



# Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii

## HEADQUARTERS UPDATE

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June 2024

### MESSAGE FROM THE BISHOP

#### VESAK AT THE WHITE HOUSE

On Thursday, May 23, 2024, Second Gentleman Douglas Emhoff hosted a Vesak celebration at the Navy Department Library and Reception Room on the White House campus. The celebration of Vesak might not be familiar among Jodo Shinshu Buddhists. Vesak commemorates Shakyamuni Buddha's birth, enlightenment and passing away (Parinirvana), and is observed by various Buddhists across the world.

This annual tradition of celebrating Vesak at the White House started under President Biden's administration in 2021 through the instrumental leadership of Ms. Wangmo Dixey, President of the International Buddhist Association of America (IBAA). Bishop Marvin Harada of the Buddhist Churches of America, who also serves on the IBAA Board of Directors, kindly extended the invitation to the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii to participate in this special event. It was a great honor for me to travel to Washington, D.C. to represent the HHMH and be a part of this historic event at the White House.

Among the attendees were many venerable masters, teachers and lay devotees from across America who represented the Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana traditions. Several representatives from the State Department including ambassadors and embassy staff from across the globe also attended.

In his statement on Vesak, President Joe Biden wrote, "For over 2,500 years, those who adhere to the Buddha's teachings have enriched and strengthened this world we share. Vesak is a time to reflect on the Buddha's teachings, including the need to work for peace and justice, and cultivate humility and compassion as we work together towards a brighter future."

Upon his entrance, the Second Gentleman welcomed us all with his remarks. He said that we are showcasing the beauty and diversity of all the communities, and it is important that we build coalitions and come together not only to express our interconnectedness, faith and joy but also to combat hate. He said that the one and best way to combat hate is to do it together, to come together, because, in the room, there was so much more that unites us than divides us. The Second Gentleman concluded his remarks by encouraging us to celebrate the universal principles of compassion, humility and peace, and to recommit to building a better future for all.

After the Second Gentleman's message, Ms. Dixey welcomed everyone, saying that Vesak is a sacred occasion celebrated by millions of Buddhists around the world, its profound message transcends borders, resonating deeply with people from all walks of life, including here in America. She noted that there are around 3,000 Buddhist temples in the United States, each representing the diverse traditions of Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana, and enriching our nation with profound wisdom. Ms. Dixey said, "In times of challenge where wars and internal disagreements run rampant, let us reimagine this light as a beacon of hope, a possibility for each of us to manifest harmony and well-being within ourselves and ultimately to become ambassadors of World Peace. Imagine the power within us to illuminate the world showing that wisdom and compassion are the ways to lead humanity."

Following those remarks, the representatives from the three Buddhist traditions lit the lamps, chanted the sutra, and offered their aspirations. Bishop Harada of the BCA, Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara of the Jodo Shinshu International Office, and I represented the Mahayana tradition together with other venerable masters.

In his aspiration, Bishop Harada described Mahayana Buddhism as “like a big bus” that carries anyone and everyone regardless of race, gender, social status, or sexual orientation, and it brings us from a life of delusion, ignorance and suffering to a life of awakening, wisdom and liberation. He said that we need teachings that act as mirrors, enabling us to deeply self-reflect and truly live a life of humility and gratitude. He said, “Understanding the interconnected world of oneness enables us to live with a deep sense of compassion, to treat all beings as if they are our brothers and sisters, to treat all beings as if they are a part of each of us, and in truth, they are.”

It was truly an honor that both the Buddhist Churches of America and the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii be a part of the Vesak Celebration at the White House.

Ms. Dixey, at the end of her message, said, “May each of us carry the inspiration and spirit of Vesak into our everyday lives. May we embrace the beautiful qualities that the Buddha has shown us to build a brighter and kinder future for all Americans, guided by the timeless qualities of love, compassion and mutual understanding. By lighting this lamp today, we send a message of peace and harmony that will resonate throughout the world.”

You can watch the Vesak Celebration at the White House on YouTube:  
<https://www.youtube.com/live/v3V1ZwCAGQs?si=2dC1evzdPvppZzFu>

Bishop Toshiyuki Umitani

Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii



*Bishop Marvin Harada and Bishop Toshiyuki Umitani standing outside of the White House.*



*From Right: Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara, Mrs. Wangmo Dixey, Bishop Marvin Harada, and Bishop Toshiyuki Umitani.*

## MINISTERIAL ASSIGNMENT

**Rev. Sol Kalu**, currently serving as the Office of Buddhist Education assistant and Overseeing Minister of the Mililani Hongwanji Mission, will be relieved from his current assignments and will be transferred to the Kailua Hongwanji Mission (DBA Windward Buddhist Temple) as its Resident Minister as of August 1, 2024.

