



“The Calling Voice”

Ka Leo Kāhea

VOLUME 3 • ISSUE 1 MARCH 2023

Official Publication of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii

Living the Dharma Makawao-style for Over 50 Years

By JEAN HESELDEN
MAKAWAO HONGWANJI MISSION

With deep joy and gratitude, on Oct. 16, 2022, Makawao Hongwanji celebrated the 50th anniversary of the dedication and opening of our temple and the 115th anniversary of the founding of our predecessor, the Paia Hongwanji Mission. Our theme for the celebration was “Living the Dharma.”

Everyone delighted in seeing old friends, making new friends, and enjoying the fruits of the hard work and sacrifices of so many who came before us. Mahalo to those who joined our celebration in person and virtually.

Esteemed co-chairs for the celebration were Diane Kosaka and Karen Ishizu. Helping hands were provided by our affiliates Cub Pack 18, Scout Troop 18, Judo Club, and the Jr. YBA, as well as sangha members and friends.

Resident Minister Kerry Kiyohara officiated the service and dedication of the bodhi tree plaque, assisted by Rev. Shinkai Murakami of Wailuku Hongwanji Mission and Rev. Ai Hironaka of Lahaina Hongwanji Mission.

Honored guests included Keirokai members, ages 80 to 104, who were honored with special gifts presented by Cubs of Pack 18 and



(Courtesy of Jean Heselden)

Scouts of Troop 18. Nearly 30 of our 80 keirokai members attended.

In the 1960s, as the plantation system was closing, our treasured Kūpuna had the foresight and perseverance to move the sangha from the cane fields of Paia to upcountry Makawao town.

Much of the labor for the new temple building was provided by sangha members. They completed construction in the early 1970s. Through further hard work and sacrifice, the mortgage was paid off in seven years. We profoundly cherish their legacy.

Dr. Warren Tamamoto,

President of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, delivered a congratulatory message.

JoAnn Yosemite was accompanied by husband Grant Ito and brother Eric Yosemite. JoAnn and Eric are the children of the late Bishop Rev. Chikai Yosemite. Rev. Yosemite was the last Resident Minister of Paia Hongwanji and the first Resident Minister of Makawao Hongwanji, serving Maui from October 1964 through August 1981. JoAnn narrated a slide show with her recollections of her family's times on Maui.

Rev. Toshiyuki Umitani, eighth Resident Minister of

Makawao Hongwanji from March 2005 through June 2011, attended with his wife Yoshiko and younger daughter Riho. Rev. Umitani told us about the bodhi tree which he planted at our temple in 2007 to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the founding of Paia Hongwanji. Our bodhi tree is a direct descendant of the tree under which Buddha Siddhartha achieved enlightenment.

Mayor Michael Victorino spoke at the dedication of the plaque under the Makawao bodhi tree, accompanied by his wife Jocelyn.

To top off the celebra-

tion, we enjoyed an on-lucious luncheon buffet in the beautifully decorated social hall and a special performance by the Dharma School.

Please visit our website at makawaohongwanji.org for additional photos and the live streamed video.

Mahalo nui loa to Maui for allowing us to be part of the community for 115 years, your neighborhood Buddhist Temple in Makawao for 50 years, and home of the Makawao bodhi tree for 15 years. Now it is our turn to step up and grow the Makawao Hongwanji temple community into the next 50 years!

Sōran Bushi and Taiko at PBA

By MEGAN LEE
DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT
PACIFIC BUDDHIST ACADEMY

Pacific Buddhist Academy students are gearing up for the 17th Annual Taiko Festival on March 5. For the first time in three years, the entire school will perform in the show, as social distancing rules at the Moanalua High School Performing Arts Center previously limiting performer participation have been lifted. This year's festival, titled “Senri No Michi,” also welcomes the return of the all-school “Sōran

Bushi,” a Japanese folk dance and favorite piece for many school supporters. As we look forward to the festival, we reflect on the importance of continuing these traditions at our school.

The choreography in “Sōran Bushi” mimics the movement of the ocean and Hokkaido fishermen dragging nets and lifting cages over their shoulders. The motions are physically demanding, as one's entire body is used to show currents and waves. Junior Vance Maruya shares, “‘Sōran Bushi’ training at PBA helps me get in better shape. It's like a workout

that the whole school does at the same time.” Vance also highlighted the most exciting element of Sōran practice: It brings the school community together all at once, in the same room, working toward a common cause. Even a number of teachers and administrators participate in training for the dance.

“Sōran Bushi” is offered as a workshop class under the leadership of math teacher and athletic director Kena Heffernan. Senior Chase Sukekane, who was not able to join in training with members of the PBA sangha during the pandemic, shared his thoughts



PBA students perform the Sōran Bushi, a dance that tells the story of Hokkaido fisherman dragging nets and lifting cages over their shoulders. (Courtesy of Alan Kubota)

on why “Sōran” is important to him. “‘Sōran Bushi’ helps us bond through shared strenuous activity. When we dance as one, I feel as if we are united. I continue the practice in class because I

enjoy improving in the dance that has deep roots in Japan and has been a tradition at PBA since the school's founding.”

SEE PAGE 8

Kona Hongwanji 125th Anniversary Celebration



Seated at center are Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii Bishop Eric Matsumoto (left) and Rev. Blayne Higa, Resident Minister of Kona Hongwanji Mission, with the Sangha and guests. (Courtesy of Terry Terada)

By REV. BLAYNE HIGA, RESIDENT MINISTER,
KONA HONGWANJI MISSION

Kona Hongwanji Mission celebrated its 125th Anniversary with a series of events on Oct. 15-16, 2022. A Bon Dance and Craft Fair were held on Oct. 15. A Chigo Parade, Commemoration Service, Luncheon, and Affirmation Rites were held on Oct. 16.

Affirmation Rites were held by the Hawaii District Ministers Association in conjunction with the Kona Hongwanji Mission 125th Anniversary on Sunday,

Oct. 16, 2022. In the solemn atmosphere, six individuals participated in the ceremony and received Buddhist names from Bishop Eric Matsumoto.

Affirmation Rites is a ceremony in which one takes refuge in Jodo Shinshu Buddhism and pledges their faith before Amida Buddha. The Buddhist Name is the name given to those who follow the Three Treasures of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, and pledge to live their lives as Buddhists.

It was a joyful and festive weekend of events for the entire Kona Hongwanji Sangha and the West Hawaii community.



BY REV. ERIC MATSUMOTO
BISHOP, HONPA HONGWANJI
MISSION OF HAWAII

What is the most sacred and precious flower in Jodo Shinshu? Several may come to mind: udumbara blossoms, sal flowers, asoka flowers, lotuses, wisteria, and magnolia, to name a few. Among these, I would select the lotus, in particular the white lotus (*Nelumbo nucifera*), as the most notable. We find references to the white lotus in many Jodo Shinshu writings. For example, the *Contemplation Sutra* states, “Know that the person who

says the nembutsu is a white lotus among people.” Shinran Shonin in his *Hymn of True Shinjin and the Nembutsu (Shoshinge)* writes, “All foolish beings, whether good or evil, When they hear and entrust to Amida’s universal Vow, Are praised by the Buddha as people of vast and excellent understanding; Such a person is called a pure white lotus.”

If you have ever seen a large lotus up close you will agree that it is beautiful, majestic, delicate, and inspiring. Even a single flower imparts a sense of awe. Could you imagine seeing a whole field of lotuses? This is exactly the image that I have in my mind. I hope to see hundreds, if not thousands, of lotus flowers all blooming in the bright Hawaiian sun.

How does this become a reality? To be sure, it is ultimately the Compassion of Amida Buddha which

BISHOP'S CORNER

brings about our birth in the Pure Land of Enlightenment and the gratitude and joy that people of the Nembutsu experience here and now. We respond in gratitude by reciting the Buddha’s Honored Name “Namo Amida Butsu” and also encourage others to join the journey on the White Path. The Great Buddhist Master Shantao stated, “To realize shinjin oneself and to guide others to shinjin is among difficult things yet even more difficult. To awaken beings everywhere to great compassion is truly to respond in gratitude to the Buddha’s benevolence.”

This is probably what was happening in Kona in the early decades of the 20th century. The book *Dharma Treasures, Spiritual Insights from Hawaii’s Shin Buddhist Pioneers* shows how these dynamics af-

ected the lives of people in those days. Haru Matsuda, a young mother who lived in the 1920s, is one of the pioneers noted in the book.

