greatly appreciate the continuous support of the HHMH Sangha.

BWA

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Center on Maui. She shared stories of the many ways the center works to preserve the important legacy of the Nisei veterans and spoke of the various activities they sponsor as ways to connect with the community.

Sunday's keynote speaker was Janet Umezu, a Secretary General of the Buddhist Churches of America's Federation of Buddhist Women's Associations. She addressed us via Zoom on the topic, “Diversity and Acceptance.” In her very moving talk, she stressed the importance of

our temples and our members being accepting of LGBTQ+ members and their families. She emphasized listening without judgement, providing a safe and welcoming space, and being inclusive. Given the current social climate in our country, this was a very important and timely message that brought many of us to tears.

Following Mrs. Umezu's talk was a panel on Diversity and Acceptance, moderated by Sylvia Niezman. Panel members were George Borg, Rev. Yuika Hasebe, Brian Hashiro, Lois Toyama, and Janet Umezu. The Hawaii BWA now accepts male members, so the discus-

sion focused on racial and gender diversity as well as ways to grow our organization and welcome newcomers to our temples.

The workshops covered a variety of topics: women's fashions, social media, women in Buddhism, and ended with a fun fitness activity.

The business meeting, conducted by State BWA President Linda Nagai, included a presentation by Kintetsu on arrangements for the May 2023 Joint Celebration and World Buddhist Women's Convention in Kyoto, Japan and post-convention tours.

See your temple BWA president for more information.

Infant Rite

Continued from Page 1

given to me as a gift from the Buddha. I learned that the origin of life dates back to the ancient sea, and that amniotic fluid has the same concentration of salt as the ocean that nurtures life.

When our founder, Shinran Shōnin, explained Amida Buddha's virtue, he often used the metaphor of the ocean. He said that the boundless, all-inclusiveness of the Buddha's virtue is likened to the ocean. He also said in *Shōshinge*, “When ignorant and wise, even grave offenders and slanderers of the dharma, all alike turn about and enter shinjin, they are like waters that, on entering the ocean, become one in taste with it.” *According to*

these words of Shinran Shōnin, we, who entrust ourselves to Amida Buddha, will be born into the Pure Land, and will be changed into virtue and enlightenment through the power of Amida Buddha's Vow.

The vast ocean of Amida Buddha's Pure Land accepts all of us. Everybody is included. The ocean does not reject any kind of river. It accepts all rivers including muddy water, too. And all rivers, on entering the ocean, become completely one with its salty taste. Just as the various rivers enter the ocean and immediately become seawater, so do various lives return to the Pure Land and immediately attain enlightenment. The vast ocean of Amida Buddha's Pure Land is where our lives shall reach.

Through the Infant Initiatory Rites service, I understood how precious my life is. I realized our lives are guided to be born and attain enlightenment in the vast ocean of Amida Buddha's Pure Land. The birth of the Buddha's child is the Buddha's gift to the family. Henceforth, endeavor to receive the Jōdo Shinshū teachings. Create a family submerged in the living nembutsu by which your precious children will truly grow and be happy. Through the life embraced by Amida Buddha, we are able to walk the path of the nembutsu in joy and gratitude. *Namo Amida Butsu*, Amida's calling voice—*Ka Leo Kāhea*—resonates throughout the world to encourage us to entrust ourselves to the power of Amida Buddha's Vow.

HHMH Statement on Gun Violence

By **BISHOP ERIC MATSUMOTO**, HONPA HONGWANJI MISSION OF HAWAII AND **REV. BLAYNE HIGA**, CHAIR COMMITTEE OF SOCIAL CONCERNS

We mourn the innocent lives lost in yet another mass shooting in our country. Our hearts go out to the families and communities that have been torn apart by these senseless acts of violence. Gun violence is an uncontrolled plague on our society and the cause of so much suffering. The recent shocking events in Texas, New York, and California remind us how much damage can be caused when these weapons are so easily obtained by those who would use them to harm others.

Gun violence is an unresolved public health crisis in our country. The proliferation of guns on our streets and our culture of violence needs to be addressed. We can and must do better to make our homes and public spaces including schools, churches, and stores where large numbers of people regularly gather safer.