## TRIPLE CELEBRATION

The HHMH Triple Celebration Steering Committee members are looking forward to seeing you at the Ala Moana Hotel on September 7 & 8, 2024.

Currently 270 people have registered for the event and there are several announcements as follows.

### Updated Schedule

#### Saturday, September 7, 2024

850<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Shinran Shonin's Birth & 800<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Establishment of the Jodo Shinshu Teaching

9:00 am – 10:00 am Registration

10:00 am – 11:00 am Opening Service (Shinsei Gohonden Saho in commemoration of the 850<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Shinran Shonin's Birth & 800<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Establishment of the Jodo Shinshu Teaching)

11:00 a.m. - 11:15 a.m. Break

11:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. Keynote Speaker: Rev. Dr. Takashi Miyaji

12:15 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. Lunch

2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. Workshop I

3:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. Break

4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Workshop II

5:00 p.m. Hotel Check-in

Saturday evening – Dinner on your own.

#### Sunday, September 8, 2024

135<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii

7:00 a.m. - 7:30 a.m. Choir Rehearsal

7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. Continental Breakfast

9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. HHMH 135<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Service

10:00 a.m. - 10:15 a.m. Break

10:15 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Panel Discussion "Sharing of the Joy of Nembutsu Together"

11:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Closing



### Flights

If you didn't fill out your flight numbers on the Triple Celebration Registration Form and wish to have transportation between the airport and Ala Moana Hotel on September 7 & Ala Moana Hotel to the airport, please email your flight numbers to [triple.celebration@honpahi.org](mailto:triple.celebration@honpahi.org) as soon as possible.

### Neighbor Island Subsidy

The neighbor island participants subsidy will be mailed after the no refundable date.

### Panel Discussion

Due to unexpected circumstances, there have been changes in the Triple Celebration panelists. Kahu Sherman Thompson will no longer appear on the panel. Instead, Mr. Dan Thompson and Rev. Ai Hironaka will join Ms. Edythe Vassall on the panel.

If you have any questions, please email [triple.celebration@honpahi.org](mailto:triple.celebration@honpahi.org) or call the H.Q. office.

## YBICSE

The following individuals were selected for the 2024 YBICSE (Young Buddhist International Cultural Study Exchange) which is scheduled for July 2 – 12, 2024. Its basic purpose is for young Jodo Shinshu Buddhists to deepen their understanding and appreciation of the Nembutsu teaching by visiting our Mother Temple or Honzan, the Hongwanji, and traveling to several historical and/or significant sites with fellow young Buddhists.

### Participants (6):

Laethan Chanhmany (Honpa Hongwanji Hilo Betsuin)  
Kaitlin Nakamura (Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin/PBA)  
Yuma Kamuro (Honpa Hongwanji Hilo Betsuin)  
Chad Okawa (Aiea Hongwanji Mission)  
Ty Wakahiro (Mililani Hongwanji Mission)  
Sean Fitch (PBA)

### Chaperone (1):

Rev. Joshin Kamuro (Honpa Hongwanji Hilo Betsuin)

## LIVING TREASURES OF HAWAI'I™

Living Treasures of Hawai'i recognizes and honors individuals who have demonstrated excellence and high achievement in their field of endeavor and the larger community, who through continuous growth and selfless giving have made a significant positive impact on our local society.

The program was inspired by the Living National Treasures (Ningen Kokuho) of Japan. In 1976, Bishop Yoshiaki Fujitani instituted the program within the Hongwanji at the suggestion of Paul Yamanaka, a local business executive. Initially established to honor those committed to perpetuating our islands' distinctive cultural and artistic heritage, the recognition was expanded to consider persons across sectors and communities who are making Hawai'i a better place. A [complete list of honorees](#) since Living Treasures was established in 1976 is available.

We urge members of the public who know anyone who they believe qualifies for this award to submit nominations by August 1, 2024. The Living Treasures Selection Committee will choose honorees for a February 2025 ceremony.