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.

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. Haru Matsuda noticed that the temple members around her were filled with joy and gratitude. Further, there were people who, like the Kona Hongwanji ministers, were sharing the Nembutsu teaching and encouraging people to say Namo Amida Butsu. It was this Dharma environment brimming

with nembutsu and sharing which guided and supported Haru Matsuda.

In one of her poems she recalls, “Without knowing, Namo Amida Butsu suddenly appears—borrowing my lips, calling unto me.” In another poem, we hear her deep wish. “My children, please go to sleep while calling on the (Buddha’s) Name (Namo Amida Butsu). Sound, sound asleep in the arms of Oya-sama (Amida Buddha).” To me, Haru Matsuda was living a quote from the *Sutra of Great Compassion* which is cited by Shinran Shonin: “What is ‘great compassion’? Those who continue solely in the nembutsu without interruption will thereby be born without fail in the land of happiness at the end of life. If these people encourage each other and bring others to say the

SEE PAGE 8

Minister Lay Assistants Gather For Annual Training Retreat



Attendees of the Minister Lay Assistants Annual Training Retreat of 2022. Instructors are seated in the front row (right to left) Rev. Umitani, Bishop Eric Matsumoto, Minister Emeritus Rev. Kenji Akahoshi, and Minister Lay Assistant Dexter Mar. (Courtesy of Buddhist Study Center)

On Oct. 8-9, 2022, 15 Minister Lay Assistants (MLA) met in Honolulu at the Buddhist Study Center with four faculty to learn how to better assist their temple ministers. The Hawaii MLA program is designed to nurture lay volunteers interested in helping in spiritual tasks and Dharma-centered projects at their temples. Continued steps towards becoming a minister are totally optional.

Nine temples (Hawaii Betsuin, Honomu, Jikoen, Kona, Moiliili, Papaikou, Puna, Wahiawa, and Windward) were represented with a variety of MLA, Certified MLA, Certified MLA with Tokudo, and Kyoshi MLA in attendance. Everyone enjoyed the fellowship, making new Dharma friendships and renewing old ones.

Study of temple rituals included creating a sacred space for worship, altar setup, the meaning of religious objects, chanting, and developing a meaningful service order. Dharma communication workshops provided opportunities to deliver meaningful and relevant messages at worship services. The two-day retreat was challenging and worthwhile, with most MLAs saying there was not enough time to cover as much as they wished.

The 2023 MLA Retreat will learn from this gathering and improve the program for more attendees to take steps along the Shin Buddhist path. Plan to join us next year!



BY REV. DAVID FUJIMOTO
MILILANI HONGWANJI MISSION
AND 'EWA HONGWANJI MISSION

Recently, a fellow chaplain colleague shared a story with me. During World War II, a village priest was restless and could not sleep, so he decided to go out and walk around the village. As he closed the door to his home, he noticed a small group of soldiers walking towards him. A fellow soldier had become a casualty of the war and the soldiers wanted to give him a proper burial. However, the priest told them that he was not going to allow this, as the fenced cemetery next to the church was only for church members. Saddened by the disheartening words of the priest, the soldiers decided to bury their fallen comrade just outside of the fence.

The next morning, the soldiers returned to the site and were astonished as they

could not find the grave. One of the soldiers ran over to the priest’s house and knocked on the door. “What happened to our friend?” the soldier asked the priest. “The grave is gone!”

“Oh, your friend is still there,” the priest calmly told the soldier. They walked to the gravesite where the other soldiers were still looking around. “After you all left last night, I regretted what I had told you. So, as I could not sleep, I moved the fence.”

In Buddhism, we often refer to the content of Enlightenment with two concepts. One is Wisdom and the other is Compassion. As Rev. Dr. Seigen Yamaoka remarks, “The aspect of Compassion is meant to show the dynamic movement of Enlightenment as it works to awaken all beings from their ignorance and suffering. Not a static state that requires striving for benefits, the Enlightenment of the Buddha actively manifests concern and pity.”

The intent of the appearance of Śhakyamuni Buddha in this world was to disclose the Dharma, the true nature of reality that would save all sentient beings, through Amida’s Infinite Wisdom and Incomprehensible Compassion.

The priest could have

easily followed the rules that were set forth, but the Dharma directed him in the right direction. In life, we are constantly bombarded by so many things, juggling this or that, being here or there. No one is immune to this; it’s just a part of our daily everyday life as sentient beings. However, when we are in that mode we fail to see the life we are truly meant to live. The Dharma encourages us to live outside of this habit of distracted living.

We often hear of distracted driving. Driving while texting, on the phone, eating, applying make-up, talking to someone else. This is not how we are truly meant to be driving. With so many distractions, we easily get carried away and before we know it, we are swerving into the next lane or perhaps into trees and cause harm and damage that is preventable.

The distracted living of the priest can easily be applied to us; distracted by temptations, anger, ignorance, and greed. The Dharma attempts to help us to acknowledge these distractions and temptations and see things for what they truly are.

Many years ago, I attended a morning service during which the minister

was chanting the *Shōshinge*. As I chanted along, something happened. The chanting drifted away from *Shōshinge* and went into the midst of *Juseige*. It wasn’t until later that the minister had discovered his mistake. There was so much going on in his mind that he became distracted from what was going on in the here and now.

The Dharma attempts to bring forth in us a new perspective on looking at things and gives us the much-needed adjustment to our perspectives without being forceful. That is the heart of the Dharma.

During the pandemic, our lives slowed down and many of the distractions and temptations subsided. In the stillness of life, we were able to see just how interconnected we really are to one another and much that we are surrounded by. At the same time, we saw how much we took advantage of and many things we took for granted. In my opinion, as we slowly head out of the pandemic we are losing focus on so much that we learned during the pandemic.

That is where I feel we can put the Dharma into our everyday life. When we start to lose focus and we start to feel distracted in life, we

can always turn to the Dharma for much-needed introspection to feel the embrace of the Buddha’s Infinite Wisdom and Incomprehensible Compassion—and move the fence. That to me, is the heart of the Dharma.

Ka Leo Kāhea

(USPS Permit #9044)

Official Publication of the Honpa
Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii
Published four times a year.

Honpa Hongwanji
Mission of Hawaii
1727 Pali Hwy.
Honolulu, HI 96813
Tel: (808) 522-9200

www.hongwanjihawaii.com
Email: hqs@honpah.org

The Ka Leo Kāhea provides a variety of articles on Jodo Shinshu Buddhism for Hawaii residents.

The Ka Leo Kāhea, a quarterly newspaper published by the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, features organizational news and experiences by Jodo Shinshu members, and a variety of articles relating to Buddhist principles.

Editorial rights are reserved to postpone, edit, or withhold from publication anything submitted which does not meet those specifications or the specifications of the editorial staff.

The meaning of any submission will not be altered, but we reserve the right to correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation when necessary.

Editor: Rev. Eric Matsumoto
Managing Editor: Matsumoto
Print Production: Jeffrey Kimoto

What Is the Value of Membership in Your Temple?



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

Aloha kākou! Happy New Year! I hope that you are doing well, physically, and spiritually.

When we started publishing this newsletter at the end of 2021, we hoped to create a sense of unity in the Hawaii Sangha. We had several important objectives: 1) to connect our Sangha with each other and within our statewide

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

organization through interesting, inspiring, and funny stories; 2) to inform you of important news and new initiatives within the Hawaii Kyodan; and 3) to share the Dharma in a variety of ways, such as through Dharma messages, short stories, and poems.

Ultimately we hope that this newsletter helps you, our readers, live a life of gratitude in awareness of Amida Buddha's Compassion, which always embraces us just as we are. Are we meeting our objectives? Are there ways that we can improve our newsletter? Please let us know your thoughts by emailing us at newsletter@honpahi.org.

As I write this message, we are busily preparing for the 111th Legislative Assembly (Giseikai), which happens once a year in February. This year it is Feb. 10-11. Ministers, temple delegates and observers

representing every temple gather to decide the future course of the Hawaii Kyodan (Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii). We will report about the Legislative Assembly via our *Headquarters Updates* and also in the next issue of the *Ka Leo Kāhea*.

