



Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii

HEADQUARTERS UPDATE

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May 2023

BISHOP'S CORNER

"Go forth...for the good of the many..."

Bishop Eric Matsumoto



On Sunday, May 7, 2023, the Pacific Buddhist Academy held Commencement Exercises for 17 Graduates of PBA's Class of 2023. It was held at the beautiful 700-seat Moanalua Performing Arts Center which is equipped with state-of-the-art audio-visual systems and LED lighting not to mention air-conditioned. As is the unique tradition of PBA, the Head of School gave a tribute to each individual Graduate. Further, each Graduate expressed their appreciation by acknowledging the support they received from their families by giving a kukui nut lei to them as families were called onstage. The feeling of sangha was strong. The following is the Benediction of the Commencement Exercises delivered by Bishop Eric Matsumoto, the 16th Bishop of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii.

Benediction for Pacific Buddhist Academy's Class of 2023 Commencement Exercises

Today, as Pacific Buddhist Academy's Commencement Exercises for the Class of 2023 draws to a close, in the presence of Amida Buddha, All-Inclusive Wisdom and All-Embracing Compassion, let us reflect.

As we congratulate our Graduates, we hope that some of the universal Teachings and Virtues of the Buddha will guide our Graduates for the rest of their life. The most fundamental Teaching or Truth that the Historic Buddha, 2600 years ago, became aware of is that all life, all existence is interconnected and interrelated and nothing exists in total isolation by itself as depicted by the beautiful metaphor of Indra's Jeweled Net meaning we should mutually respect, care and appreciate one another.

A virtue of an Enlightened Person is that the Buddha's very existence benefits both the Buddha and also everyone (and everything) else. It is not that one does something for oneself and does something else for someone else, but whatever one does brings benefit to (both) self and others, together, simultaneously. May our Graduates live their life and continue their endeavors guided by this virtue of the Buddha.

We hope our Graduates will be guided and inspired by Enlightened Wisdom and Compassion for more peace and harmony in the world. As encouragement, I would like to share the exhortation of the Historic Buddha to the monks and nuns of Ancient India to our Graduates (as they go forward themselves). The Buddha said *"Go forth...for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the welfare, the good and the happiness of gods and people."*

To slowly conclude, may we express our gratitude to one and all. Let us express our gratitude to each other. As we thank our Graduates for their endeavors, let us all express gratitude to all others who played a part in our lives.

Finally, to conclude this Benediction, for those who wish to join me, please join me in gassho/anjali, a gesture of reverence and respect in Buddhism, to recite Namu Amida Butsu, The Buddha's Name That I Call in Gratitude in response to Namu Amida Butsu, The Buddha's Name Which Calls Me to Entrust.

Namu Amida Butsu, Namu Amida Butsu. Namu Amida Butsu/ Entrusting in All-Inclusive Wisdom and All-Embracing Compassion.

MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR GENERAL OF JODO SHINSHU HONGWANJI-HA BISHOP CHIKO IWAGAMI FOR 2023 PBA BACCALAUREATE

First, congratulations to this year's graduates!

As we share this moment, you may be looking back on the many memories of your time spent here at PBA.

Graduation marks the end of one of many chapters in one's lifetime, and at the same time, it is also the starting point as you embark on a new goal. As you set off from Pacific Buddhist Academy, you will carry the memories of your days here at PBA together with your hopes and dreams in the next phase of your life.

In response to the Novel Coronavirus pandemic these past three years, in-person learning, as well as extracurricular activities and events have been limited. As a result, your senior year of high school may not have gone as you had hoped, and many may have found this very disappointing. But perhaps, these unprecedented circumstances gave us an opportunity to stop and carefully think about our lifestyle and future that we had been taking for granted.

