



Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii

HEADQUARTERS UPDATE

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BISHOP'S CORNER

"Aloha, where East Meets West: A Significant Mo'olelo (Story) From My Faith."

Bishop Eric Matsumoto



Earlier this year, in observance of the United Nation's World Interfaith Harmony, numerous faith traditions gathered for the 3rd World Religions' Conference sponsored by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community of Honolulu at their Kalihi Mosque. Bishop Eric Matsumoto was invited to represent the Buddhist Community. Each tradition was given 7 minutes for a presentation on the theme. The following message is a condensed version of the message shared by Bishop Matsumoto introducing the story of Kisagotami (slightly adapted) from BDK's *The Teaching of Buddha*.

Once, there was a young woman named Kisagotami, the wife of a wealthy man, who lost her mind because of the death of her child. She took the dead child in her arms and went from house to house begging people to heal the child. Of course, they could do nothing for her, but finally a follower of the Buddha advised her to see the Blessed One (Sakyamuni Buddha).

The Blessed One looked upon her with empathy and said: "To heal the child I need some poppy seeds; go and beg for four or five poppy seeds from some home where death has never entered."

So (she)...sought a house where death had never entered, but in vain. At last, she was obliged to return to the Buddha. In his quiet presence her mind cleared and she understood the meaning of his words. ...(she)...became one of his disciples.

This actual story from the life of the Historic Buddha shares the truth or reality of impermanence, that everyone and everything is subject to change including the human body which, born of conditional causes and conditions, is thus subject to old age, sickness and death. This may sound pessimistic, but in actuality it depicts reality. The goal of Buddhism is to be in touch with reality and in that way attain perfect peace and tranquility by becoming aware and thus not attached to false perceptions of our ego. As the Historic Buddha said,

Life is ever changing; none can escape the dissolution of the body. ...the true Buddha is not a human body: -it is Enlightenment. A human body must die, but the Wisdom of Enlightenment will exist forever in the truth of the Dharma...

This understanding of the impermanent nature of the self, however, does not totally negate life and living and deny the significance of the body as we find in the following quote.

Those who hear and receive the Buddha's teaching know that their lives are transient...so they do not become attached to them. At the same time, they do not neglect to take good care of their

bodies, not because they wish to enjoy the physical pleasures of the body, but because the body is temporarily necessary for the attainment of wisdom and for their mission of explaining the Path to others.

The Buddhist view embraces old age, sickness and death as a natural part of life. Ajahn Brahm shares

I came to know...a region steeped in Buddhist teachings...(where) death was accepted by all in a way that defied Western theories of grief and loss. ...there is an alternative to grief. Not that grief is wrong, only that there is another possibility.

*Loss of a loved one can be viewed in a second way, a way that avoids the long days of aching grief.”
“Grief is seeing only what has been taken away from you. The celebration of life is recognizing all that we were blessed with, and feeling so very grateful.*

From my own Jodo Shinshu or Shin Buddhist Tradition, I am recalling a poem written by Ayako Suzuki. She died of cancer, but she wrote the following remarkable poem.

*Now I finally understand the Buddha’s words.
For this life that I have received,
I am very thankful.
For this body that is able to listen
To the Buddha-Dharma,
I am very thankful.
For the Nembutsu that I have been able to receive,
I am very thankful.
And now, with inner joy and gratitude,
I also receive the end of my life.*

Ayako Suzuki encountered both the Wisdom and the Compassion of Enlightenment. It is not the attainment of Enlightenment by her, but she came into contact with it. On one hand, she came to understand one aspect of the Wisdom of Enlightenment that life is subject to change and at the same time she experienced the embrace of the Amida Buddha’s Great Compassion known as Namo Amida Butsu, which, unconditionally, just as we are, embraces one and all who Entrust, and vows that no matter what I shall never abandon you (and all who Entrust) under any circumstance and eventually bring about your Enlightenment.

Now, what does this have to do with “East meets West?” There is much we can learn from this “Eastern” view of life and when combined with the “Western” role of medicine and health care, it can produce a much more balanced view of life and a realistic role of medicine and health care which will benefit patients and health care professionals too. I am a supporter of the integration of spiritual care into health care for a more holistic approach as being advocated by individuals such as Dr. Christina Puchalski.

To conclude, for us of Hawaii guided by the Aloha Spirit, we are in a good position to offer to the world, a very special gift. Hawaii is truly where “East meets West” and today’s program is a prime example of it. I am honored to have been able to share today. Thank you and Namo Amida Butsu/Entrusting in All-Inclusive Wisdom and All-Embracing Compassion.