Recently one of our newer members asked me a question. She wanted to know what I would say to her husband if he asked, "What is the value of membership in your temple?" I could have answered in several ways: 1) learning about the Buddhism and the Buddhist way of life at our services, at our discussion groups, or by talking to the minister; 2) fostering friendship and enjoying fellowship at our various temple activities; 3) joining one of our groups such as the Buddhist Women's Association; 4) gaining satisfaction by working to maintain our temple and grounds; or 5) supporting

the temple financially, which in turn shares Buddhist teachings with our community. All of these, I think, are good reasons to become a member.

However, I chose to answer this way; he would be joining an organization that promotes peace in the world. I explained that Buddhists work to promote peace in our community and our world. You've heard the statement "peace begins with me." His Eminence Monshu Kojun Ohtani has shared with us *Our Pledge*. The third paragraph reminds us that "Breaking away from my greed, anger, and ignorance, I will try to live in peace and harmony. Just like the Buddha, who shares tranquility and kindness with all."

Bishop Eric Matsumoto is highly visible in our community, supporting peace efforts including the Peace Walk to the Nagasaki Peace Bell. We

support fundraising for an Eternal Peace Flame in Hawaii and our annual "Ring Your Bell for Peace Day" event in honor of World Peace Day every September 21. Also, remember that our Federation of Jr. Young Buddhist Associations presented a resolution to the Hawaii State Legislature in 2007 that was passed, establishing September 21 as Peace Day in Hawaii.

We are a long way from realizing peace in the world. However, that is exactly why we must continue our efforts. Buddhist teachings strive to nurture peace and harmony that starts with the individual and extends to the community. Our mission statement is "to share the living teachings of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism so that all beings may enjoy lives of harmony, peace, and gratitude." The Pacific Buddhist Academy's

SEE PAGE 8

Hilo Hongwanji Preschool Construction Update



Before and after: Excavation work began on the lot early in February 2022. One year later, the preschool building has taken shape. (Courtesy of Ivan Nakano)

We Are 48% Complete and On Schedule

By **KAREN MAEDO, DR. KEITH YAMAKAWA, AND IVAN NAKANO**
CO-CHAIRS, HILO HONGWANJI
PRESCHOOL CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Can you believe that the ground-breaking ceremony for what will become the new Hilo Hongwanji Preschool (HHP) building took place on Jan. 30, 2022? Groundwork began shortly thereafter. After one year filled with many hurdles, the building is 48% completed. Bad weather and supply and shipping issues made it necessary to revise our completion date to September 2023.

Framing, the roof, and concrete work have been completed. By March, the interior work will start with electrical hardware

and plumbing going in. Interior walls will be constructed and painted, windows installed, and many other details completed. We also plan to furnish and equip the classrooms with new preschool recommended products and will have a fully adaptable playground with appropriate ADA compliant safety equipment. Although we have met our pledge goal of \$5 million, we are acutely aware of the rising cost of everything and have been working with our contractor to keep costs under control.

Donations are still being accepted even as our active campaign has ended. All donations are appreciated and will directly go to pay for the construction and

furnishing of this new building. Any surplus will go into an HHP maintenance fund. As all of us are aware, repairs and building maintenance will be needed in the future.

The Hilo Hongwanji Preschool Capital Campaign Committee expressed its deepest appreciation to the 110th Legislative Assembly (Giseikai) and the delegates and observers for the overwhelming support of the \$1 Million Line of Credit Resolution that was approved for the HHP construction project. This may be necessary as some of our pledges will not be completed until 2025.

The Hilo Hongwanji Preschool promotes Buddha's teachings with regular visits to the temple. Ministers share stories and gathas, which builds appreciation and awareness of life as the most precious gift to be lived in

gratitude, aloha, and compassion.

Founded in its current location as Kilauea Day Care almost 100 years ago, the school has graduated thousands of students in its 95-year history. Many of its students have contributed much to make a positive difference in their respective communities.

One individual who made a difference not only on Hawaii Island, but throughout our state, was Barry K. Taniguchi, CEO of KTA Super Stores. Learning from his grandparents, Barry followed the philosophy of life called "Okage Sama De" — "I am who I am because of you" and "Dana," or "selfless giving." He truly set the example that we all need to appreciate and support.

We are incredibly humbled by the many members and community members who also embraced this philosophy of

life. Many of our donors will not personally benefit from this preschool but know the value of a new home for our preschool. Together we could build a place that many more youth will grow and flourish in. These youth will go on to contribute great things to our world for the next 95+ years.

The Hilo Hongwanji Preschool embraces the 2023 theme of Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii: "Building Healthy Sanghas: Sharing Joy Together." As work progresses on schedule, it is our hope that construction will be completed by the end of September and that we will have much to celebrate by the end of the year!

For more information, contact: Ivan Nakano, inakano183@gmail.com; Karen Maedo, kmaedo@yahoo.com; Keith Yamakawa, kkydds@hawaii.rr.com

Correction

In the article "Honpa Hongwanji Judo Federation" in the December 2022 *Ka Leo Kāhea*, the annual Honpa Hongwanji Hongwanji Championship Judo Tournament was mislabeled as the annual Hawaii Betsuin Championship Judo Tournament.

HMH Observes the Triple Celebration in 2024

By **THE TRIPLE CELEBRATION STEERING COMMITTEE**

The year 2023 will mark the 850th anniversary of the birth of Shinran Shonin, founder of the Jodo Shinshu Buddhist tradition, and the following year 2024 will be the 800th anniversary of the establishment of the Jodo Shinshu

teaching and the 135th anniversary of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii. Accordingly, the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii will observe the Triple Celebration on Sept. 7-8, 2024, to commemorate those occasions. The Triple Celebration Steering Committee discussed the significance of the occasions and selected the event theme "Sharing the Joy of Nembutsu Together:

Our Living Heart of Gratitude."

The celebration, which is scheduled to be held in Honolulu, will be a prime opportunity at which the ministers and members truly appreciate the life and the teaching of Shinran Shonin, share the joy of being embraced by Amida Buddha's all-inclusive Wisdom and Compassion, and

SEE PAGE 8

Hawaii Island United Hongwanji BWA'S Upfront Encounter

BY ELLEN OKANO, HONPA
HONGWANJI HILO BETSUIN BWA

Oct. 29, 2022 was a beautiful day, and as you drove into the Puna Hongwanji Mission parking lot, you could see, straight ahead, their lovely bodhi tree with leaves fluttering in the breeze.

Our hosts, Puna Buddhist Women's Association (BWA) members, were at their social hall to greet everyone who had signed up to attend our two events. Pretty face masks sewn by members were available for all. There was an atmosphere of warmth and friendship as we conversed with each other face to face

for our first in-person gathering.

Calabash bowls were set up to receive donations for our Dana and Scholarship Funds, and attendees' generosity was overwhelming. Because of this, we were able to donate \$547 (including Dana donations from dues) to The Food Basket, an organization that services both East and West Hawaii.

The Reverend Satoshi Tomioka officiated the beautiful opening service and delivered a meaningful message on never being abandoned but always embraced by Amida Buddha. Towards the end of the service, we happily raised our voices together to sing the BWA song, "Asoka



Hilo Betsuin Rimban Kazunori Takahashi with the newly-installed Hawaii Island BWA cabinet officers. First row, left to right: Rimban Takahashi, Ellen Okano, Bessie Kubo, and Carole Tsutsumi. Back row, left to right: Eileen Usagawa, Deborah Fried, Jo Kim, Karen Maedo, and Lynn Higashi. Not pictured: June Fujikawa. Photo courtesy of Sandra Tomiyama

Garden." Such a beautiful connection with others!

Our general membership meeting followed and these officers for 2023-2024 were elected: President, Ellen

Okano; First Vice President and Federation Director, Karen Maedo; Second Vice President, Jo Kim; Recording Secretary, Bessie Kubo; General Fund Treasurer,

Carole Tsutsumi; Assistant (Scholarship) Treasurer, Lynn Higashi; and Auditors, Deborah Fried, Eileen Usagawa, and June Fujikawa. The installation, officiated by Rimban Kazunori Takahashi of Hilo Betsuin, took place after adjournment.

We honored nine centenarians with Resolutions of Appreciation as follows: Shizuko Hamada, Yachiyo Hamada, Sumie Miyasaki, Tomiko Nakanishi, Fujie Edna Tokuuke, Shigeo Yonemori, Hanako Kuwaye, and Alma Yano who are members of Hilo BWA; and Tomiye Kukino, of Puna BWA.

