



Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii

HEADQUARTERS UPDATE

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June 2023

BISHOP'S CORNER

"Namo-amida-butsu!"

Bishop Eric Matsumoto



Aloha Kākou/Aloha to One and All!

I really don't know where to begin. There are so many people to thank. As I ponder on what to say for this final message, a quote by Shinran Shonin from one of his Letters comes to mind. *"The teachers of Sakyamuni number one hundred and ten; this is stated in the Garland Sutra. Namo-amida-butsu."*

Reflecting on my life and tenure as your Bishop for the last 12 years, I realize that something similar can be said. It is preposterous, to think that I can compare to the Historic Buddha, but my indebtedness to so many others is something I cannot deny. I have been the recipient of their care, instruction, wisdom, knowledge and insight. In short, their generosity, sharing and caring nurtured me.

I am not enlightened and so cannot see beyond this current life, but since I was born the love and unquestioned support of my family especially my parents, Glenn Tatsuki (deceased) and Ann Aiko Matsumoto, and, though long since passed away my paternal and maternal grandparents, not forgetting my brother Alan and, today, my immediate family of Tamayo and her family in Japan, Chika and Caden support me to this today.

Also, throughout my student years from elementary school to graduate school, I have had the good fortune of having incredible teachers and instructors who imparted not only their knowledge, but showered upon me their genuine concern. Every part of my education such as my years at the University of Hawaii at Hilo learning Japanese Language and Culture from Dr. Tazuko (Ajiro) Monane, World History, and being awarded The Crown Prince Akihito Scholarship which took me to Japan was an essential part of my life's journey which was leading up to a further broadening of my horizon.

As I see it, everything was leading up to my encountering Buddhism, the Wisdom and Compassion of Enlightenment which included my encounter with Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto and Bishop Marvin Harada of the Buddhist Churches of America who were Ministerial Aspirants in Japan back in the 1980's. Their invitation to me to join them in their studies-quest changed the direction of my life as did the many outstanding professors I learned from such as the late Rev. Takamaro Shigaraki and many other remarkable instructors not to mention the benevolence of our Spiritual Leaders, but not to overlook dedicated fellow-practicers and fellow-travelers like those elderly neighborhood ladies who picked up litter along the Horikawa Street walkway taken by the speaker for Honzan's Early Morning Service. It took many years and not without the support of countless people, some long deceased like Former Bishop

Yemyo Imamura whose writings influenced me deeply, and entities both in Hawaii and Japan including local individuals like Former Bishop Yoshiaki Fujitani and Rev. Tatsuo Muneto who provided me with spiritual guidance and you, the Sangha of Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii who provided me with a generous scholarship for 5 years and your continued support which culminated with Ordination (Tokudo), Full Certification (Kyoshi), being an Overseas Minister (Kaikyoshi) for 30+ years and eventually your Bishop.

Although I am not retiring, again, if it wasn't for the support of so many of you, my life would not be what it is. My lifetime refrain is "How can one person be so fortunate!" As I see it, I am a mere recipient of the guidance, encouragement, kindness, and benevolence of others. I have not done anything special. If I have accomplished anything and my words are worth anything it is only because of the remarkable people in my life. I am only a vehicle. I only share what others have shared with me.

However, I share the best for last and that is the gratitude and appreciation for Shinran Shonin's compassionate activity of sharing Amida Buddha's immense Wisdom and Compassion which is ultimately the working of All-Inclusive Wisdom and All-Embracing Compassion (Amida Buddha or Namo Amida Butsu) itself, an unparalleled Wisdom and Compassion which includes everyone and everything with no conditions. It is out of gratitude and appreciation for all of the above and more (which I have not mentioned due to space limitations) that I do what I do. It is responding in gratitude, but especially the Buddhas' benevolence and the wish to share the Joy of being forever embraced by Great Compassion.

I conclude my final Bishop's Corner by quoting, once again, the same Letter by Shinran Shonin. He said, *"The selected Primal Vow (of Amida Buddha) is the true essence of the Pure Land way...The true essence of the Pure Land way (the Jodo Shinshu Teaching) is the consummation of Mahayana Buddhism...Namo-amida-butsu."*

Finally, please join me in reciting Namo-amida-butsu, The Buddha's Name Which I Call in Gratitude in response to Namo-amida-butsu, The Buddha's Name That Calls Me to Entrust. Namo-amida-butsu, Namo-amida-butsu, Namo-amida-butsu/Entrusting in All-Inclusive Wisdom and All-Embracing Compassion.

