



Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii

HEADQUARTERS UPDATE

1727 Pali Highway, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Phone: (808) 522-9200 Fax: (808) 522-9209

Web: www.hongwanjihawaii.com Email: hqs@honpahi.org



August 2023

MESSAGE FROM THE BISHOP

“Statement regarding the Disaster on Maui”

I would like to express my deepest condolences to those who lost their lives as a result of the disaster in Maui, and my heartfelt sympathy to those who have lost their homes and are living as evacuees.

The fire that broke out on August 8, 2023, devastated the city of Lahaina. As of today, 93 people are confirmed to have died, and more than 2,000 buildings have been damaged or destroyed. The historic town of Lahaina, which was once the capital of the Hawaiian Kingdom and a beautiful tourist destination visited by many people, was burnt to the ground.

Lahaina Hongwanji Mission, located in the center of the city, was not spared the destruction by the fire. The Resident Minister, Reverend Ai Hironaka, his family, and many of the temple members have safely evacuated and are currently living a life of inconvenience. As for the damage to the temple, it is expected to take some time to confirm its state, partly because the town is under lockdown.

The history of the Lahaina Hongwanji Mission began in 1904. Since then, the light of the Nembutsu Dharma has been successfully passed down through the dedication and contribution of the Resident Ministers, their families, temple members, and many people in the community. Lahaina Hongwanji Mission, along with other churches and temples, was the place of refuge for the people living in the area. I remember the sound of the Nembutsu reverberating in the Hondo on Sundays. It is truly sad for all of us that such a practice hall of the Nembutsu was destroyed by the disaster.

The Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii established the Maui Wildfire Disaster Relief Fund. Since then, we have received much support not only from within the State of Hawaii but also from all over the world, including the mainland United States, Canada, and Japan. On behalf of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii ministers and members, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to those who extended compassionate words and actions for those on Maui. I would like to humbly ask for your continued support.

Recovery on Maui could take years. Many people are living in anxiety about their uncertain future. As fellow travelers of the Nembutsu, let us stand in solidarity with those who are experiencing suffering and sorrow brought about by this unprecedented encounter.

Even though the temple buildings have been damaged, our sincere aspiration of listening to and sharing the Nembutsu teaching never disappears. This is not the end of 119 years of the history of Lahaina Hongwanji. We are all the more determined to dedicate ourselves to establishing a society where the sound of the Nembutsu prevails.

May the Wisdom and Compassion of Amida Buddha embrace us all. May the sound of the Nembutsu brings us peace and comfort, and gives us the courage to move forward. Namo Amida Butsu.

Toshiyuki Umitani
Bishop

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Aloha all. I hope you are well. The Maui Wildfire Disaster fills the news as we find out a little more each day about the wildfire's rapid spread, the work being done to care for those displaced from their homes, and the ongoing effort to find those who are still missing. We do know that the Lahaina Hongwanji temple buildings (with possible exception of the columbarium) have burned to the ground. My sincere condolences to those who have lost loved ones and sincere sympathy to those who have lost their homes and possessions.

We are grateful that there has been an outpouring of support from around the world. Donations of food, clothing, and monetary donations have arrived on Maui. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is on the ground in Maui, coordinating the disaster response with State and County agencies and personnel.

I am grateful that we (Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii) have been able to respond to this disaster, working together as a family. A GoFundMe effort was quickly organized, spearheaded by Rev. Kerry Kiyohara and has raised tens of thousands of dollars. The Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii's **Maui Wildfire Disaster Relief Fund** was established with the goals of supporting non-profit agencies providing relief for everyone affected by the disaster (such as the Red Cross and Hawaii Community Foundation's Maui Strong) and the Lahaina Hongwanji temple members. Information about the Maui Wildfire Disaster Relief Fund was shared with our sister organizations at the Buddhist Churches of America, the Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temples of Canada and our mother temple (Honzan) in Kyoto, Japan. We have many friends all over the world and they are eager to help.