Of the 15 new members

SEE PAGE 8

Rap Session: "Toward a Flourishing Sangha"

Ministers and Members Working Together Will Make the Membership Grow

BY EDYTHE VASSALL,
HONPA HONGWANJI HILO BETSUIN

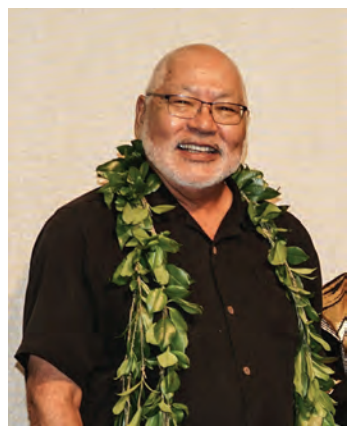
The 111th Legislative Assembly (Giseikai) of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii was held from Feb. 10-11. There were religious services, business meetings, and an Aloha Luncheon to honor the Living Treasures of Hawaii for 2022 and 2023. Several pre-Giseikai events were held on Thursday, Feb. 9, including a rap session titled "A Flourishing Sangha." This event addressed the problem of declining membership by engaging leaders who have done so successfully. The presenters were Reverends Bob and Patti Oshita, retired ministers of the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) and Mr. Pieper Toyama, first head of school of the Pacific Buddhist Academy in Honolulu.

Before the session began, in-person participants gathered to share dinner and talk story. Then, thanks to the technical expertise of Derrick Inouye and Rev. Shingo Furusawa, the session began with Revs. Bob and Patti Oshita speaking via Zoom.

Revs. Bob and Patti served at the Buddhist Church of Sacramento for 32 years. When they retired it was among the BCA temples with the largest numbers of members. What was their strategy? "To grow the sangha you have to know the sangha," said Rev. Patti.

The Dharma school grew from 75 students when the Oshitas came onboard to 420 at its highest point. How did they do it? By offering meaningful programs. They paid attention to the needs of the children, learned about them, and learned their names. Along with each child came their parents and grandparents. They engaged them, too. For example, when seven girls wanted to be scouts but there was no girl scout troop, they formed one with Rev. Patti as the scout leader. The Metta-Padma study class on Buddhism was one of the core programs that helped draw in children and young families. It grew from about nine kids in 1985 to over 30 by 2015, and eventually there were as many parents as children attending the class!

The Oshitas made it a goal that every child and/or member should have some knowledge of Buddhism and be able to explain what Buddhism is. Rev. Bob described an incident from decades ago that still stands out in his mind. His brand new car was broadsided one day by someone charging out of a driveway. As he stood looking at the damage, a station wagon pulled up, the passenger window rolled down, and one of his nine-year-old Dharma school students looked out. "Reverend Bob is that your new car?" he asked in wonder. "Yes, I'm



Left: Pieper Toyama is the first head of the Pacific Buddhist Academy, the first Shin Buddhist high school in the U.S. He is also a former president of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii. Right: Revs. Bob and Patti Oshita were chaplains for the California State Assembly from 2016-2020; the first Buddhists to serve in that capacity. Their book, *Dharma Is Everywhere: Reflections Shared at the California State Assembly*, is available from the American Buddhist Study Center: ambuddhist.org.

afraid so," Rev. Bob replied. The boy thought for a moment, then said very seriously, "That's impermanence. That's dukkha!"

Finally, the Oshitas defined "Meaningful Programs" as key to a flourishing sangha. Meaningful programs 1) respond to a need felt by the Sangha; 2) are more successful when members or board members request them; 3) produce positive energy and passion; 4) have "buy in" of individuals and groups; 5) need to have a "point" person to bring the people and groups together; and 6) FOOD is essential at any in-person event!

An example was the Youth Advocacy Committee (YAC) week-long retreats for 13-18 year olds. These retreats taught a consistent curriculum so the newcomers could connect with the experienced students. Over the years, the YAC program has nurtured a minister, several ministers' assistants, Dharma School teachers, and other temple leaders.

Everyone has been aware of the problem of declining membership for years, but without a clear and motivating vision to unite around, little has changed.

"Three Controllable Reasons for Organizational Decline" was the title of Pieper Toyama's presentation. He spelled out specific problems:

1. No clear and motivating vision to unite everyone in a common purpose.
2. A lack of communication internally and externally.
3. Ego and historical complacency.

Pieper highlighted some good news—we've made progress on the communication issue with the launching of the *Ka Leo Kāhea* newsletter in 2021. It provides a means for the Hawaii Kyodan temples to keep up with each other.

The third point, ego and historical complacency, is one that requires effort on everyone's part. "Ego kills a sense of urgency and prevents leaders from listening to members," he explained. "The attitude that 'we've always done

things this way' leads to blind adherence to tradition." The same old methods lead to the same old results.

Pieper gave some concrete ways to tackle our current situation and reverse organizational decline. 1) Make communication of vision and purpose a constant priority. 2) Be open to listening and learning new ideas. Ask questions. Recognize the wisdom and experiences of others. 3) Set aside barriers, such as titles, that separate groups and territories one from another. Work for the good of the team, the organization, and its members. 4) Engage and empower EVERYONE to make suggestions and take ownership of the vision. Everyone

must feel responsible for working towards the vision and purpose.

After each presentation, enthusiastic discussion followed that centered on constructive ways to improve and strengthen our organization. Ministers and members have to talk to and learn about each other. Ministers should focus on current members; pay attention to in-reach and not just outreach, and be open enough to listen to suggestions. Ego must not get in the way. "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care."

And members help make the minister. One might feel shy or uncomfortable to say anything critical to a minister, but members must care enough to tell the minister how they can improve. For example, if you don't get the point of a Dharma message, say so. However, members should show appreciation first, not just criticism. And temples might offer a suggestion box for anonymous requests.

While the talks were mainly directed toward ministers and temple leaders, the need for sangha members—including even Dharma School students—to participate and be heard was clear. The rap session ended with an upbeat and urgent attitude that spilled over into the Legislative Assembly in the days to follow.

Wailuku Hongwanji Mission BWA Celebrates "Peace Day"



BWA members, Rev. Shinkai Murakami, and temple members surrounded by red peace cranes on Peace Day 2022. Courtesy of Donna Ikeuchi

BY GWEN HIRAGA, PRESIDENT, WHM BUDDHIST WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION
AND BOBBIE PARR, CHAIR, WHM PEACE PROJECT

Wailuku Hongwanji Mission Buddhist Women's Association (BWA) members participated in the International Peace Day exhibit set-up on Sept. 4, 2022, following the Sunday service. On Sept. 21 at 9:01 a.m., the BWA participated in the "Ring Your Bell for Peace Day" ceremony by ringing the temple bell. They also worked on creating a bouquet of origami cranes and making a poster as part of Maui United BWA activities.

Green Dreams for an Earth-Touching Sangha

Honolulu Hongwanji Council (HHC) Field Trip to Ho'oulu 'Āina



BY STEVE LOHSE
CHAIR GREEN HONGWANJI
COMMITTEE, HONPA HONGWANJI
MISSION OF HAWAII

'O ka hā o ka 'āina ke ola
o ka po'e.

*The breath of the land is
the life of the people.*

On a Friday morning in November with perfect weather, 25 people from Honolulu Hongwanji Council (HHC) made a field trip to Ho'oulu 'Āina in Kalihi Valley to come together around forest, food, knowledge, spirituality, and healthy activity. As

Joanne Kealoha of Moiliili notes, Ho'oulu 'Āina is a 100-acre nature preserve in the back of Kalihi Valley that focuses on community health and on the freedom to make connections and build meaningful relationships with the 'āina, each other, and ourselves. See Ho'oulu 'Āina (hoouluaina.org).

All four temples of the HHC participated in the field trip, organized by Hawaii Betsuin and the HHC Committee on Social Concerns (CSC).

Members of the CSC include Pete Doktor of Jikoen, Joanne Kealoha of Moiliili, Prudence Kusano of Windward Buddhist Temple (WBT), and Dave Atcheson and Steve Lohse of Hawaii Betsuin.