In gassho,

Eric Matsumoto, Disciple of the Buddha Dharma-Pleasure (Horaku)

REFLECTIONS ON THE JOINT CELEBRATION IN KYOTO

Reflections on the Joint Celebration: 850th Anniversary of Shinran Shonin's Birth and 800th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Jodo Shinshu Teaching at the Hongwanji and the 17th World Buddhist Women's Convention (WBWC) in Kyoto, Japan.

On May 10, 2023, Claire and I were privileged to be able to attend the Joint 850th/800th Celebration at the Hongwanji in Kyoto, Japan. Approximately 165 ministers and lay participants from Hawaii attended the celebration, along with fellow Nembutsu travelers from the overseas districts of Canada, Continental USA (BCA) and South America. Every person who attended has a unique perspective. Here are a few of my thoughts.

If you were not able to attend the 850th/800th celebration but can visit Kyoto in the future, I would highly recommend a visit to our mother temple, Hongwanji. The temple buildings and Grounds are beautiful. The Amidado (Hall of Amida Buddha, completed in 1760) and Goeido (Founders Hall, completed in 1636) are designated National Treasures of Japan. The altars were beautifully arranged for the celebration. It was truly an uplifting experience to be present in the temple, chanting Shoshin Nembutsu Ge and reciting

the Nembutsu with hundreds of Sangha members from Hawaii, Canada, South America and the Continental USA.

Our hosts from Japan were cheerful, helpful, and treated us with “Aloha” everywhere. They somehow managed the difficult task of getting hundreds of people moving in the right direction in a reasonable amount of time. We are so grateful for their wonderful effort. While being guided into the temple for the service, I heard a voice call out to me, “Dr. Tamamoto!” It was Rev. Masako Sugimoto from the Hongwanji International Center. When I visited the Honzan with my family about 10 years ago, HQ arranged for a tour of the Honzan. Rev. Sugimoto was our guide. When I visited Honzan about 4 years ago with some friends, Rev. Sugimoto was our guide again. It was nice to see a familiar face. Thank you for sharing your knowledge of Buddhism and the Honzan, Rev. Masako Sugimoto!

During our visit to the Honzan, we were able to see the Shoin Chambers, the Karamon Gate (also a National Treasure) and the Hiunkaku (Flying Cloud) Pavilion. Along with the famous Kinkakuji (Golden Pavilion) and Ginkakuji (Silver Pavilion), Hiunkaku is listed as one of Kyoto’s three famous pavilions. These special areas are not usually open to the public. Thank you to our hosts for making our visit special in so many ways.

The following two days were spent at the World Buddhist Women’s Convention at the Kyoto International Conference Center (ICC Kyoto). The ICC Kyoto is a beautiful facility which opened in 1966 and still looks new. The theme of the convention was *“Life of Nembutsu enables us to appreciate every encounter.”* The two days passed quickly with interesting workshops, a commemorative concert by singer/songwriter Chihiro, who composed and sang poems written by Lady Takeko Kujo, a keynote speech by Prof. Shin’en Morita entitled “Embraced in the Wish,” entertainment by BWA members from each overseas district and a panel presentation by 5 Buddhist women representing Japan and the four overseas districts. Hawaii was represented by Cindy Alm from Hawaii Betsuin BWA. Thank you, Cindy for sharing your family journey from Japan to Hawaii, guided by Shin Buddhist teachings.

I will always remember how warmly we were received by our Japanese hosts at the 850th/800th Joint Celebration and the 17th World Buddhist Women’s Convention. For the closing program, we were scattered in the main hall, mixed in with our hosts from Japan. I was lucky to sit with BWA members from Rev. Kazunori Takahashi’s home temple in Japan. They were so happy to meet me and I was able to share a photo that I had taken of Rev. Takahashi and his family just two days prior at the 850th/800th celebration. They were so happy to hear that he and his family are doing well in Hilo Betsuin. In spite of the language barrier-using hand signs, broken English/Japanese and Google Translate, we were able to enjoy each other’s company.