Attached is a nomination form for the Living Treasures of Hawai'i.

## YESS CAMP 40: DARUMA & ME

Young Enthusiastic Shinshu Seekers (YESS) Camp 40 was held at the Buddhist Study Center on May 25-27, 2024. We had a total of 14 campers, 7 counselors, and a rotating cast of staff helpers in attendance.

Camp activities on Saturday included mixers and games, opening service, Daruma craft, Dharma discussion, and a "campfire" night of skits, s'mores, and a dream board activity. Sunday's busy schedule was filled with morning service, stretches, more Dharma discussion, clean-up at the Mō'ili'ili Japanese Cemetery, field games, and a social night at Dave & Buster's. Finally, on Monday, we had morning service, stretches,

and finished the Daruma craft before wrapping up with BSC clean-up and closing service with a candlelight ceremony.

Overall, YESS we're back! According to campers and staff, they had a fun-filled weekend and made many special memories. We hope that next year, we can keep it going with returning campers & counselors, as well as new friends!

A big mahalo to everyone who helped to make YESS Camp 40 a success, including Hawaii Kyodan, the Buddhist Study Center, Bishop Umitani and the Headquarters staff, our guest speaker Rev. Kerry Kiyohara, various temples and individuals for helping with PR and support, YESS Camp counselors (Koki Atcheson, Cristina Gervais, Kano Hashimoto, Ethan Mayer, Chihiro Okawa, Kenji Suzuki, Koji Suzuki), staff (Dwight Matsuo, Ryne Masuda, Alan Matsumoto, Mark Haimoto, and many others from our "old crew" who took the time out to stop by), and of course the campers. We couldn't have done it without you.

Emi Hashi – Children and Youth Activities Specialist



## 61<sup>ST</sup> LAY ASSOCIATION CONVENTION

Theme: A Future with Aloha - Engagement, Diversity and Relationships

When: Sunday, September 8, 2024 from 1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
(following the Triple Celebration)

Where: Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin Social Hall  
Attend in person or by Zoom

Cost: In-person Delegates and Observers \$30.00 (includes bento)  
Online Delegates and Observers \$15.00  
Non-participants may select a bento for \$10.00

Registration Deadline: July 31, 2024

Transportation will be provided for neighbor island participants from Ala Moana Hotel (where the Triple Celebration will be held) to Hawaii Betsuin and to the airport.

Registration is by temple. Information has been emailed to temple presidents and is also available on the Lay Convention 2024 website, <http://honpahi.link/laycon2024>.

## BISHOP'S AWARD FOR JAPANESE LANGUAGE SCHOOL STUDENTS

Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii Japanese Language School committee honored following students who received the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii Bishop's Award at their graduations in May 2024.

Fort Gakuen	8 <sup>th</sup> grader: Luke Mitsuo Nissle
Hilo Hongwanji Gakuen	6 <sup>th</sup> grader: Mika Mieko Grohs
Hongwanji Mission School	8 <sup>th</sup> grader: Amy Sayuri Yoshida
Wailuku Hongwanji Gakuen	6 <sup>th</sup> grader: Kenzie Michie Yokouchi 8 <sup>th</sup> grader: Kazumasa Trevor Amby

## SAVE THE DATES

### Dharma-Centered Living 101 – Session 2

Please join us for Session 2 of Dharma-Centered Living 101 on Saturday, August 3rd from 9:30 am - 12:30 pm. D. Trinidad Hunt will be presenting IN PERSON at the Hawaii Betsuin in the Social Hall for the Oahu and Honolulu districts. Neighbor Island districts will be via Zoom at designated locations. The focus of this workshop will be on kindness and caring. Please see the attached flyer for more details.

Please contact Debbie Kubota, Chair, Commission on Buddhist Education if any questions arise ([dekub88@gmail.com](mailto:dekub88@gmail.com))

### The 50<sup>th</sup> BSC Summer Session

**Save The Dates**  
**Summer Session – August 5-9, 2024**  
**6-8pm - Held in person and via Zoom**

Lecturer: Rev. Dr. Kenji Akahoshi (BCA Retired Minister)  
Theme: "Shifting From 'Please' to 'Thank You' – A Path to Awakening"  
A contemporary interpretation of Shin Buddhism

Come learn how to bring joy into the flow of ordinary life. For more information and registration, visit: <https://bschawaii.org/summer-session/> or contact the Buddhist Study Center.