Bulletin boards at schools are often used for making announcements and sometimes displays a motto or slogan. Buddhist temples also have this kind of bulletin board on which inspirational words or a short phrase filled with Buddhist wisdom are shared. Maybe you have seen one of these. A few years ago, a Japan-based Buddhist organization called Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai held a contest of inspirational phrases shared by Buddhist temples through their bulletin boards. This contest, which is called "Let it Shine! Temple Bulletin Board Project" has been gaining attention in Japan. The Grand Prize winner for 2020, which was selected from a total of 1,677 entries, was a remark made by a salesperson of a drugstore in Kanagawa prefecture, which was displayed at a temple in Kumamoto prefecture. It read, "The thing that scared me the most was not COVID, but humans."

We were faced with many challenges when the first state of emergency was declared in Japan in April 2020. The media reported that a healthy person with no underlying health conditions had died of COVID-19 within a couple of days. People were panic buying face masks and hand sanitizers. Customers were lashing out at store employees because of the empty shelves. Some were even engaging in the reselling of medical masks and price gouging. In learning that we become infected through contact with others, we have become suspicious of people around us. Sadly, this has led to stigma and discrimination against frontline medical workers and COVID-19 patients. Everyone is scared in the same way, but the feeling of fear has driven us into an egocentric shell. The phrase, "the most terrifying are humans," is a description of the reality of us humans, which was revealed in the circumstance of the pandemic.

The phrase that took second place in the contest that year was one that was displayed on the bulletin board of Tsukiji Hongwanji in Tokyo, a Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha branch temple. The phrase is, “Even if you hurt me, I would not hurt you back. This is Buddhism.”

In fact, Sakyamuni Buddha taught us that if you take revenge on someone, in turn, that person will take revenge on you, and so in this way, the hatred would never end. In the sutra, *Dhammapada*, it states “In this world, if we respond to hatred with hatred, hatred will never cease.” It explains that hatred will cease only by relinquishing it. I hope every one of you will always be able to share in the joy and sadness of others, not putting oneself first.

What awaits us in the future is unknown. There may be happy occasions, as well as some sad ones too. Please continue learning more about Buddhism, which is the spiritual legacy of this school’s foundation, and Buddhism will surely provide you with the guidance you need whenever you are feeling lost in your own fear or hatred.

Our lives are all interrelated and interconnected. It is important that we keep in mind this feeling of gratitude for one another, as we continue to practice the spirit of placing our hands in *gassho*, and make every effort to respect and uphold the dignity of all life. In today’s world, we are too often only concerned with the results. Although you may endeavor, it may not always pay off. However, try to not feel distressed in such situations, and try not to boast when your efforts are rewarded. All you need to do is just continue in your efforts. When this naturally comes to you, you are then a truly respectful and beautiful human.

It is my hope that you will face things you encounter with a feeling of gratitude that “thanks to you, I am enabled to dedicate myself to this.” Then, I am confident that a bright future will await you.

In closing, I would like to extend my congratulations once again. Thank you.

May 4, 2023
Governor General IWAGAMI, Chiko
Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE FOR 2023 PBA BACCALAUREATE



Congratulatory message to the Pacific Buddhist Academy Class of 2023 on behalf of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii .

Bishop Matsumoto, Head of School Josh Morse, Former Head of School Pieper Toyama, ministers, teachers, parents and most importantly, the Pacific Buddhist Academy graduating class of 2023, good evening. It is my privilege to offer congratulations on behalf of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii to you, the Pacific Buddhist Academy class of 2023.

Today, I would like to share with you one of my favorite stories (it must be a favorite since I shared it last year). You may know it. I have enjoyed reading this story again and again to my children and grandchildren. It is Momotaro, the Peach Boy-one of the best loved folk stories of Japan. It is the story of an older couple who dream of having a child of their own. Their dream comes true in the form of a giant golden peach floating down the river into the arms of Obaa-san. Planning to feast on the peach, they are surprised when the enormous peach bursts open and inside

the peach is a tiny baby boy. Their dreams of having a child are fulfilled and they named him MOMOTARO, the Peach Boy. Momotaro grows up to be smart, strong and brave. He helps with the work of the village and he learns the skills of a samurai.