The Kyodan Committee on Social Concerns, chaired by Rev. Blayne Higa of



The Ho'oulu 'Āina Community Garden has provided a myriad of yields, including organic food for residents of Kalihi, since 2008. Courtesy of David Atcheson

Kona Hongwanji Mission, and the Hawaii Betsuin Social Concerns Committee combined resources to make a grateful donation to Ho'oulu 'Āina.

As Prudence Kusano of WBT says, "We were pleas-

antly surprised at the setting, the knowledgeable people, and impressed with the work they do for the community and how similar their views are to ours." This field trip was fully as inspirational and value

affirming as we hoped it would be, as well as just plain outdoors fun. The HHC-CSC gratefully shares this community-building experience in hopes that other Kyodan District Committees on Social Concerns might organize their own field trips.

In 2023, World Water Day is Wednesday, March 22. April is Earth Month and Earth Day is Saturday, April 22. We are inescapably interdependent with the environments that we abuse as well as with the environments that we protect! Namō Amida Butsu.

Ho'oulu 'Āina is a project of Kōkua Kalihi Valley Comprehensive Family Services, a federally qualified health center. Volunteer work sessions are held Monday and Wednesday mornings.

Left to right: Hawaii Betsuin members Cindy Alm, Dave Atcheson, and Jo DesMarets surround the statue of Shinran Shonin draped with lei of peace in honor of the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy of peace. The poster at the center contains a photo of Dr. King with the late Thich Nhat Hanh, the famous Vietnamese Buddhist monk and peace activist. (Courtesy of Lois Toyama)



Hawaii Betsuin BWA and Social Concerns Committee Honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

BY WENDIE YUMORI, HAWAII BETSUIN
BUDDHIST WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

On Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Jan. 16, Hawaii Betsuin Buddhist Women's Association (BWA) Past President, Cindy Alm, and newly-installed BWA President, Jo desMarets were aided by Dave Atcheson in draping lei of peace on the statue of Shinran Shonin to honor the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy of peace. The lei of peace were made of hundreds of origami cranes folded and

strung together by BWA members.

Following the lei-draping, 14 Hawaii Betsuin members and friends gathered in the lounge for an MLK Day event coordinated by the temple's Social Concerns Committee. Participants listened to a 1967 speech by Rev. King titled "The Three Evils of Society." Afterwards, they engaged in an informal discussion.

Another component of the MLK Day social concerns event was a Mini Food Drive. In the week leading up to and including MLK Day, members and friends brought in donations of non-perishable food for Hawaii Foodbank.

Rev. Jeffrey Soga Named as HPD Police Chaplain



The Honolulu Police Department (HPD) welcomed Police Chaplain Jeffrey Daien Soga (right) as a new police chaplain on Oct. 3, 2022. Rev. Soga is pictured with HPD Chief Arthur "Joe" Logan after receiving his new position. (Courtesy of Rev. Daido Baba)

On Oct. 3, 2022, the Honolulu Police Department (HPD) welcomed Rev. Jeffrey Daien Soga as a new police chaplain.

The department's Chaplaincy Program offers assistance to employees who experience work or personal challenges and are in need of nondenominational, spiritual support.

Rev. Soga is the resident minister of Waipahu Hongwanji Mission and is also assigned to Waianae Hongwanji Mission.

Rev. Soga was born in Hiroshima, Japan. After graduating from Ryukoku University in Kyoto, he came to Hawaii in 1985 to serve as an overseas minister at the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii. He has served at Hilo

Betsuin, Puna, Pahala, Naalehu, Kahului, and Lahaina Hongwanji Mission temples. He returned to Hilo Betsuin as Rimban from 2015-2017, and he was in charge of operations of the Papaikou, Honomu, Honohina, and Papaaloa Hongwanji Mission temples.

Rev. Soga has a long history of community service. From 2007-2012 he was the Maui County Police Chaplain, and from 2013-2017 he was the Hawaii Island County Police Chaplain. Rev. Soga served on the board of directors for Hospice Maui from 2009-2012, and was president of the Japanese Cultural Society of Maui in 2012.

His wife, Kumika, is also an ordained minister, and they have four grown children.

Being Buddhist in a Multi-cultural Society

BY JANET JUN GUSUKUMA HAMILTON
HONOHINA HONGWANJI MISSION

Editor's Note: This article was written by a Shin Buddhist who grew up on the Big Island. She reminisces about her encounters with Christianity and efforts to gain a deeper understanding of the connections between religions.

My childhood in Hawaii centered around the Buddhist temple in Honohina on the Big Island. The original Honohina village was abandoned in 1969, but members continued at the Ninole temple, which was renamed Honohina Temple in memory of the previous church. I visited other temples, such as when I attended weddings in Honolulu. Once I spoke in the Mililani Temple at the funeral of my Uncle Noboru Yoza, and I found the familiar rituals comforting.

As for Christianity, what did I know about it? Well, I liked Christmas! At the original Honohina temple, Mr. Wataru Iwahashi, our Sunday school teacher, presided over Christmas parties—until one year he said we should call them year-end parties instead.

Once some Christians named Jehovah's Witnesses came to our door, trying to be helpful. After they left, I worried about going to hell.

After graduating from Laupa-hoe High School in 1969, I



Janet Jun Gusukuma Hamilton

went on a long journey, attending colleges in Florida, France, and California. Later in life I taught French and Spanish in high schools. At a certain point in time, I realized that my interest in foreign languages and people began with my childhood in Hawaii. I had attended Japanese language school, taught by Rev. Hatta. I was also used to hearing Hawaiian words and Filipino conversations.

My interest in international languages and people led me along the road to sangha connections in a variety of places. In France I had a Muslim boyfriend from Iraq for two years. He was very kind, and so were his friends from all over the Arab world. When I moved to Berkeley for graduate school, I had a Jewish boyfriend. Then I met the "haole" Christian, Neil Hamilton, who became my husband.

For our wedding in my fiancée's Northern California hometown, I was pre-viewing our

SEE PAGE 8

Sadako Sasaki's "Hiroshima Eternal Flame" Monument Project Gaining Local Support in Hawaii Statewide

Fundraising Programs Honoring the Late Sadako Sasaki Successful

By HIROSHIMA FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE IN HAWAII

Editor's Note: The following article is reprinted with the permission of the Hiroshima Fundraising Committee and was printed in the Oct. 24-30, 2022 issue of Weekly Cultural News.

*"I will write peace on your wings
And you will fly all over the world."
—Sadako Sasaki*

Many of us grew up learning about the story of Sadako Sasaki, a young girl living in Hiroshima when the atomic bomb was dropped on Aug. 6, 1945. Years later, Sadako developed leukemia due to her exposure to radiation. Inspired by the Japanese legend that one's wish will be granted upon folding 1,000 paper cranes, Sadako set out to fold 1,000 cranes.

Today, the origami crane has become an international symbol of peace, and people throughout the world, continue to fold cranes with the hope of peace.

A statue of Sadako and her paper cranes are displayed at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park in her memory and the memory of all children who died from the effects of the atomic bomb.

The family of Sadako Sasaki has been diligently working on two projects to promote the legacy of Sadako: The development and construction of an "Eternal Flame" monument, which, pending approval, is proposed to be situated at the World War II Valor in the Pacific Memorial at Pearl Harbor.

Additionally, a documentary film on the life of Sadako Sasaki is being created in conjunction with

the monument and to preserve her memory forever.

To ensure the preservation of Sadako's legacy in Hawaii, a fundraising committee from the Honpa Hongwanji Mission, the various Hiroshima Kenjin Kais along with other interested groups was organized to raise funds in the State of Hawaii for these two projects.

The fundraising committee has been led by Wayne Miyao, Chairman of the Hiroshima-Hawaii Sister State Committee and President of the Honolulu Hiroshima Kenjin Kai, Arthur Taniguchi, Chairman and President of numerous organizations in Hilo and the Big Island and Bishop Eric Matsumoto of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii as Advisor.

The initial goal for the fundraising was \$20,000, however due to the overwhelming response by individuals and organizations on Oahu and the Big Island, total donations raised amounted to \$35,880, which significantly surpassed the targeted goal!

