



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



March 2023

BISHOP'S CORNER

"Here I rejoice in what I have heard and extol what I have attained."

Bishop Eric Matsumoto



I would like to begin by sharing the Opening Aspiration and some thoughts which I gave at the start of our 111th Legislative Assembly held on February 10-11, 2023. *"How joyous I am, my heart and mind being rooted in the Buddha-Dharma...of the universal Vow...my thoughts and feelings flowing within the dharma-ocean...I am deeply aware of the Tathagata's immense compassion...My joy grows ever fuller, my gratitude and indebtedness ever more compelling. Therefore, I have selected [passages expressing] the core of the Pure Land way and gathered its essentials. ...May those who see and hear this work be brought...to manifest shinjin within the power of the Vow and reveal the incomparable fruit of enlightenment in the land of peace."* -Shinran Shonin-

This should be all of our thoughts and aspiration too, especially in 2023 as we joyously and gratefully observe the auspicious Joint Celebration of the 850th Anniversary of the Birth of Shinran Shonin and the 800th Anniversary of the Establishment of Jodo Shinshu including the 17th World Buddhist Women's Convention.

Last year, our Hawaii Kyodan's slogan emphasized "Connecting with Others" and I emphasized that the primal and fundamental connection which we each should have is the connection with Amida Buddha. Then, from that connection, we, as Sangha members, further connect with others inspired by the Buddha, guided by the Dharma and motivated by gratitude for Amida Buddha's Wisdom and Compassion. This becomes apparent in the guidance we are receiving from His Eminence Kojun Ohtani whether it is "Gratitude for the Jodo Shinshu Teaching" or "Our Pledge" which he composed for us.

However, as I look at our Hawaii Kyodan and reflect on myself too, I have a concern that we have not connected with as many people as we would like to. What do you think? The steady decline in our membership suggests that we have not. Thus, today, I implore that we all share our joy for the Teachings and especially Amida Buddha's compassion with others. Let your family and friends know that temple is a big part of your life and the reasons why. If you don't people including your own family may not know. Just because you physically go to the temple a lot does not mean that those around you truly understand the significance of the temple and the Teachings in your life. As your Bishop and as a temple minister, I have come across, too many, families especially grand-children and great grandchildren of our most devoted members who didn't know just how precious the temple was to their Elders. Its only at the funeral service that they find out. I lament that it is a lost opportunity. If younger family members knew how

important temple was to their Elders including the reason, they too, could have possibly connected more with the temple and Jodo Shinshu.

Even in the case of Shinran Shonin, I find, at least, 4 instances, one of which is the opening aspiration with which I started, in which he relates that out of the gratitude of realizing the benevolence of the Buddha and Joy, he collects passages about Jodo Shinshu so others can come to know Amida Buddha. I am not saying we all have to write a book like Shinran Shonin, but in our own way, within our own capacities, we can share about Buddhism with others. In Hawaii, we would say “We can all talk story.” On second thought, however, our sharing does not necessarily have to involve lengthy words explaining Buddhism. I say this as I reflect on my own journey to Jodo Shinshu. My grandmother (Fuji Matsumoto), according to some like Rev. Yoshihide Matsubayashi, was a devout Jodo Shin Buddhist, but she could not speak English and I, in my Middle School and High School years, could not speak Japanese. Her way of connecting me to Buddhism was to have me see her doing her daily “Praising of the Buddha’s Virtue” at the home altar (which was not in her bedroom, but in the family living room). She, also, gave me the responsibility of changing the flowers on the Home Altar. So, it was that in the Matsumoto household, a Middle School kid would regularly, on a weekly basis, change the flowers at the home butsudan. From within my family, it was the first recognizable (for me) step in the budding and growing relationship that I would have with Buddhism.

