



# 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](http://www.hongwanjihawaii.com) Email: [hqs@honpahi.org](mailto:hqs@honpahi.org)



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### MESSAGE FROM THE BISHOP

#### “Authentic Individuality”

Today, we witness many sad news of hate, violence, and discrimination. A human criticizes, discriminates, hates, and hurts other human beings. It is truly a tragic thing. We are all different in our appearances, socioeconomic status, race, language, lifestyle, etc. Even family members who live in the same household have different thoughts and viewpoints. But we are all unique and beautiful. We all shine beautifully.

We seem like surfers who try to ride on a massive range of waves: waves of our life’s challenges. Some waves are small, and others are too large for a single person to overcome. Sometimes, we succeed in riding on the waves; sometimes, we are overwhelmed and fail to ride on it. It would be wonderful if we could work together. It would be wonderful if we could freely extend our compassionate hands to those needing help. But it seems like we are all too busy in the pursuit of our own happiness. We are all too busy catching the waves right before us. In the ocean of our lives, we often fail to understand and care for the people around us. Perhaps we are too focused on catching the waves we want and feel that the people around us should not belong in the ocean we enjoy. Driven by such narrow viewpoints, we have no moment of peace. Such viewpoints are the primal cause of hatred and discrimination.

Professor Kenneth Tanaka talked about “authentic individuality.” Buddhism is the teaching to cultivate this authentic individuality. Authentic individuality means that each of us is unique, each of us can contribute to others, and each of us is precious and has dignity. “Oneness” that we talk about in Buddhism does not mean being the same. Say you are an apple; Oneness does not mean that you and others must be pineapple. Oneness means that an apple can exist as an apple, and a pineapple can exist as a pineapple. Apple has its dignity and place, and pineapple has its dignity and place. The Buddhist teaching of oneness teaches us that we are all, no matter who we are, illuminated and embraced by the Buddha’s Wisdom and Compassion just as we are. In that awareness, we become aware of our self-centeredness and limitations and, at the same time, endeavor to cultivate peace and harmony, compassion for self and others, and live with confidence, conviction, and dignity. I understand this as the meaning of “authentic individuality.”

A narrow viewpoint, characterized by limited personal experiences and a strong selfish attachment to oneself, can have far-reaching consequences that lead to hatred and discrimination. Buddhism teaches us the dignity of all lives and that all lives must be affirmed, respected, and appreciated.

Namo Amida Butsu

Bishop Toshiyuki Umitani

## OBITUARY NOTICE

**Mr. Jay Kunio Hamai**, a member of Moiliili Hongwanji Mission, passed away on May 12, 2023. Mr. Hamai served as the Treasurer of Moiliili Hongwanji Mission for close to 45 years. The Ingo of EI-HO-IN 映芳院 which translates as “One who shines brightly with rare fragrance” in recognition of his life of Nembutsu was conferred by Bishop Toshiyuki Umitani on August 31, 2023.

**Mrs. Mary Fujitani**, wife of retired minister, Rev. Shigeaki Fujitani, passed away on September 4, 2023, at the age of 94 in Honolulu, Hawaii. Her Funeral Service will be held on Saturday, November 25, 2023, in Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin as a private service. Visitation will be held from 2 pm, followed by the funeral service at 3 pm. If you would like to join the service, please RSVP to Mrs. Caryn Okuda [carynokuda@gmail.com](mailto:carynokuda@gmail.com) by November 15, 2023.

## NEW YOUTH SPECIALIST



Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii welcomed Emi Hashi as the new Children and Youth Activities Specialist (Youth Specialist).

Emi was a very active participant in the HHMH programs, such as Jr. YBA (Maui & Federation President), YBICSE, BWA Exchange Student, YESS Camp counselor, and BSC Fellowship Club. She is originally from Maui and currently participates in the Aiea Hongwanji Mission’s services and programs.

Her official starting date was Wednesday, October 4, 2023, and her office will be at the Buddhist Study Center (BSC). She works on Mondays and Wednesdays as a part-time employee.

As the Youth Specialist, Emi will develop, organize, and direct youth and youth-related activities such as Jr. YBA, YESS Camp, BSC Fellowship Club, Dharma School, and Young Adults. She will assist the operation of the BSC and OBE in matters relating to children, college students, and young adults.

We sincerely hope that this new assignment will be beneficial for the HHMH in propagating the teaching of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism, especially to the children and young adults who will bear the future of the HHMH.

## MAUI WILDFIRE

- The State Ministers Association and the Maui District Minister’s Association hosted the Maui Wildfires Memorial Service on September 24, 2023, at Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin. Under the officiation of Bishop Umitani and the HHMH Ministers, the participants of about 400 people (in person and online) placed their hands together in Gassho. Rev. Tomo Hojo, the President of the State Ministers Association, gave the opening message. Bishop Toshiyuki Umitani and Rev. Ai Hironaka delivered Dharma Messages. The service touched all of our hearts. The Nembutsu came out of our mouths naturally during the service. The service is now available to watch on the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii YouTube channel. You can feel it through this recorded video. Please share this video link with your temple members and friends. <https://youtu.be/clyxKab2un0>



- The Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha Buddhist Women’s Federation of Japan provided financial aid to Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii to be used by Rev. Ai Hironaka to purchase the ministerial robes and supplies that were lost due to the fire. Bishop Toshiyuki Umitani, together with Dr. Warren Tamamoto (Hawaii Kyodan President), Rev. Daido Baba (Executive Assistant to the Bishop), and Mrs. Yoshiko Umitani (Hawaii Federation of BWA Honorary President), joined the Kahului Hongwanji Mission’s Sunday Service on October 1, 2023, for the official presentation of robes to Rev. Ai Hironaka.