The majority of the funds raised were from Hilo and the Big Island. According to Co-chairman Arthur Taniguchi, "Many of us have strong ties to



From left: Yuji Sasaki, nephew of the late Sadako Sasaki, and Prime Minister Fumio Kishida showing Sadako's paper crane. (Courtesy of Hiroshima Fundraising Committee)

Hiroshima which have been strengthened over the years. We are honored that several business and individuals led our fundraising efforts including HPM Foundation, Isemoto Contracting, KTA Super Stores, Honpa Hongwanji Hilo Betsuin, Sidney and Aileen Fuke, and Kinuyo Isemoto. We are proud that our friends and businesses on the Big Island have supported our fundraising program and have given generously to our cause."

Co-Chairman Wayne Miyao commented, "We would like to thank our Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii churches and members located throughout the State of Hawaii for participating in our fundraising efforts.

"In the past, they have been so generous to support the Sadako Sasaki Paper Crane Exhibit at Pearl Harbor in March 2013 and the landslides in Hiroshima which caused

loss of lives and damaged properties in April 2014. And now, they have graciously joined us to raise funds for these two projects."

Organizations supporting and contributing to these two projects included:

Oahu: Honolulu Hiroshima Kenjin Kai, Wahiawa, Waiialua Hiroshima Kenjin Kai, Honolulu Japanese Chamber of Commerce, Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii

Hawaii Island: Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Hawaii, East Hawaii Hiroshima Kenjin Kai, Kona Hiroshima Kenjin Kai, Kona Japanese Civic Association, and Japanese Cultural Center of Kona

Statewide: Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii
Bishop Eric Matsumoto of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, who served as an advisor, congratulated all individuals, organizations, and

businesses by saying, "All of us are proud of our Hiroshima heritage and are honored to support these two projects which will keep the memory of Sadako Sasaki alive in the State of Hawaii!"

Masahiro Sasaki, brother of the late Sadako Sasaki, spoke from Japan through Zoom, said, "My son Yuji and I are grateful for the overwhelming support given to us from the people of Hawaii. We consider Hawaii to be our second home as we have made so many friends and supporters through the years. Mahalo to Hawaii from the Sasaki family for cherishing the memory of our dearly departed Sadako."

Postscript by Bishop Eric Matsumoto:

The Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii's participation in this endeavor is inspired by the saying of Shinran Shonin who said, "Those who feel uncertain of birth (in the Pure Land) should say the nembutsu aspiring first for their birth (in the Buddha's Pure Land of Enlightenment). Those who feel that their birth is completely settled should, mindful of the Buddha's benevolence, hold the nembutsu in their hearts and say it to respond in gratitude to that benevolence, with the wish, 'May there be peace in the world, and may the Buddha's teaching spread!' Please consider this carefully." From the early years of 2000, Hawaii Kyodan has been focusing on nurturing peace, especially with the establishment of "Peace Day" in Hawaii through the efforts of the Hawaii Federation of Jr. YBAs in 2007, and since 2012, we have been in collaboration with Sadako Legacy in promoting world peace.

2023 Spring Seminar In-person and on ZOOM at Hilo Betsuin

Featured Speaker is Rev. Elaine Donlin of BCSF



Rev. Elaine Donlin

You are invited to attend the 2023 Spring Seminar at the Honpa Hongwanji Hilo Betsuin on Saturday, March 18, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The event will be held in person and on ZOOM in our YBA Hall.

The featured speaker will be Rev. Elaine Donlin of the Buddhist Church of San Francisco (BCSF), California.

She will present on the 2023 Hongwanji Slogan: *Building Healthy Sanghas: Sharing Joy Together.*

After her presentation there will be opportunities for questions and answers, and a Dharma discussion will follow for one hour after lunch.

Rev. Elaine Donlin became a Minister As-

sistant in 2008, and received Tokudo at Nishi Hongwanji in 2013. She is a founding member of the BCSF LGBTQ+ group, the first such temple group within the Buddhist Churches of America. She served as Federation of Buddhist Women's Associations (FBWA) President in 2019 and 2020.

For over 10 years Elaine Sensei has partnered with the San Francisco Zen Center to provide Meditation and Buddhist teachings in the SF County Men's and Women's Jails.

She is passionate about interfaith collaboration and has served on the San Francisco Interfaith Council Board of Directors for the past six years.

She has led a monthly Metta Gathering in Shin temples in San Francisco, Mill Valley, and Sebastopol for the past 10 years. She has also organized the BCSF Winter Shelter Hot Meal Program for those without homes for the past 10 years. She has also participated in international interfaith collaborations.

The event begins with an Interfaith Forum on the topic "Interfaith: Caring Across Cultures and Beliefs" on Friday evening in the main temple hall, 7-9 p.m. The forum is free and open to the public. The Saturday session is from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. There is a fee of \$10 to cover lunch and materials.

Please register at the temple office located at 398 Kilauea Avenue by Thursday, March 16.

You may also attend the Saturday session for free on ZOOM.


In addition, Rev. Donlin will give a Dharma message at our Hilo Betsuin Spring Higan Service on Sunday, March 14 at 9 a.m., which may be attended in person or watched on ZOOM at the link below.

Here is the 2023 Spring Seminar and Spring Higan Service Zoom link and information:

<https://zoom.us/j/93470607158?pwd=NTdqRDBaUmhSQ2VXZHM5Zzd-GOEZGUT09>
Meeting ID: 934 7060 7158
Passcode: HHHB




Enjoy reading this issue of Ka Leo Kāheā? Please support our quarterly publication with a donation. You may use the QR code or mail a check to HHMH.



Buddhist Study Center
2023 Spring Virtual Session
Saturday, March 25, 2023
10am-12pm

"FELLOW TRAVELERS IN SHIN BUDDHISM"
Presented by Rev. Jon Turner, Orange County Buddhist Church



Let's hear about the journey of a fellow Shin Buddhist traveler, Rev. Jon Turner. Rev. Turner was introduced to Shin Buddhism when his family began attending the Orange County Buddhist Church (OCBC) in 1999. Later he joined the Minister's Assistant Program. In 2010, Rev. Turner graduated from the Institute of Buddhist Studies at Berkeley with a master's degree in Buddhist Studies and received his Tokudo ordination. In 2017 became a fully ordained Kaikyoshi minister at OCBC.

Our founder, Shinran Shonin referred to his followers as equal companions and "fellow travelers" (Ondobo Ondogyo) in the Dharma. Shinran taught us that, without exception, we are all "brothers and sisters" embraced by Amida Buddha's Wisdom and Compassion.

The program will explore this unique Shin Buddhist understanding that developed from Shinran's life experience as a monk and then a lay teacher. We urge all Jodo Shinshu followers (ministers and members) to become fellow travelers and listeners of the Buddha Dharma.

Everyone is Welcome! Register online at: <https://forms.gle/CvXICZhsKe4Gguy17>
Or, fill in form below & mail to the BSC. Please register by **Saturday, March 18, 2023.**

Donations Welcome: All gifts received will be donated to the BSC & go toward furthering Buddhist education. Give online at <http://bit.ly/hhmdonate> Or, checks can be made payable to HHMH & mailed to the Buddhist Study Center. Questions? Call the BSC office at (808) 973-6555.

~ Registration Form for 2023 BSC Spring Session ~

Name: _____ Temple (if applicable): _____

Email/Phone: _____

Mail to: Buddhist Study Center • 1436 University Ave. Honolulu, HI 96822

Or register at the Buddhist Study Center website.

Bloom-Futaba Memorial Lecture: Turning Poisons into HUGs

Rev. Dr. Kenji Akahoshi Invited to Speak at 2023 BSC Summer Session

By **DEXTER MAR**, HONPA HONGWANJI HAWAII BETSUIN

At the 23rd Annual Bloom-Futaba Memorial Lecture held on Oct. 7, 2022, Rev. Dr. Kenji Akahoshi visited the Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin to share his perspectives on everyday Shin Buddhism.

Recently retired as resident minister of the Buddhist Temple of San Diego (California), Kenji Sensei spoke on “Meditation, Mindfulness, and Gratitude: The Natural Path to Awakening and Joy.” He calls it the easy path of gratitude that replaces a “please” mentality with a “thank you” attitude.

American culture embraces the individual (the self) and Christian values promote petitionary

prayer as a fundamental practice, so changing from “please” to “thank you” requires tremendous understanding, intention, and effort. The effort takes the form of concentrated practice in everyday life.