Sounding like a broken record, I still firmly believe that we need more of the Buddha-Dharma to inspire and guide us as a Sangha and one of our roles as the Sangha, not limited to ministers, is to create a connection to the Dharma for people. This is what will eventually connect to growing our membership. People are searching for a warm, harmonious, safe accepting place to belong where people are happy, empathetic, and joyous. Especially, as we come out of the Pandemic it is an important time to connect with others by sharing our Joy and Appreciation of the Nembutsu. It is essential, critical that we connect with more people. It is by connecting with more people that we can also address our declining membership. Thus, at this time, guided by our 2023 slogan “Sharing Joy Together,” I would like to ask all temples to create a membership committee or something similar to it, to address our declining membership. Further, I have brought to the attention of the State Ministers Association and the Ministerial Training Committee, our need to begin identifying and nurturing more individuals who can become ministers lay assistants or full-fledged overseas ministers. However, a committee can only do so much. The real work of connecting takes place at the temple level by each one of us. First, please let that Heart and Mind of True Entrusting being given by Amida Buddha blossom. Then, naturally, share your Joy and Appreciation of Dharma especially that of Namo Amida Butsu with others by living the life of a Nembutsu follower as shared by His Eminence Kojun Ohtani.

To conclude, to one and all, please know that your devotion, dedication, contributions and efforts are deeply appreciated and I express my deepest gratitude to you. Please join me in gassho/anjali and in awareness, joy and gratitude, 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.



MINISTERIAL ASSIGNMENT

Rev. Mieko Majima, currently serving at the Headquarters as the Office of Buddhist Education Assistant and Kapaa Hongwanji Mission as its resident minister, will be relieved from her current duties and assigned to Kapaa Hongwanji Mission as its full-time resident minister as of April 1, 2023.

TEMPLES' ANNIVERSARY ARTICLES

Hongwanji International Center in Kyoto put together the HHMH Temples' Anniversary articles on their website. You may visit their website https://international.hongwanji.or.jp/html/2302_1.html or read attached documents.

LGBTQIA+ 101 EDUCATIONAL SESSION

Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, its Commission on Buddhist Education and its Committee on Social Concerns will sponsor the LGBTQIA+ 101 Educational Session in April 2023.

Date & Time: Saturday, April 22, 2023, from 9:00 am to 11:00 am
Speaker: Camaron Miyamoto, Director of the UH Manoa LGBTQ Center.
Place: In person at the Buddhist Study Center and online via Zoom
Registration: <https://forms.gle/Kwqn9QCGFuf5zcPn7>
Registration Deadline: Saturday, April 15, 2023 (Registration is FREE!)

Learn more about the LGBTQIA+ community so we can ensure all beings may enjoy lives of harmony, peace and gratitude. We will talk about:

- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questions, intersex, ally and more identities
- An appreciation for the unique lives of LGBTQIA+ people
- Ways to be supportive and compassionate allies for LGBTQIA+ people
- Share ways to build respect, harmony, peace and gratitude for all

Panel of LGBTQIA+ Community Members and their families - Chihiro Okawa, Jay Yokoyama, Benjamin Bruch & Rudiger Ruckmann, Richard & Gail Taira, Pieper & Lois Toyama

2023 TAITETSU UNNO MEMORIAL LECTURE

The Institute of Buddhist Studies announced the Taitetsu Unno Memorial lecture, to be delivered by Dr. Ruben Habito, and held on Friday March 31, 2023, from 1 - 3pm (HST), both in person at the Jodo Shinshu Center and virtually.

Dr. Habito shares an interesting perspective as a Zen Buddhist and former Jesuit priest, seeing the problems of the world through eastern Buddhism and western Christianity. His lecture will present using religious transcendence to heal our wounded world as we face wars, economic hardships and Global pandemics. It will also address giving meaning to jaded youth, disillusioned adults, pinpointing the sense of loss that is universally felt in the age of the Pandemic and how we can give hope for the future to our youth.

SAVE THE DATE

The date of the 2023 BSC Summer Session has been changed. Please mark your calendar.

Date & Time: June 5 - 9, 2023, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Takashi Miyaji (Southern Alameda County Buddhist Church)

Place: In person at the Buddhist Study Center and online via Zoom

CHANGE THE DATE

Pacific Buddhist Academy Commencement Exercise is rescheduled on Sunday May 7, 2023, at Moanalua High School Performing Arts Center.