- In the spirit of compassion, Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii established the Maui Wildfires Disaster Relief Fund. All donations collected will go to support Lahaina Hongwanji Mission and relief efforts on Maui. If you could help support this effort, we would truly appreciate it.

You will find a large button for Maui Wildfires Disaster Relief near the top of our Donate page:  
<https://hongwanjihawaii.com/donate/>

**QR code for Maui Wildfire Disaster Relief Fund through PayPal**



Updates for Maui Wildfires Disaster will be shared on our website at <http://honpahi.link/fire>  
Mahalo for your generosity and support during this time of tragedy.

## **2023-2024 SOCIAL CONCERNS FUND DRIVE**

The month of November is a special time for reflecting on gratitude. Observing Eitaikyo and celebrating Thanksgiving are opportunities to appreciate the innumerable causes and conditions which sustain our lives and how we are deeply connected to the world around us. It is in this spirit of profound gratitude that we kick-off our Annual Social Concerns Fund Drive.

Your generosity enables the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii with the ability to support worthy organizations and programs making a difference in our community. Your selfless giving also enables us to provide compassionate aid during times of disaster and the ability to skillfully respond to issues affecting our local and world communities.

Through our Social Welfare Fund, we were able to immediately support relief efforts on Maui in the aftermath of devastating wildfires, giving over \$25,000 to various organizations and affected individuals. Your generous support ensures we have the ability to respond quickly when disasters strike.

We continued our advocacy for improving mental health care, addressing homelessness, and alleviating food insecurity in our community by donating to the Samaritan Counseling Center of Hawaii, Spill the Tea Café, Hope Services, and the various food banks on each island. This year, we also awarded several Golden Chain Grants to help nurture Sangha-based compassionate action.

The fund drive will begin November 1, 2023, and run till August 31, 2024. We request that temples submit their collected donations by the end of September 2024. Envelopes have been provided to temples wishing to use them. Extra envelopes are available in limited supply. Please make all checks payable to YOUR TEMPLE. Your temple will then remit one combined check to the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii.

Your support of our Annual Social Concerns Fund Drive is greatly appreciated. Mahalo!

In Gassho,

Rev. Toshiyuki Umitani, Bishop

Dr. Warren Tamamoto, President

Rev. Blayne Higa, Social Concerns Committee Chair

## **2023 MINISTER LAY ASSISTANT RETREAT**

On October 7 & 8, eleven Minister's Lay Assistants (MLA) from Oahu, Maui, and Hawaii Island gathered at Hawaii Betsuin in Honolulu to participate in various workshops to prepare for helping their ministers with temple services. The retreat offered the opportunity to review and enrich the knowledge of the participants in the rituals and traditions of the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha.

This year, two tracks were offered to nurture those just starting as MLAs and also support Certified MLAs to further hone their skills and knowledge.

New instructors Reverends Hashimoto and Soga led the well-received workshops on altar setup, service order, and chanting. Reverend Kuniyuki provided insights on providing Dharma education and talks. Bishop Umitani reviewed the role of MLAs as part of the Kyodan policy on the Shin Buddhist Ministry in Hawaii. Dr. Dexter Mar discussed opportunities for MLAs beyond worship services to help share the Dharma at our temples.

The 2024 MLA Retreat will be held on October 12-13, 2024. Please mark your calendars and plan to join this group of fellow travelers in learning how to support your ministers and temples.



### MINISTER'S RITUAL WORKSHOP

On October 13<sup>th</sup>, the Ministerial Training Committee held a Ritual Workshop at the Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin for Hawaii Kyodan ministers. Rev. Katsuya Kusunoki, Rimban of Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple was the featured trainer. Rev. Kusunoki is a graduate of Gonshikishidōsho and is a recipient of the specialized chanting and ritual certification from Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha.

The daylong workshop focused on learning aspects of the New *Gohonden Saho* which is a service created for the 850<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Shinran Shonin's Birth and the 800<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Establishment of the Jōdo Shinshū Teaching. *Gohonden* refers to Shinran Shonin's main work *Kyōgyōshinshō (The True Teaching, Practice, and Realization of the Pure Land Way)*. This new style of chanting the *Shōshinge (Hymn of True Entrusting)* will be used at Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii's Triple Celebration commemorating the 850<sup>th</sup>/800<sup>th</sup> Anniversaries and Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii's 135<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in September 2024.

Ministers also reviewed the purpose and basic understanding of Jōdo Shinshū rituals and chanting which are described as, "Buddhist religious services are opportunities to bow in veneration and pay respect to the Buddha and Masters, read aloud the sutras and scriptures, and praise the virtue of Amida Buddha, expressing with utmost sincerity our indebtedness and gratitude."

This was a meaningful time of professional development and fellowship for our ministers as they deepened their knowledge and appreciation for the Jōdo Shinshū tradition. We are planning to chant the "New *Gohonden Saho*" at our Triple Celebration next year.