The first step is developing the habit of appreciating our ordinary entitlements. We take for granted most of the conveniences of our modern society and are prone to complain when life does not meet our high expectations. High prices, too long wait times, too many rules, taxes, masks, shots, etc. Is it a miracle when a first responder saves a life? Or is it the result of planning, training, and readiness? Our lives are interconnected to the efforts of others who, through their actions, effect our lives every day. Why do we so easily forget to be thank-



Rev. Dr. Kenji Akahoshi

ful?

American culture constantly reinforces our blind passions and triggers the three poisons: hate, ignorance, and greed. As Shin Buddhists, our goal is to transform these poisons with the antidotes of Humility, Understanding, and Gratitude—for which Rev. Kenji uses the acronym HUG.

In developing the habit

of saying “thank you” for simple, everyday benefits (like light switches, faucets, the toilet, your car), you can gradually shift from a “please” attitude to a “thank you” gratitude.

2023 Summer Session

Rev. Akahoshi introduced his ideas at the Bloom-Futaba Lecture in two brief presentations. He will return to Hawaii to provide a more in-depth workshop/retreat to help attendees further understand and follow the “easy path of gratitude” at the 2023 Buddhist Study Center (BSC) Summer Session, to be held at the Honolulu BSC from June 12-16 (subject to change). The BSC Summer Session will aim to help attendees experience the perspective that makes ordinary life an extraordinary reality. More information and registration details will be available at the

HHMH website.

About Rev. Dr. Kenji Akahoshi

Kenji Sensei’s unique style of presenting the Shin Dharma comes from his background in Transpersonal (spiritual) Psychology and other mind/body/spirit disciplines. He graduated from UCSF Dental School (DDS), Institute of Transpersonal Psychology (MATP), and the Institute of Buddhist Studies (MBS). He had a private practice for 30 years in San Jose. At the San Jose Betsuin, he served as board president, chaplain at the Santa Clara County Juvenile Hall, led education discussions, and conducted vision quests for high school students. Dr. Akahoshi has conducted Shin retreats since 1998. He retired in 2021 as the resident minister of the Buddhist Temple of San Diego.

“Cranes for Peace” at Wailuku Hongwanji

Dharma School Reopens with Peace Day Activities

By **JOAN TAMORI**, DIRECTOR, WAILUKU HONGWANJI MISSION DHARMA SCHOOL

After a two-and-a-half year hiatus due to the pandemic, the Wailuku Hongwanji Mission Dharma School opened up at long last, with a joint grade group activity that focused on peace in observance of worldwide Peace Day in September 2022. The activity ran for two Sundays, Sept. 11 and Sept. 18, and drew a small but enthusiastic number of students, families, and teachers.

On Sept. 11 after the service, students

folded colorful origami paper cranes, little boxes, and pinwheels, and enjoyed coloring peace-themed drawings.

On the 18th, after refreshments, a huge clear plastic bag filled with the folded paper cranes, small toys, candies, and balloons, was suspended by Mike Munekiyo and Ed Tamori high above on the second floor railing of the social hall building.

Teacher Laurie Fukushima-Tsai arranged to have a ripcord sent down to the students below, who then pulled it. The bag burst open and the goodies showered down onto the overjoyed students!



Dharma school students participating in “Cranes for Peace” activity for World Peace Day, 2022. (Courtesy of Joan Tamori)

West Kauai Hongwanji Mission 25th Anniversary



More than 100 people gathered to celebrate the West Kauai Hongwanji Mission 25th Anniversary Service and Shinran Shonin Statue Dedication Ceremony on Nov. 13, 2022. (Courtesy of Dennis Fujimoto / The Garden Island)

By **REV. TOMO HOJO**, WEST KAUAI HONGWANJI MISSION

West Kauai Hongwanji Mission celebrated its 25th Anniversary Service and Shinran Shonin Statue Dedication Ceremony on Nov. 13, 2022, at Hana-pepe Temple.

Among those in attendance were special guests Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii (HHMH) Bishop Eric Matsumoto, HHMH President Dr. Warren Tamamoto, Rev. Shindo Nishiyama, and others. The hybrid-style service was held in-person and on Zoom, with over 100 attendees.

The West Kauai Hongwanji Mission is the result of the merging of the Hanapepe, Waimea, and Koloa Hongwanji temples. Each of the three temples has over 110 years of history.

The decision to consolidate was made in order to cope with changing conditions in the area. The West Kauai Hongwanji Mission was incorporated in 1996. Bishop Chikai Yosemori installed the West Kauai Hongwanji Mission Board of Directors on June 9, 1996, over twenty-five years ago. The full consolidation of the three temples took place on Jan. 1, 2011.

The service was held in appreciation to all ministers, members, and friends who have supported the West Kauai Hongwanji Mission for more than twenty-five years. It also honored the members who overcame great hardships over 100 years ago to build the temples that we enjoy today. “I believe that this 25th anniversary is a steppingstone to the next 25, 50, and 100 years to share Shinran Shonin’s teachings,” said resident minister Rev. Tomo Hojo.

A New Monto Shikisho is available at HHMH Bookstore!

The Honzan in Japan released newly designed *monto shikisho* in commemoration of the 850th Anniversary of the Birth of Shinran Shonin and the 800th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Jodo Shinshu Teaching, which will be held in Kyoto, Japan in 2023.

The commemorative design features two crests that are embossed over a reddish-brown brocade background. The background pattern consists of pine needles woven within

a ginkgo leaf-shaped silhouette. The two crests are comprised of the *sagarifuji* (hanging wisteria) and *tsuru* (crane) motifs.

The *tsuru* crest showing two facing cranes has been adopted from the crest of the aristocratic Hino family into which Shinran Shonin was born. The pine needle design represents the birth name of Shinran Shonin, Matsuwaka, which is composed of two Chinese characters for “pine” and “young.” The ginkgo leaf

pattern is associated with the ginkgo tree that stands on the Inada Gobo temple grounds where Shinran Shonin is believed to have written his lifework, *Kyogyoshinsho*.

The continuous design of the background pattern expresses the bonds of connection between Nembutsu followers through the ages embraced by Shinran Shonin’s Nembutsu path.

The *shikisho* is now available for \$45 each at the HHMH Bookstore. It

will be great to wear the *shikisho* at the Joint Celebration Service at Honzan in the spring of 2023 and also at the Triple Celebration Service (also celebrating the 135th anniversary of Jodo Shinshu in Hawaii) in 2024.

If you are interested in the special commemorative *shikisho*, please stop by the HHMH Bookstore in the HQ office during the business hours, or contact us by email hqbooks@honpahi.org, or call (808) 522-9202.



The *shikisho* is a simplified version of a *kesa* for lay members. Modeled after a minister’s *wagesa*, the overall size has been reduced and two ends tied together by a decorative cord. Members are encouraged to wear the *shikisho* whenever participating in services or other Buddhist observances.

Taiko at PBA

Continued from Page 1

Students in PBA's performance taiko group Hyaku Sen Ki Kai are also preparing for the upcoming taiko festival. In addition to attending Jay Toyofuku's taiko class every Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, the students have performed at various events such as the annual Schools of the Future conference hosted by the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools and Make Music Hawaii, where they set up on the sidewalk of downtown Honolulu outside of Central Pacific Bank. The taiko group serves an important ambassadorial function for the school.

Taiko drumming is known as the heartbeat of Japan, with early Japanese taiko being performed in rituals, theaters, and the military. Students at PBA are preserving the beloved form of art and are enriched by its virtues of patience and interdependence. "Learning and



Students in PBA's Hyaku Sen Ki Kai taiko group perform at last year's festival. (Courtesy of Pacific Buddhist Academy)

continuing the art of taiko is important to me as it is a form of expression," said sophomore Kaya Blum. "It is universal and a method of conveying history and emotions both in an ensemble and individually. I've found a passion in the culture and enjoy the freedom of expressing myself without words. Therefore, I want to continue learning and playing taiko to keep the spirit alive and strengthen my connec-

tion with it."

One group of students particularly excited for their debut festival performance are the freshmen. They are being introduced to the tradition of "Sōran" for the first time and inspired to further master their taiko skills. Freshman Maya Galvez came to PBA with previous taiko experience. While it is mandatory for all students to take the beginning taiko course, Maya is one of two fresh-

men in Hyaku Sen Ki Kai. "Taiko to me is a way to show your hard work, commitment, discipline, and teamwork in a performance for others and yourself to enjoy. I'm excited because, for us freshmen, this year is our first festival, and I am excited to perform with everyone on stage," shared Maya.