KAPOLEI BUDDHIST SANGHA NEWS

On April 17, 2023, twenty-five people connected with the Kapolei Buddhist Sangha, a few who were part of the original Sangha rallied together by the late Rev. Henry Tanaka who was the founding minister of the Kapolei Sangha, gathered at the Buddhist Study Center for a closing service. The Sangha decided to close by the end of April 2023. The service was officiated by Bishop Eric Matsumoto assisted by current minister of KBS Rev. Bert Sumikawa who also shared a brief history of KBS. Former ministers Rev. David Nakamoto and Rev. David Fujimoto were also in attendance. Rev. Daido Baba and Derrick Inouye also assisted. Hawaii Kyodan State President Dr. Warren Tamamoto, besides saying a few words, together with Oahu Hongwanji Council President Mr. Russell Nonaka, offered incense. What was envisioned as a very simple closing service with only a handful of people in attendance turned out to be moving final service of Kapolei Buddhist Sangha as members including some supporters from Oahu temples attended and came forth to share their warm thoughts and gratitude tinged with a bit of sadness in their hearts. Bishop Matsumoto encouraged everyone to not focus on only their sadness and emphasized the importance of continuing to live a life of Nembutsu. He quoted from the late Rev. Henry Tanaka's book, *Shin Buddhism 24/7*, in which Rev. Tanaka quotes a saying by Rev. Masahiro Yoshimaro, "Living Nembutsu means the constant examination of myself in the presence of the (Amida) Buddha." He concluded by saying that though Kapolei Buddhist Sangha may no longer exist, as individuals they could still share their awareness, joy and gratitude of Amida Buddha's Great Wisdom and Compassion as expressed by Shinran Shonin "I praise Amida's wisdom and virtue, So that beings with mature conditions throughout the ten quarters may hear. Let those who have already realized shinjin, Constantly respond in gratitude to the Buddha's benevolence." The evening ended with delicious refreshments planned by KBS President Cyrus Sakai. President Sakai expressed Kapolei Buddhist Sangha's gratitude to all those who had supported KBS all these years! "Thank you very much and Namo Amida Butsu."



SOCIAL CONCERNS COMMUNITY GIVING UPDATE

The Committee on Social Concerns recently made donations to extend compassionate action into the local community:

Community Giving

\$2,500 Ohana Arts—Peace on Your Wings Japan Tour

\$2,500 Commission on Buddhist Education "Buddhism and Coming Out" initiative to support LGBTQIA+ trainings and educational materials for temples.

\$1,000 Maui Farm

\$1,000 Vibrant Hawaii

\$500 Hawaii State Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters 2023 Summit

Disaster Relief

- \$250 Shut Down Red Hill Mutual Aid—Matching grant to supplement Green Hongwanji Committee/Honolulu Hongwanji Council donation to purchase clean water for families affected by the Red Hill water crisis.
- \$1,000 Omimai for Kahului Hongwanji Member

Golden Chain Grant

- \$500 Windward Buddhist Temple “Kailua Service Care Events” assisting homeless individuals in the community.
- \$1,000 Puna Hongwanji Buddhist Temple “Children’s Day Sharing Joy” community event.
- \$1,000 Naalehu Hongwanji Mission “Help the Seniors Project” assisting kupuna living alone in the community.

The Committee on Social Concerns serves a vital role in sharing the living teachings of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism in practical and meaningful ways that directly impacts the lives of individuals and communities. Mahalo for your continued support!

KAHUKU HONGWANJI SCHOLARSHIP

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



Eligibility:

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

Application Deadline: July 31st of the year of application

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

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

BOOK LAUNCH

The Institute of Buddhist Studies announces a new book launch for Dr. Scott Mitchell's new book, "The Making of American Buddhism," on May 24th at 10:00 am HST on Zoom. The moderator will be Dr. Chenxing Han.

Dr. Mitchell was the 2022 Summer Session speaker at BSC. At that session, Dr. Mitchell introduced the source material for his new book to the attendees. The primary source is the *Berkeley Bussei*. In addition, the following is a quote from an interview posted on the Institute of Buddhist Studies web page Dr. Mitchell gave in 2019 regarding his book "The Making of American Buddhism."

"My current project is a study of a series of publications by the Young Buddhist Association of the Berkeley Buddhist Temple in the 1950s, the *Berkeley Bussei*. These were, basically, literary journals with essays by Buddhist laypeople and priests, as well as philosophers, poets, play-writes, and artists. I'm interested in exploring what their work has to say about Buddhist modernity and American Buddhism at the transnational intersection of global Buddhist modernity and Japanese American history — and what these conversations can tell us about Buddhism and Buddhist communities in the present."

Please follow the link : <https://www.shin-ibs.edu/event/race-place-and-religious-labor-a-book-launch-event-for-the-making-of-american-buddhism/> for more information.

SAVE THE DATE:UPCOMING EVENT

LGBTQIA+ 101 EDUCATIONAL SESSION

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>
(We will be accepting late registrations)

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