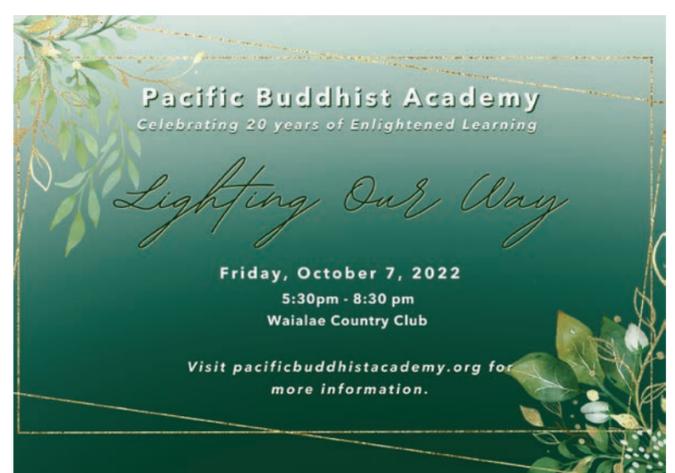
We call upon our national leaders to have an honest and respectful debate on reasonable policies to curb gun violence. We need to enact sensible regulations to save lives and make our communities safer. Such measures include a ban on assault weapons, universal background checks on all gun purchases, removing loopholes that allow gun sellers and buyers to bypass checks, prohibiting high-capacity magazines, preventing gun trafficking, and improving access to quality mental health care.

In addition to immediately pursuing sensible gun regulations as a key element of addressing gun violence in this country, we also need to cultivate the conditions for transforming anger and hatred which are the cause of these violent acts including the usage of the language of violence. Changing our hearts and minds is essential to transforming our society.

The Buddha taught how conflict can be resolved through wisdom and compassion. Let us be guided by this teaching to mend our brokenness and heal our wounds on the journey to mutual peace, harmony, and respect for all. May the light of all-inclusive wisdom and all-embracing compassion guide all our thoughts, words, and actions.

A statement on gun violence issued in 2018 and reissued in 2019 is available at <http://honpahi.link/gv2018>.

Enjoy reading this issue of
**Ka Leo Kāhea? Please support our
quarterly publication with a donation.
You may mail a check to HHMH.**



July Bon Dance Celebrations at Hilo, Moiliili, and Puna



"Everyone enjoyed the night, even with some off and on rain," said Robin Sato of Puna Hongwanji. "That didn't chase people away after missing Bon Dance for two years." These photos from Hilo Betsuin, Puna Hongwanji, and Moiliili Hongwanji show how "connecting with others" is a great part of Bon Dance. These celebrations create "a diversity of people in attendance and a great partnership with other community organizations," said Joanne Kealoha of Moiliili. Photos are (clockwise from right) Hilo, Moiliili, Moiliili, and Puna. (Courtesy of Rimban Kazunori Takahashi (Hilo), Kat Wade (Moiliili), and Robin Sato (Puna))

The Rest of the Story

By **MITSUO YAMAMOTO**
BUDDHIST CHURCH OF FLORIN

EDITOR'S NOTE: The article "The Gift of Faith" appeared in the first issue of Ka Leo Kāhea. In it, Rev. Kerry Kiyohara praised Mr. Yamamoto for a gift to Makawao Hongwanji Mission of a myogo (an object of reverence that spells out "Namo Amida Butsu" in Chinese kanji) that he created. We received this letter in response.

Dear Rev. Kerry Kiyohara,
I just read your article, "The Gift of Faith" in the *Ka Leo Kāhea* publication. The accolade you have given me was too heavy to bear. I would like to tell you the whole story, and all of the people who should receive credit along with me, as I only did the finishing part.

In the spring of 2002 I received a phone call from a member of our Buddhist church, Mrs. Toyo Tsukamoto, asking me if I would stop by and meet a friend of hers. I asked, "Who is this person?" and was told it was Rev. Arthur Takemoto. I had heard of him but never had the pleasure to meet him, so I went to her home and was really surprised and impressed with his down-to-earth demeanor. I didn't have to be on my best behavior. I really treasured that visit because he gave me another way to please people.

In the meantime, he asked if I could make him an *omyogo*, since his was 40-plus years old and it was getting tattered. He explained when he got home he would send me a sample of what his *omyogo* looked like. I told him I will try, but don't know how the outcome will be.

A week or so later, he sent me a sample scripture written by Shinran Shonin. As I was contemplating how to do this he sent me a second one a few days later, explaining that this one was



Mr. Mitsuo Yamamoto crafted a six-character Name ("rokuji myogo") that was delivered to Makawao Hongwanji Mission. (Courtesy of Rev. Kerry Kiyohara)

written by his wife at a *shuji* [calligraphy] class. I was really impressed by the handwriting. Besides, it seemed easier for me, and it would mean more to him because it was his wife's handwriting. After I made the first one I sent it to him for approval, and luckily it was approved. To make a long story short, you know the rest of the story.