Jay Sensei has been teaching taiko at PBA since the school first opened in 2003. He not only teaches his students rhythms and beats, but the history behind each piece they perform. The cultural element of each number is a key piece to the preservation of taiko as it paints the story that each player must convey through their movements. The piece "Mishaguji Yabusame," composed by Daihachi Oguchi, depicts the form of Japanese archery where the archer is on horseback. In this piece, the performer's arm motions resemble the shooting of an arrow. "Jay Sensei teaches us the origins behind each song,"

explained senior Chad Okawa. "This knowledge helps us understand the motions we should emulate and brings more power and emotion to our performance. It is also another way to preserve culture and I'm grateful for the opportunity to do so!" The group will be performing two of Chad's originally composed pieces: "Aspirations" and "Senri No Michi." "Senri no Michi," meaning journey of a thousand miles, is a dedication to the senior class and their journey together.

PBA's annual taiko festival raises money for programs such as taiko, sumo, and sado (tea ceremony). It also helps bring our school together in preparation to showcase the hard work and talent of students and teachers. It reminds us of the values of respect and patience that we strive to maintain, and it helps fulfill our lives as practitioners of peace. Thank you to everyone who has supported our school and the traditions we cherish deeply!

BWA

Continued from Page 3

recognized, the following three were in attendance and presented with gifts: Edythe Vassall (Hilo), Naomi Hirayasu (Puna), and June Kiyabu (Puna). Unable to attend were Noriko Takahashi, Miranda Thomas, Janice Waterlow, Karen Fuji, Candice Imamura, Maya Kondo, Lois Nakamichi, and Trudy Sugiyama (from Hilo), Linda Iwata (from Puna), and Mr.

Jules Dudoit, Mimi Bergstrom, and Mryna Kunihiro (from Kona).

Members from four units were present and approved two important donations. The first was to the HHMH Ministerial Training Fund to help support the establishment of an endowment fund that supports present ministers and ministerial aspirants who want to become Hawaii Kyodan ministers. The other was to the Ichi-Mi Video Project at Gardena Buddhist Church

(California) for production of a video to promote understanding, acceptance, and tolerance of the LG-BTQ+ community. This video will be available for showing at educational workshops, individual temples, and Sangha gatherings.

After the meeting, Hilo BWA hosted the Buddhist Education Seminar that featured a film by Skye Bergman, titled *Lives Well Lived*. Numerous individuals, 70 and older, were interviewed and related

their life stories and lessons on how to stay active physically and mentally for emotional stability. All seemed to have the right attitude about age being only a number, and that you can accomplish almost anything you set out to do with right thoughts and actions. It is a film about being grateful for each day, no matter what happens or has happened in the past.

Rimban Takahashi gave the concluding message and enhanced their stories

by mentioning the Buddha Dharma teachings that help us live our daily lives in the best way that we can. He reassured us that we are accepted just as we are by simply entrusting ourselves to Amida Buddha's infinite wisdom and compassion.

The sharing of food is a great connector, too, and everyone enjoyed the array of desserts for morning refreshments, and the delicious bento that was served at lunchtime.

Take care till we meet again, everyone!

Bishop

Continued from Page 2

Name, they are all called 'people who practice great compassion.'

Nurturing people of Nembutsu continues to this day. Last Oct. 8-9 at the Buddhist Study Center, 15 people from nine temples gathered at our annual Minister Lay Assistants Retreat. Within the group I could sense a wonderful feeling of joy and gratitude mixed with a deep commitment to help at temple. "As the light of a small candle will spread from one to another in succession, so the light of Buddha's compassion will pass on from one mind to another endlessly." I saw that in action as Rev. Kenji Akahoshi, Rev. Toshiyuki Umitani, Rev. Daido Baba, and lay teacher Dr. Dexter Mar imparted their knowledge and expertise while encouraging everyone to recite the Nembutsu. It

was profoundly rewarding to hear participants of the retreat talking about Amida Buddha and reciting the Nembutsu, loudly and clearly.

The Minister Lay Assistants program is designed to nurture lay volunteers interested in helping in spiritual tasks and Dharma-centered projects at their temples. There is a need to identify, train, and recruit more individuals to become assistants and even clergy or ministers—but there is no obligation to become a minister. As we experience a shortage of ministers and as the responsibilities of ministers' increase and grow more complex, the need for lay assistants becomes crucial for the Hawaii Kyodan. It begins at the local temples. We need to plant the seeds now.

The 2023 Ministers Lay Assistant Retreat will be held in early or mid-October. Please mark your

calendars. We hope to see more attendees! There is a subsidy to help with expenses. We would like to encourage anyone who has an interest in helping your minister(s) at your temple to join us.

This year we are observing the 850th Anniversary of the Birth of Shinran Shonin and the 800th Anniversary of the Establishment of Jodo Shinshu Teaching. Also, we will celebrate Hawaii Kyodan's 135th Anniversary in 2024. Let us bring our slogans "Sharing Joy Together" (2023) and "Sharing Nembutsu Moments" (2024) to life with all who have an interest in Buddha-Dharma. Thus, the lives of many more people can be enriched by the Nembutsu and we can witness the blooming of many more white lotuses.

Thank you and Namō Amida Butsu/Entrusting in All-Inclusive Wisdom and All-Embracing Compassion (Amida Buddha).

President's Message

Continued from Page 3

mission statement is: "To prepare students for college through academic excellence; to enrich their lives with Buddhist values; and to develop their courage to nurture peace."

The promotion of peace as a personal and organi-

zational goal is an excellent reason to join our Sangha. And as I type this, I can think of a couple of other great reasons; to be happy, and to try our best to leave this world a little better than it was.

What do you think? How would you answer the question, "What is the value of membership in your temple?"

In Gassho

Celebration

Continued from Page 3

together move toward the realization of a society in which everyone is able to live a life of spiritual fulfillment. We look forward to seeing you at the celebration. Please save the date and look for more information which will become available later this year.

To promote and increase awareness and appreciation of the significance of the Triple Celebration, we have asked several individuals to write articles on this event for *Ka Leo Kāhea* from the next issue until the end of 2024.

Let's together celebrate this once a lifetime opportunity and welcome 2024 commemoration with hope and aspiration!

Multi-Cultural

Continued from Page 5

wedding vows. That "G-word" (God) made me uncomfortable because it seemed to only apply to Christianity, so wherever I saw "God," I substituted "the Spirit of Love." Our Congregational minister was fine with that because he was open-minded and read books on Zen Buddhism.

As a married couple, we moved several times within California. When we moved to the San Francisco Bay Area we

attended the Unity Center of Walnut Creek, a Christian church which promoted the idea that all religions teach the same things. While the regular minister was gone on summer vacation, she scheduled guest speakers including a Buddhist nun, a Jewish rabbi, and a Catholic monk. Then in the fall the kids in Sunday school celebrated a Hindu festival. I found these sangha connections stimulating. Also noteworthy, "New Age" ideas were sweeping the country in the 1970s and 1980s. Eastern customs such as

yoga, meditation, and Zen Buddhism were becoming popular.

When we moved to Stockton, my husband's Episcopalian minister asked why his wife did not attend church. Neil said, "She's Buddhist." The priest beamed and recommended "a very nice Buddhist church on the other side of town." I was amazed and thought that I just might attend his church with my husband, because he did not judge Buddhists negatively.

For many years I continued my connection with the Honohina Hongwanji.

Recently I was reading in *Ka Leo Kāhea* about the closing of the Papaaloo Temple. Dr. Warren Tamamoto reminded us that the phenomenon of change is a universal reality. This brings up the subject of attachment to the past, which is resistance to change. That can be painful. Of course endings can often lead to new beginnings, such as when we find new and meaningful friends and companions.

I especially liked how Dr. Tamamoto noted that Amida Buddha is non-judgmental and therefore

radiates unconditional love. I realized that this non-judgmental attitude had facilitated my connections to others. Buddhist compassion and empathy enabled me to imagine myself in other people's shoes. I hoped that this would lead to peace on earth. Very important as well, I realized that while I was reaching out to other people, they, too, were reaching out to me. They were actively extending their hands and opening their hearts in friendship and love. Perhaps there might be a universal quest for love and peace?