I will also remember meeting Dharma friends from years past, such as Rev. Gerald Sakamoto of the BCA, Ms. Tabitha Kobata (Rev. Ron Kobata’s daughter, who works at the Hongwanji International Center) and Mrs. Tomoko Okamoto (wife of Rev. Jay Okamoto). Overall, this was a wonderful event and I look forward to the 18th World Buddhist Women’s Convention in 2027 in Honolulu, Hawaii.

In Gassho,

Warren Tamamoto

President, Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii



PHOTOS FROM KYOTO – MAY 10-12, 2023



Joint Celebration



World Buddhist Women's Convention



PERSONNEL

Blayne Nakasone Sakata, started his onboarding program as a new minister at Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii Headquarters on June 1, 2023.

Reverend Bishop Eric Matsumoto, the 16th Bishop of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, will be assigned to Aiea Hongwanji as its Resident Minister, effective July 1, 2023.

Reverend Mariko Nishiyama, currently serving at Aiea Hongwanji Mission as its Resident Minister and Pearl City Hongwanji Mission as its Oversee Minister, will be assigned to Pearl City Hongwanji Mission as its Resident Minister, effective July 1, 2023.

Reverend Bert Sumikawa, a retired minister, will be assigned to Moiliili Hongwanji Mission as a Retired Kaikyoshi Minister (Part-Time) as of July 1, 2023, until the new Resident Minister is assigned. Rev. Sumikawa will continue to guide the Kailua Hongwanji Mission (Windward Buddhist Temple), where Rev. Barbara Brennan serves as a Kaikyoshi-ho under the mentorship of Rev. Sumikawa.

NEW BISHOP REVEREND TOSHIYUKI UMITANI

Reverend Toshiyuki Umitani, the resident minister of Moiliili Hongwanji Mission, was confirmed as the 17th Bishop of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii at the 111th Legislative Assembly. Reverend Umitani officially takes Office as of July 1, 2023.

The operation of the Buddhist Study Center will be overseen by the Office of the Bishop. Incoming Bishop Rev. Toshiyuki Umitani will serve as its Interim Director as of July 1, 2023.

MAHALO LUNCHEON FOR OUT GOING BISHOP ERIC T. MATSUMOTO

Date: Saturday, July 8, 2023

Time: Registration - 10:30am

Lunch - 11:30am

Place: Ala Moana Hotel, Hibiscus Ballroom

Cost: \$70/person by check

\$75/person by credit card

Attire: Aloha

RSVP due by June 28, 2023

Seats are still available. Let's get together to honor and extend our deep appreciation for Bishop Eric T. Matsumoto for his 12 years of leadership as Bishop of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii.

INVESTITURE CEREMONY AND WELCOME LUNCHEON FOR THE 17TH BISHOP, REVEREND TOSHIYUKI UMITANI

Reverend Toshiyuki Umitani was confirmed as the 17th Bishop of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii at the 111th Legislative Assembly (Giseikai) on February 11, 2023.

Please join Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii in celebrating this occasion by joining us at his Investiture Ceremony followed by the Welcome Luncheon.

Date: Saturday, August 5, 2023

Investiture Ceremony:

Location: Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin, 1727 Pali Highway, Honolulu
Time: 8:00am
RSVP: not needed – please attend to show your support.

More details are forthcoming.

Welcome Luncheon:

Theme: Ko Ko Sho Gon (“Adorned with the Fragrance of Light”)
Location: Sheraton Waikiki – Kauai/Maui Ballrooms
Time: Registration - 10:30am
Luncheon - 11:30am
Cost: \$90/person by check
\$95/person by credit card
Attire: Aloha
RSVP by: Tuesday, July 25, 2023

Please submit the payment and name(s) of the attendee(s) to Headquarters (attention Dianne Sumida, Administrative Assistant) by July 25, 2023. (Please see the attached form for more details.)
Temples & Organizations – if you will be submitting a consolidated list, please submit one (1) check/payment.