After approval, I asked if I could duplicate this and make it for other people. The answer was yes, only if it is to be used properly and not for decoration, as it is a sacred symbol. Since then I have made a few for people I thought would use it properly. Like when our Buddhist Church of Florin had our 100th Year Celebration in 2019, I made it for all the dignitaries who were kind enough to attend and help us celebrate.

I wanted you to know this because I am nearing 96. I didn't want to take all of the credit, along with my secrets and regrets, to the grave. I want to share and give credit to all people who deserve it. As I said before, I only did the easiest part, cutting it out. If it wasn't for Mrs. Toyo Tsukamoto and Rev. Takemoto and his wife, you would not have the *omyogo* today.

In gassho

certification from the Pure Land Buddhist School. Through his publications, he strives to present the impact of Buddhism in Asia and its recent extension in the west.

Both books are now available at HHMH Bookstore. If you are interested in purchasing the books, please email hqbooks@honpahi.org or call (808) 522-9202.

Bishop

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understanding develops, leading to an aspiration that one should somehow contribute towards peace and harmony. Through the gentle, humble, and sincere life of Nembutsu, we can "see" the workings of Amida Buddha's Lights of Purity, Joy, and Wisdom.

Thanks to the working of Other-Power, we find respite in a new awareness. We come to know our blind passions for what they are and see that we should not live blinded by them. We live in a new awareness of the illuminating, caring, nurturing presence of Amida Buddha. Our respectful, warm, and harmonious relationships and interactions with people are crucial in sharing Jodo Shinshu with others. We must become more of that Sangha which others want to be a part of.

Finally, let me share a passage from the book *Dharma Treasures, Spiritual Insights from Hawaii's Shin Buddhist Pioneers*. (This book is available at the HHMH Bookstore.) In it, Rev. Tatsuo Muneto introduces Haru Matsuda of Kona, Hawaii in the following way: "A deep wish for a full human life, meaningful and peaceful, is inherent in everyone. This profound, personal urge to go beyond the everyday, mundane world is nurtured and made apparent in a religious context. When people see others living a life of contentment and thankfulness,

they ask: Why am I not happy and grateful? Such was the question that disturbed Haru Matsuda, who lived the life of a young mother in the 1920s. Her quest for an answer ultimately led to the discovery of nembutsu and working of true compassion in her life.

"While busily working on their coffee farm and raising their children, she soon realized that she was surrounded by people who lived a life of deep awareness of true compassion." These people who rejoiced in the Nembutsu and lived lives of fulfillment were the Hongwanji Sangha.

To conclude, ultimately everything stems from Amida Buddha's Primal Vow. But to me, on a very practical human level, it is the Sangha members and how we live that can also guide others to discover Jodo Shinshu. It is that search for happiness, as in the case of Haru Matsuda, that will lead people to Amida Buddha via the Sangha. Thus, I believe the Sangha is a very important and integral component for sharing the Dharma. Today, I leave you with the thought of the Sangha which is nurtured by Amida Buddha's Light of Wisdom and Compassion.

Finally, please join me to recite Namo Amida Butsu (The Buddha's Name Which I Call in Gratitude) in response to Namo Amida Butsu (The Buddha's Name Which Calls Me to Entrust). Namo Amida Butsu/ Entrusting in All-Inclusive Wisdom and All-Embracing Compassion.

Rev. Kondo

Continued from Page 1

Kondo, as a minister's spouse. She was ordained in 1987 and was fully certified as a Jodo Shinshu minister in 1999. She served as an Overseas Minister (*Kaikyoshi*) from 1999-2009 serving at Honpa Hongwanji Hilo Betsuin and Lihue Hongwanji. She retired in October 2009. Her Dharma Name (*Homyo*) is "Disciple of Buddha Supreme Excellence" or 釈超秀, (Shaku Chou-Shu) and, in

recognition and gratitude of her outstanding dedication and commitment to sharing the Jodo Shinshu Teaching, she was conferred the Posthumous Title (Ingo), "Utmost Virtue" or 至徳院 (Shi-Toku-In).

As we express our condolences to her family, relatives, and close friends, we miss her, but are happy for her birth in Amida Buddha's Pure Land of Enlightenment. She is survived by her sons: Glenn and Alan (Yuka) Kondo, and daughter Maya Kondo. Namo Amida Butsu.