The **Maui Wildfire Disaster Relief Fund** has raised tens of thousand of dollars. If you are not familiar with this term, please check with your temple leaders or go to the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii website at <https://hongwanjihawaii.com>. The HHMH Social Concerns Committee will be responsible for distributing the money collected for this fund drive, with valuable input from Maui members.

Here are a few of the things that we are doing to help our friends on Maui. The Social Concerns Committee helped with setting up the Maui Wildfire Disaster Relief Fund, disseminating the information on social media and by keeping us informed of relief efforts that are available on Maui. The HHMH website is updated regularly and is an excellent place to find information about our effort to support the people of Maui. A group of ministers and temple leaders from Maui meets regularly via Zoom with the goal of connecting with Lahaina members and providing assistance with housing and other immediate needs. Phone calls to the Lahaina Hongwanji temple have been rerouted to Headquarters to help our Lahaina leadership and possibly get information about missing members. At the time of this writing, we are still trying to collect as much information about our Lahaina members as possible. Bishop Toshiyuki Umitani visited Maui on August 19th, to meet with key ministers and temple members on Maui. Thank you, Bishop Umitani.

I am thankful for the tremendous effort that our Sangha has made to help those who are suffering from the effects of the Maui wildfires. Headquarters personnel, District Councils, suborganizations such as the BWA, individual temples, and Sangha members have contributed to the relief effort. There may be more that we can do. If you have any suggestions or are able to help, please call our headquarters or send an email.

In Gassho,

Dr. Warren Tamamoto
President, Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii

MAUI WILDFIRE DISASTER RELIEF FUND

In the spirit of compassionate action, Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii have established the **MAUI WILDFIRE DISASTER RELIEF FUND**. You can donate in the following ways:

1. Online at www.hongwanjihawaii.com by clicking on the “Maui Wildfire Disaster Relief” button under the “Donate” tab.
2. Through GoFundMe at the following link: <https://gofund.me/ff77a520>
3. Check and cash donations can be sent directly to Hawaii Kyodan Headquarters. Please make check payable to HHMH and in the memo line designate “Maui Wildfire Disaster Relief” to ensure proper credit.

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All donations collected will go to support Lahaina Hongwanji and relief efforts on Maui. The Office of the Bishop and Committee on Social Concerns will prioritize addressing the immediate and short-term needs of temple families displaced by the fires and supporting the greater community as it rebuilds. The Committee will select reputable relief agencies and organizations to support in order to ensure our donations will directly aid those impacted by this disaster.



Updates will be shared on our website at <http://honpahi.link/fire>

Mahalo for your generosity and support during this time of tragedy.

MAUI WILDFIRE MEMORIAL SERVICE

The State Ministers Association assisted by Maui District Ministers Association would like to host a memorial service for the Maui wildfires under the guidance of Bishop Umitani.

The following is the service date and time.

Date: Sunday, September 24th, 2023

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Place: Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin

Platform: In-Person and Zoom

Dharma Talk: Bishop Toshiyuki Umitani

All donations from the service will go to the HHMH Maui Wildfire Relief Fund.

Everyone is invited to the service in-person and Zoom.

More details will be shared with you later.

SHINJUSHIKI-OFFICIAL CONFIRMATION BY GOMONSHU

Bishop Umitani traveled to Japan from July 25 to August 1, 2023 to attend the Shinjushiki, the ceremony of receiving the official letter of appointment directly from Gomonshu Kojun Ohtani, the spiritual head of the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha tradition at Honzan Kyoto. The ceremony was held at Shiro Shoin (the White Chamber) inside of the Hongwanji, together with Bishop Marvin Harada of Buddhist Churches of America. Reverend Umitani had various meetings with Honzan officials and professors of the Ryukoku University, and other related institutions and individuals during his time in Japan.