60TH LAY ASSOCIATION CONVENTION

Theme: SHARING JOY TOGETHER!
When: September 15 & 16, 2023
Where: Kona Hongwanji Mission (81-6630 Mamalahoa Hwy. Kealahou, HI 96750)
As well as virtually via Zoom
Cost: Regular Registration Fee, by July 17: \$75.00
Regular Zoom Registration Fee by July 17: \$40.00
Late Registration Fee, after July 17: \$85.00
Late Zoom Registration Fee, after July 17: \$50.00
Registration Deadline: July 17, 2023

You are cordially invited to the 2023 Hawaii State Federation of Honpa Hongwanji Lay Association Annual Convention. Please see the attached documents for more information.

VIDEO RECORDING OF LGBTQIA+ 101 EDUCATIONAL SESSION

The LGBTQIA+ 101 Educational Session sponsored by Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, its Commission on Buddhist Education and its Committee on Social Concerns was held on April 22, 2023, at Buddhist Study Center and via online.

Video Recording is available to watch at HHMH YouTube channel.

<https://youtu.be/TIA4ApHvGIw>

KA LEO KĀHEA

Call for Photos Celebrating Obon in 2023

Will you celebrate obon this year? Ka Leo Kāhea, the statewide newsletter of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, would like photos of your temple's obon odori for our September issue. Here are some submission guidelines.

The deadline for the September issue is July 15, but we will accept obon photos throughout August. We will do our best to cover as many temples as we can.

Submit up to three photos from your event. Please send each image as a separate JPEG or TIFF file. Each image should be at least 2MB in size. Image files should be from the original phone or camera (not from a text message).

For the photo caption, include the photographer's name and a sentence or two identifying your temple and any interesting point(s) you would like to make. Photo captions may be typed into your email or sent in a separate Microsoft Word document. Please send captions and photos separately. **Do not** embed images in Word documents or send PDF files.

Submit your email with attachments to: newsletter@honpahi.org. Please include "Obon" and your temple's name in the subject line.

Feel free to email us at newsletter@honpahi.org if you have any questions. We look forward to receiving your wonderful obon photos!

COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL CONCERNS UPDATE – EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Hurricane season in Hawaii began on June 1st and will run till November 30th. It's important to have an emergency plan and kits ready to keep your family safe. Useful information on how to prepare for emergencies can be found on the following websites:

Hawaii Emergency Management Agency

<http://dod.hawaii.gov/hiema/>

Hawaiian Electric Emergency Preparedness Handbook

<https://www.hawaiianelectric.com/safety-and-outages/storm-center/emergency-preparedness-handbook>

City and County of Honolulu Department of Emergency Management

[Department of Emergency Management Home \(honolulu.gov\)](http://www.honolulu.gov/departments/emergency-management/)

County of Hawaii Civil Defense

<https://www.hawaiicounty.gov/departments/civil-defense/emergency-preparedness>

Maui County Emergency Management Agency

[Maui Emergency Management Agency | Maui County, HI - Official Website](http://www.maui-county.gov/departments/emergency-management/)

49TH ANNUAL BUDDHIST STUDY CENTER “SUMMER SESSION 2023” HELD JUNE 5-9



After a 4-year Zoom-only hiatus, the Buddhist Study Center (BSC) was filled with fellow travelers of the Dharma once again on June 5-9. The 2023 Summer Session was held both in-person in Honolulu and via Zoom. Each night, over 30 combined attendees listened, learned, and appreciated the insights of Rev. Dr. Takashi Miyaji, a minister-scholar from Buddhist Churches of America and the Institute for Buddhist Studies.

As a young American-born scholar who received his PhD from Ryukoku University (Japan) in 2019, Miyaji-sensei brought a fresh perspective to what it means to be a Shin Buddhist in the 21st Century. He issued “Shinran’s Challenge” to develop a Shin Buddhist identity that re-affirms our values in today’s high-speed, chaotic world. On the 800th anniversary of the Hongwanji tradition, American Shin Buddhism shares an enduring legacy of Shinran’s teachings that has been kept alive by many generations of Shin Buddhist followers.

By reviewing several shorter writings of Shinran, Prof. Miyaji focused on major themes of each work to provide a sense of the unique Jodo Shinshu identity among the many Buddhist, and other religious paths. On the final evening, a robust discussion of the Shin Buddhist social ethics brought together the previous four nights sessions. The development of both a “personal” and “collective” voice are separate and connected issues.