As he grows into a young man, Momotaro learns that for many years, evil ogres (oni) would arrive at the village to rob, kill and plunder. Momotaro announces that he will go to the Inland Sea and defeat the ogres so that they would never return to the village. His parents prepare him, as best they can, for his journey. They prepare kibi-dango, a special Warrior's food. Ojii-san laid out Momotaro's knife, sword, sash and tessen-iron fan, the garb of a samurai. Then, armed with all that he knew and all that he was, Momotaro set out. This line from the story has always been particularly meaningful to me, and perhaps your parents as we see you attain this milestone in life and move forward to a future that is still unwritten. Notice the careful choice of words. "Then, armed with all that he knew and all that he was, Momotaro set out."

On his journey, Momotaro encounters a giant dog, a monkey and a pheasant. These animals become his friends and allies in the battle against the evil oni. Momotaro crosses the Inland Sea to arrive at the home of the evil oni. With the help of his brave companions, Momotaro defeats the ogres. He recovers stolen treasure and returns home. Along the way, Momotaro returns stolen treasure to all of the villages. He finally arrives at his home village with the unclaimed treasure and he is able to care for his parents for the rest of their lives.

This story is much more exciting than the abbreviated summary that I've shared with you today. It is a good choice for this occasion. Momotaro's parents cared for him and loved him. They were concerned for his future, but they prepared him the best way that they knew. Your parents and family are always thinking about you.

Hopefully none of you will be headed for real battle, but we know that this journey of life doesn't always go exactly the way that we think it will. You will have your own challenges in life. The saying goes, "Life is a bumpy road". Your "weapons" and your "armor" are the skills, knowledge and values that you have gained through your hard work, nurtured by your parents and your school community. You will meet new people along the way. Like Momotaro did, choose your close friends wisely. You will face difficult choices in your life. I suggest that you ask yourself a few simple questions along the way. Did I do my best? Did I do what is right? Did I care for and help others?

Finally, Momotaro returns to his home village. Returning home in this context means maintaining connections-with your friends, family and school community. Remember the Buddhist teaching of interdependence. We are interconnected and interdependent with everyone and everything around us.

In closing, I'd like share that special line from the story of Momotaro with minor changes: Then, armed with all that they knew and all that they were, the Class of 2023 set out.

Aloha and Best Wishes,
Namo Amida Butsu.

May 4, 2023
Dr. Warren Tamamoto
President, Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii



Pacific Buddhist Academy Class of 2023

BSC SUMMER SESSION



“Shinran’s Challenge: A Shin Buddhist in the 21st Century”

The Buddhist Study Center (BSC) is pleased to offer its 49th Annual Summer Study Session in person and online, June 5-9, 2023, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. (HST). The featured speaker is Rev. Dr. Takashi Miyaji, Hongwanji Minister of Southern Alameda County Buddhist Church. The format for each evening includes a lecture by Rev. Miyaji and question-and-answer time. Themes of Summer Session 2023 is “Shinran’s Challenge: A Shin Buddhist in the 21st Century”.

What does a Jodo Shinshu Buddhist look like? It is a difficult question to answer. However, if we go back and investigate the works of Shinran Shonin, there is a wealth of suggestions and themes presented by our founder. He enables us to envision what the Jodo Shinshu Buddhist identity looks like, even today. Shinran Shonin is challenging every one of us to think about what it means to be a Jodo Shinshu Buddhist. As the American Buddhism movement develops, there is a growing challenge to sustain the teaching brought to us by Shinran Shonin. Let us delve during this weeklong session into these suggestions and themes to have a better understanding of being a Shin Buddhist in the 21st Century.

Our Summer Session speaker is Rev. Dr. Takashi Miyaji. Since August 2020, Rev. Miyaji has been the minister of the Southern Alameda County Buddhist Church. In addition to his ministerial duties, he teaches at the Institute of Buddhist Studies located in Berkeley, California.