New Books

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associate professor at the University of Lausanne in Switzerland.

A specialist in Japanese Buddhism, he is a permanent visiting scholar at Ryukoku University in Kyoto. In addition, he received ordination and

BCA, HHMH Hold Joint Project on Food Waste and Sustainability

BY DARLENE BAGSHAW,
BUDDHIST CHURCH OF STOCKTON
AND DAVID ATCHESON, HONPA
HONGWANJI HAWAII BETSUIN

Over a year ago, the Buddhist Churches of America Social Welfare Committee and the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii Committee on Social Concerns embarked on an inaugural joint project to bring information of a social nature.

The committees decided Earth Day, April 22, would be an excellent time to discuss our impact, both as individuals and temples, on our ever-changing environment.

Rev. Blayne Higa, Kona Hongwanji Buddhist Temple, opened with a call for all of us to remember that we live in this life of delusion, that we need to awaken to the truth of interdependence, and how our karmic actions affect us all. Therefore, he said, we need to recommit ourselves to the preservation of this planet that we all share. Our actions matter for they have an impact upon the lives of others and the world in which we live.

Three wonderful speakers, with a passion for preservation of our natural resources, shared their talents and experiences. Koichi Sayano, BCA Social Welfare Committee, presented points of interest with regard to food waste and sustainability.

The United Nations has 17 goals to transform our world, including Zero Hunger and Responsible



Rev. Blayne Higa (left) and Koki Atcheson were emcees for the event.



Consumption and Production. The Hongwanji-ha in Kyoto has endorsed these UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Although the United States produces enough food to feed everyone, on average we waste 40 percent, or 108 billion pounds of food annually. The consequences are not just wasted resources but also filling of landfills, methane emissions, and climate change.

So what can we do to help decrease waste in our landfills? Mindy Jaffe, owner of the Waikiki Worm Company, shared her success with island communities repurposing food waste.

Jaffe has years of experience changing the environment at local schools, not only in introducing large-scale composting and vermicomposting of the schools' food and paper waste, but also educating the students on its importance.

Realizing staff and students are too busy to run the programs indefinitely, Jaffe worked to set up a crew of paid Resource

Recovery Specialists to run the composting programs at each school. Not only have these programs been successful in diverting waste from garbage collection, but the programs have also created fundraising projects. Jaffe has led five schools to the zero waste philosophy while creating additional sources of revenue for school programs.

Each year, these schools process 58 tons of food waste, creating 52 cubic yards of compost with a market value of \$23,000; 1,960 pounds of vermicast valued at \$7,840; and sale of surplus worms, generating \$20,000. Trash has decreased by 90 percent, with collection decreased from daily to weekly. Jaffe has also designed kits to start home worm composting. Remember, there is no waste in nature, and everything that is discarded has a use for someone else, according to Jaffe.

Ron Hamakawa of the BCA Seattle Betsuin shared the efforts surrounding conservation during the annual Obon Odori, as well as other aspects of temple

life.

In 2007, the City of Seattle implemented "large event" guidelines for waste, recycling and composting. Beginning in 2008, the Seattle Betsuin adopted a plan in harmony with the Buddhist perspective of interdependence. The infrastructure for composting and recycling involves implementation of composting and recycling bins, proper signage, and a great communication strategy.

The initial set up was spearheaded by an Eagle Scout project in 2008 and updated by another in 2015. Not only is the Seattle Betsuin addressing collection, but also specifying that all food containers be compostable or recyclable.

For its efforts, the Seattle Betsuin was awarded the Seafair Community Innovation Award. The Seattle Betsuin focused efforts not only on the consumer side, but also on the preparation process. The Betsuin is now mindful of the use of PFAS (poly-fluoroalkyl substances) contained in seemingly compostable products. PFAS are non-biodegrad-

able and potentially toxic. Currently, only seven states (California, New York, Maine, Vermont, Washington, Connecticut and Minnesota) ban PFAS.

Rev. Don Castro, BCA Minister Emeritus, founded the EcoSangha program in Seattle, which greatly contributed to the efforts described by Ron Hamakawa. Rev. Castro shared a story from The Teaching of Buddha in which Ananda received garments which he distributed to the monks. The old garments became bed covers, the old bed covers became pillowcases, the old pillowcases became floor covers, the old floor covers became foot towels, the old towels became floor mops, the old mops were torn into pieces to be mixed with mud to plaster the walls. Mottainai – too good to waste!