Shin Buddhism provides each individual the means to decide their personal vision, then as a group we may explore whether a collective vision is possible. The path to a personal vision is through realization of the many layers of human self-interest we create and the illuminating light of Amida’s Wisdom and Compassion piercing those layers. The path to a collective vision is through honest dialogue and posing the right questions, without necessarily finding complete answers.

The 50th Annual 2024 BSC Summer Session will feature Rev. Kenji Akahoshi. Please mark your calendars for this June-July 2024 Golden Anniversary event.

Video recordings of sessions Day 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 are available on the BSC YouTube channel:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUWzJg0lcuY5tdIGef9O9HQ>

BISHOP'S AWARD FOR JAPANESE LANGUAGE SCHOOL STUDENTS

Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii Japanese Language School committee honored following students who received Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii Bishop's Award at their Graduation of Award days in May 2023.

Fort Gakuen	8 th grader: Zachary Shigeto Tanouye
Hilo Hongwanji Gakuen	6 th grader: Riann Kazue Shiro
Hongwanji Mission School	8 th grader: Maslyn Chiemi Kaneshiro-Takeuchi
Wailuku Hongwanji Gakuen	6 th grader: Kazumasa Amby

2023 NEMBUTSU SEMINAR (HONOLULU & OAHU HONGWANJI COUNCIL)

The Honolulu and Oahu Hongwanji Councils and Office of Buddhist Education presents its annual Nembutsu Seminar on Saturday, August 12, 2023, from 9:00-11:30am in-person at the Buddhist Study Center and online via Zoom. This year's seminar is entitled, "Diversity & Acceptance in Buddha's Vow" and will be presented by Rev. Ko'e A. Umezu, Assistant Minister at the West Los Angeles Buddhist Temple. This presentation follows the recent "LGBTQIA+ 101" seminar and will discuss the Buddha's teachings of acceptance of all beings. During the seminar, the short video, "A Profound Silence" will be shown, which features Jodo Shinshu Buddhist voices from the LGBTQ+ community, family, and allies. (Please see more details in the flyer.)

2023 KAUAI HONGWANJI COUNCIL NEMBUTSU SEMINAR

Kauai Hongwanji Council will host a Zoom Nembutsu seminar with Rev. Tatsuo Muneto on Saturday, August 26, 10:00 am - 11:30 am. The topic is "Manifesting Amida's Compassionate Heart – Legacy of the Nembutsu Followers in Hawaii."

Registration is required. Please go to the link (<https://forms.gle/7tHn5Kw1XhnsJN7DA>) and fill out the information. When you complete the seminar registration, you will receive an automatic confirmation email from Google Forms. The registration deadline is August 19. The maximum capacity is 100 people, first come, first serve. We will email you a Zoom link three days prior to the seminar. Registration fee is free, but donations are welcome and can be made to "Kauai Hongwanji Council." If you have any questions, please get in touch with any of the Kauai temples.

Description:

The goal of the Buddhist Path is to be liberated (saved) from suffering and sorrow caused by one's blind passion. And the ultimate goal is to achieve the bliss of Nirvana. In Jodo Shinshu, this goal is attained through awakening to one's defiled self and the boundless compassion of Amida Buddha simultaneously. Are you walking this Nembutsu path here and now with your Dharma friends?

In the 135 years of the history of Hongwanji in our Hawaii-nei, there were a number of Nembutsu followers who attained the joy of walking the path of freedom. They went through the search for spiritual awakening and left a number of poems describing how they attained Entrusting Heart (shinjin).

They became humble and cheerful people who shared the Nembutsu path with others.

Through the 2023 Kauai Nembutsu Seminar, Rev. Muneto will share the legacy of Nembutsu followers he met during his ministry on the Big Island and Kauai.

SAVE THE DATE

Virtual State Dharma School Gathering - "Just As You Are..."

Date : Sunday, October 15, 2023

Guest Speaker: Incoming Bishop Rev. Toshiyuki Umitani

Time: 10:00 am - 12:00 pm (HST)

A service will be held from 10:00 - 10:40 am with New Bishop Rev. Umitani sharing a Dharma Message.

Adult and Student Breakout Rooms will be held from 10:45 - 11:30 am.

This is an intergenerational activity....ALL are welcome.

A Dharma School Teachers/Educators Session will be held before the gathering - from 8:45 - 9:45 am.

Please Join Us!