MAHALO LUNCHEON FOR OUTGOING BISHOP ERIC MATSUMOTO

A very special event was held on July 8, 2023, at the Ala Moana Hotel Ballroom in Honolulu. It was the Mahalo Luncheon for Outgoing Bishop Eric T. Matsumoto, who spent the last 12 years providing religious guidance to the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii (HHMH) and as part of the Interfaith community. Over 200 people turned out to show their gratitude for his wise and compassionate leadership. His wife Tamayo, son Caden, and brother Alan were present for the festivities. There was a performance of songs from the musical "Peace On Your Wings" by several of the cast members. After Aloha messages from guests, gift presentations from the HHMH, State Ministers' Association, Hawaii Federation of Buddhist Women's Association, Hawaii Federation of Lay Association, Hawaii Federation of Junior YBA, and Pacific Buddhist Academy. We also celebrated his new journey as resident minister of Aiea Hongwanji Mission.



INVESTITURE CEREMONY

The Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin on the Pali Highway on August 5, 2023, was the scene for the inauguration of the New Bishop of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii. Former Bishop Eric Matsumoto officiated a short service as the ministers and audience chanted the Juseige along with Bishop Toshiyuki Umitani. During the service, Former Bishop Eric Matsumoto read a letter of appointment from Gomonshu Kojun Ohtani, the spiritual head of the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha tradition, conferring the title of Bishop upon Reverend Umitani.

In a moving ceremony in front of the audience which consisted of the ministers from all over the state and members of the Sangha watched as Reverend Toshiyuki Umitani was given the vestments for his new role as Bishop. The congratulatory gifts of new Bishop's special robes and religious items were given to Reverend Umitani from the State Ministers' Association, Hawaii Federation of Buddhist Women's Association, Hawaii Federation of Lay Association, and Hawaii Federation of Junior YBA.

There was a short break in the service as Bishop Umitani changed into his new robes. The audience gathered with the newly installed Bishop to take commemorative pictures with Bishop Umitani.



WELCOME LUNCHEON FOR THE 17TH BISHOP REVEREND TOSHIYUKI UMITANI

"Ko Ko Sho Gon," *Adorned with the Fragrance of Light*, was the luncheon theme for the welcome luncheon of the new Bishop Reverend Toshiyuki Umitani. The party was held at the Sheraton Waikiki after the Investiture Ceremony on August 5 and was an intimate gathering of around 200 people. The welcome luncheon marks a new era of change as the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii embarks on recovering from the economic fallout of the COVID-19 Pandemic.



The Bishop's daughters, Naho and Riho, performed two numbers to surprise their father and mother. To the delight of the attendees, Naho's beautiful singing was accompanied by Riho's skillful keyboard playing. They were a hit. Thanks to the luncheon committee for decorating the tables for the luncheon with the favors and to Ann Nakata of Moililli Hongwanji for the beautiful floral centerpieces that were filled with the fragrance of light. Bishop Umitani's welcome luncheon ended with a flurry of lights as the attendees held up their cell phones as if to punctuate the music of Keali'i Reichel with a gentle wave. It was a beautiful ending to a delightful luncheon.

TEMPLE TECHNOLOGY HARDWARE ASSISTANCE GRANT

Does your temple need some assistance in purchasing hardware for your Zoom meetings or Wi-Fi network? Maybe a mesh router, conference speakerphone, wireless webcam, or large display screen. Aiea Hongwanji Mission created a grant to assist temples in purchasing equipment for their temples (does not cover prior purchases). Preference will be given to the smaller temples. If you are interested, please email your request to Derrick Inouye (dinouye@hopahi.org). In your request, please state the purpose, what equipment you want to purchase, and the cost.

The deadline will be December 1, 2023.

KA LEO KĀHEA SEEKS MANAGING EDITOR

Ka Leo Kāhea, the Official Publication of the HHMH, is seeking a new managing editor. Work from home. Responsibilities include meeting with the editorial team, editing articles, and working with the graphic designer on the layout of this quarterly, eight-page newsletter. If you have editing experience and are interested in this paid position, please send an email with EDITOR in the subject line to HQ Update at: hqs@honpahi.org.