Mahalo to the BCA and HHMH teams for a wonderful presentation.

Available online are a video of the event at <https://youtu.be/hxfU2Ax-5bJs> and a resource document at <http://honpahi.link/fwresources>.

Aiea Hongwanji: Our Temple, Our Home

BY GAYLE YAMAGUCHI
BOARD OF DIRECTORS, AIEA
HONGWANJI MISSION

"Our electric bill is too high." "We have termites." "There is a leak somewhere!" "We need to fix the roof."

Do these conversations sound familiar? It is in my aging home, perhaps yours too? These are conversations heard at the temple on Sundays and at board meetings. Devoted members have volunteered their time and skills to preserve our temple for the last 120 years.

Our members raised funds to build our temples and purchase the land. Imagine all the members who made sushi, tsukemono, shaved ice, andagi, homemade baked goods, and handmade crafts to meet their goals? How many people gave monetary donations over time to build our temple? Every phase of our buildings' history was the result of grassroots work. Members provided time and gifts selflessly as it is now for our current upkeep. Our members continuously contributed their professional knowledge to grow our temple to what it is today. Not every member that led the way was an expert in facility maintenance and safety, yet they were willing to step up to the plate to make our plans happen.

Fundraising for the new temple began in June 1965.



The "Honor Tradition, Honor Legacy" mural painted by Wayne Takazono, an art instructor at Pacific Buddhist Academy, was donated by the Aiea Senior Young Buddhist Association at the Aiea Hongwanji Mission's 110th Anniversary in 2012. (Courtesy of Warren Tamamoto)

Aotani and Oka, Inc. and Thomas Tanaka, Inc. designed and built our temple for \$129,000. The original temple, dedicated in August 1902, was demolished in January 1968. Our current temple was opened in September 1970. The Kyodan paid off the loan in 1973.

Our temple is 52 years old. It is aging gracefully due to the maintenance work currently overseen by Mark Funasaki, Boyd Marumoto, Russell Nonaka, and the weekly Hoshu Gang. Mark inherited this responsibility from Ikuo Nakata, who planned annual maintenance projects for over fifteen years. The Hoshu Gang is a hardworking group of men who humbly call themselves, "Just a worker." That translates to, "Don't ask me." They direct you to anyone but themselves when asked about projects.

Mr. Nakata did whatever it took to get things done

around the temple. He had a keen eye for talent and loyal followers. The "loyal followers" described their job as following Ikuo-san around and doing whatever he wanted. He asked for help in a way you could not refuse. "If you have time, could you...? If you are not too busy, would you...?" It seems he mentally assessed the skills of the followers. He knew who had electrical knowledge, sheet metal and refrigeration, landscaping, and carpentry skills. They became his loyal followers and are now continuing his legacy.

Recently, our temple needed work to repair leaks on the walkway and entryway. The social hall roof was leaking too. Water leaking under the hall was found and fixed, resulting in a significant reduction in our water bill. On March 13, 2022, a small army of volunteers painted, patched, and

cleaned the temple and social hall. Every Sunday, the Hoshu Gang maintains the grounds and decades-old friendships. Our location next to the freeway adds to the need for extra maintenance.

In 2010, the Kyodan commissioned artisans from Japan to restore the temple altar. They discovered an unusual board behind it. Members who contributed to building the original altar had written their names on the board. The workers carefully put it back to preserve their legacy. Do you know anyone whose name is on the board?

A small minister's residence was built in 1905 and enlarged in 1909. The second home built in November 1959 became a victim of eminent domain when the new highway cut through Aiea. The Kyodan built the current house next to our temple in July 1970. It is now over 50

years old. Ministers and their wives tend to be frugal and make do wherever they live. Observant and caring members called attention to the many problems the ministers lived with without complaint. After our previous minister retired, plumbing repairs and noise abatements significantly improved the new minister's living conditions before his arrival. Members solicited help from local companies and donated their time every step of the way.

In past generations, attending Japanese language schools was a given for many students. Over time attendance decreased, and other programs for students took their place. The new social hall and parking lot replaced the old Japanese language school.

Please send us your memories of Aiea Hongwanji. We want to share your stories and kupuna's memories of "back in the day" at AHM. You can help us solve some mysteries about our temple and the grounds. What is the significance of the twenty-nine steps to the temple? Who's name is on the lantern behind the kitchen? Was your family involved in building the original altar in our temple? Do you have memories of attending Japanese school or Sunday Dharma school?

We look forward to hearing from you via aieajiko@gmail.com.