Rev. Dr. Miyaji graduated from the University of California at Berkeley with a bachelor's degree in philosophy and Japanese language and literature. He received a master's degree in Buddhist Studies from the Institute of Buddhist Studies in Berkeley, California. Rev. Miyaji received a master's degree in Shin Buddhist Studies and completed the doctoral coursework at Ryukoku University in Kyoto, Japan.

Registration and Donations

Free registration is required to receive Zoom link or attend in person.

Please visit <http://bit.ly/bscsummersession2023>

Or, contact the BSC Office at (808) 973-6555. Please register by Saturday, May 27, 2023.

Suggested tax-deductible donation

5 sessions \$50, single sessions \$10. Online at <http://bit.ly/hhmhdonate>. Or, via check made out to HHMH and mailed to the BSC at 1436 University Ave. Honolulu, HI 96822. Please note the BSC Summer Session on the memo line of your check.

LIVING TREASURES OF HAWAII™ NOMINATION FOR 2024

The Living Treasures of Hawaii™ Committee has updated the nomination form and process and is ready to accept submissions for 2024. Information and the nomination form is available at the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii Headquarters Office located at 1727 Pali Highway, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 or on our website <https://hongwanjihawaii.com/living-treasures/>.

The completed nomination (nomination form with any letters of recommendation) must be received by the Living Treasures Committee no later than the close of business on August 1st. Any nomination received after August 1st will be considered for the following year. The presentation will be made in February of the following year. For additional information, please call our office at (808) 522-9200.

64th ANNUAL HONPA HONGWANJI STATE MINISTERS' ASSOCIATION SEMINAR

The 64th Annual Honpa Hongwanji State Ministers' Association Seminar will be held on June 6-8, 2023, via Zoom hosted by Honolulu District Ministers' Association. The theme of the seminar is "Taiki Seppo: Exploring Modern Methods of Sharing the Dharma." The keynote speaker will be Bishop Marvin Harada of the Buddhist Church of America (BCA) and Rev. Shoukei Matsumoto, Hongwanji minister of Komyoji temple in Tokyo.

66th JR. YBA STATE CONVENTION

The Hawaii Federation of Junior Young Buddhist Associations will be holding its 66th Jr. YBA State Convention on June 23-25, 2023, at the Buddhist Study Center, Moiliili Hongwanji and University of Hawaii at Manoa hosted by the United Jr. YBA of Oahu. The theme of this year's convention is "SANGHA, Our Interdependent Environment."

PROPAGATION PROGRAM GRANT

Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii “Propagation Program Grant Committee” would like to announce to all of you that “Propagation Program Grant” is available to all of you for “New and wonderful ideas for propagating Nembutsu teachings into our community”. Would you like to share your wonderful and creative Dharma projects with all of our community? If so, take action right away! We all are looking forward to seeing your innovative ideas!

The committee reviews all grants applications, which meet the following criteria:

1. New, innovative, creative ideas or activities focusing on Buddhist Education and the propagation of the Dharma.
2. Each project may be funded only once within 5 years.
3. The maximum amount of the grant must not exceed \$10,000.00
4. The project would have statewide implications/potential.

For more information regarding this program or to apply, please check with your resident minister or HQ.

HQ BOOKSTORE UPDATE

The new book is available at HHMH Bookstore!

“Dharma Is Everywhere -Reflections Shared at the California State Assembly-”

by Reverends Bob and Patti Oshita \$20/each

Published by American Buddhist Study Center 2022

Authors: Reverends Robert (Bob) and Patricia (Patti) Oshita are retired ministers of Buddhist Church of America (BCA). They 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.

In 2016, they were asked to be chaplains for the California State Assembly. They were the first Buddhist (and first husband and wife team) to serve the Assembly. Their two-term chaplaincy ended in December 2020. **“Dharma is Everywhere”** is an inspiring collection of their mindful and heartwarming messages to the California State Assembly.