View *Ka Leo Kāhea*, at: <https://hongwanjihawaii.com/blog/tag/ka-leo-kahea/>

REMINDER: CALL FOR SUBMISSION FOR 2024 HONGWANJI CALENDAR

The Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii (HHMH) Calendar Committee invites members, Dharma friends, and affiliates to provide photos for the 2024 Hongwanji calendar that capture and evoke the emotions of "Sharing Nembutsu Moments" (joy, gratitude, surprise, excitement, ceremonial, peaceful, reflective, meditative, thoughtful). As we continue to work together **Building Healthy Sanghas**, what were some of the experiences of **SHARING NEMBUTSU MOMENTS** that you captured in photos?

- You may submit several photos for consideration by the Calendar Committee for the 2024 Hongwanji Calendar.
- We do welcome cell phone photos. Photos will need to be able to be clearly enlarged.
- For each photo, please include a brief caption expressing your "Sharing Nembutsu Moment" and your name/temple for photo credit.
- If you have questions, please leave a message for Yumi Suzuki at the Hongwanji Headquarters Office c/o Rev. Baba at (808)522-9200 or email: hqs@honpahi.org.
- For photo submissions**, please submit directly to Alan Kubota at lenscapeshawaii@gmail.com. He will respond directly to any technical questions. Thank you.

Preferably, please submit pictures in landscape format (horizontal).
Deadline for submissions is Friday, September 8, 2023.

PEACE DAY: 4th ANNUAL RING YOUR BELL FOR PEACE DAY

DATE: Thursday, September 21st, 2023

TIME: Program is 8:30 – 9:30 a.m. (Bell ringing is 9:01 -9:05 a.m.)

PLACE: ZOOM – International participation promoting Peace

“E KOMO MAI!

Now more than ever, your spirit of hope and promoting peace in the world and our community is needed. Please join in our annual recognition for the United Nations International Day of Peace and Peace Day in Hawaii. Please register and receive inspirational messages, honor those who have fought for our peace, and ring your bells for peace! Maui Strong will be in our prayers during these sad and difficult times. Add your mana, your power and ring your bells, turn on your cameras as we can view friends from Ukraine, Germany, Japan, Canada, the mainland states, and neighbor islands – schools, churches, parks, businesses, and homes will be filled with bells ringing!

Here is the link: bit.ly/PeaceDay2023

Make sure you stay for the whole program as ukulele virtuoso, Jake Shimabukuro, our Ambassador of Peace, will close the program with his songs for peace.

For questions, call 808-291-6151, email: renemansho@hawaii.rr.com

Rene Mansho, Chair of Peace Day Committee

STATE DHARMA SCHOOL GATHERING

We welcome everyone to join us for our 5th **Virtual State Dharma School Gathering “Just As You Are”** via Zoom on Sunday, October 15 from 10 am-12 pm. Don’t miss this wonderful opportunity to engage and interact with Hongwanji friends across the islands and to hear a Dharma message by Bishop Toshiyuki Umitani. The service will highlight Dharma School student emcees representing each of our Hongwanji districts along with our District Dharma School minister advisors. Following the service, we will have breakout rooms – Adult Breakout Room with Bishop Umitani (sharing a more in-depth Dharma Message) with Q&A session, and Dharma School Breakout Rooms (divided by age groups) featuring activities related to the theme “Just As You Are.” If you are a Dharma School Teacher/Educator, please join us before the service from 8:45 to 9:45 am to receive resources from the BCA Federation of Dharma School Teachers League (FDSTL) Convention attended by BJ Soriano and Edythe Vassall, representing Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii. They will join us to answer any questions or provide additional information. We will also ask Dharma School teachers to share successful activities they have had since resuming in-person sessions.

Looking forward to seeing you all then!

Registration: <https://forms.gle/2pEt3azy5qkwSmPb7>

~ Planning Committee – Rev. Tomo Hojo (Kauai), Ann Ishikawa (Oahu), Shirley Kakuda (Kauai), Debbie Kubota (Honolulu), Joan Tamori (Maui), Sandy Taniguchi (Hawaii Island)