



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



July 2024

MESSAGE FROM THE BISHOP

There was an article about adaptation on the National Geographic website. In evolutionary theory, adaptation is the biological mechanism by which organisms adjust to new environments or to changes in their current environment. Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace believed that the evolution of organisms was connected in some way with adaptation of organisms to changing environmental conditions. They developed the theory of “natural selection” that traits that can be passed down allow organisms to adapt to the environment better than other organisms of the same species. This enables better survival and reproduction compared with other members of the species, leading to evolution.

As an example of natural selection, Charles Darwin proposed that giraffes evolved into long-necked creatures because, with longer necks, they could reach tender leaves on top of trees. This adaptation gave them an advantage over other animals and members of their own species with shorter necks. These giraffes with longer necks thrived and reproduced more, leading to generations of giraffes with their characteristic extended necks.

Whether it's an animal or an organization, those that can adapt to the environment better than others can not only survive but also thrive. The Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii and its 32 temples are no exception. Hawaii Kyodan must carefully assess the environment, both within and outside of the organization that surrounds us, and adapt to the changes appropriately. This will not only ensure our survival but also pave the way for us to continue to evolve and share the messages of Universal Wisdom and Compassion with renewed vigor and effectiveness.

On Sunday, June 23, 2024, HHMH had the honor of hosting Rev. Yuhiko Yasunaga, the Head Regent of the Hongwanji in Kyoto, at Hawaii Betsuin. He delivered a special lecture entitled “Innovative Rebranding and Recreating the Business Model of Tsukiji Hongwanji.” We were truly grateful to Rev. Yasunaga for taking the time to share his insights and experiences with us. Some key takeaways from his lecture include:

- The direct cause of the decline of the religious community is our inability to respond to changes in the current environment.
- Changes in the social environment surrounding temples include a declining population, the collapse of the membership system, the shift from the family system to individual households, changes in funeral format, and people’s strict scrutiny of religious organizations.
- It is important to acknowledge and accept changes earnestly and sincerely. Individual leaders must consider how to adapt for the future.
- Simply waiting at the temple will never restore the former prosperity of the denomination.
- The management of a religious corporation and a stock company is essentially the same. Both exist to contribute to society, stakeholders, shareholders, employees, customers, members, etc.

- Both religious skills and secular skills are necessary for the proper management of temples. The religious skills involve providing religious services, while the secular skills entail skillfully managing a religious organization.
- Ministers should possess both religious and secular skills, including business management, financial accounting, marketing, and IT skills.
- A widening gap or distance between temples and people in the community results in fewer personal relationships, a loss of a sense of belonging, decreased donations, and lower levels of trust in religious organizations.
- A step-up strategy is needed that connects people with whom we have a weak relationship and eventually introduces them to receive an affirmation rite and become members of the temple.
- We must convey the teachings of Jodo Shinshu in modern and easy-to-understand language.
- Temple Management Strategy includes:
 1. Define what your temple aims to achieve and how to increase the brand value of the temple.
 2. What is the uniqueness of your temple?
 3. What will you do to attract new members and repeat customers?
 4. Not to be afraid of changes.
 5. The use of IT is absolutely necessary for temple management.
- The traditional "product-out" approach is ineffective. Understanding and meeting customer expectations is crucial for an organization's survival.
- Roughly 80% of people oppose actual management reform. To change this, you need to rely on your own resilience to persistently persuade others, demonstrate small successes, and involve those who oppose you.
- Buddhism can help people to live a rich life in the age of the VUCA era (an acronym for Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity, which means an era in which things are highly uncertain and the future is difficult to predict).

Rev. Yasunaga's presentation was filled with valuable information, held my attention, and left me feeling inspired. Embarking on the journey of adaptation requires determination, courage, and perseverance. The path may not always be smooth, but let's advance together, taking deliberate steps to effectively and comprehensively address the needs of our community.

In Gassho,
Bishop Toshiyuki Umitani

CONDOLENCE

Kahu Sherman Thompson, a member of Lahaina Hongwanji Mission, passed away on June 4, 2024. Kahu Thompson served as a member of the statewide Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii Board of Directors for a long time and dedicated to Lahaina Hongwanji and Hawaii Betsuin. The Posthumous Title (INGO) of KO-MYO-IN 光明院, which signifies "Radiant Light" in recognition of his life of Nembutsu, was conferred by Bishop Toshiyuki Umitani on June 29, 2024.

YOUTH SPECIALIST UPDATE

Emi Hashi, Honpa Hongwanji Youth Specialist, will be away from office on leave of absence from August 15 to October 15, 2024. Please reach out as soon as possible if you have any youth-related concerns or requests before the start of her leave or contact Headquarters staff for anything urgent during the leave period. Emi will resume contact and coordination upon her return in October. Thank you for understanding.

TRIPLE CELEBRATION

Registration

Due to high demand the registration has been closed. Anyone sending in a registration from July 15 forward will be put on a waiting list and registered if space becomes available.

Registration Confirmation

HQ emailed a registration confirmation on July 19. If you provided your email address on the registration form and didn't receive the email, please contact us at triple.celebration@honpahi.org or call HQ at (808) 522-9200.

Hotel Reservation

If you would like to stay at the Ala Moana Hotel, the room block is still open. The Triple Celebration Committee has reserved 85 rooms for Friday night and 85 rooms for Saturday night. The room cost is \$194 for the Kona Tower and \$224 for the Waikiki Tower. We need help to fulfill our room block commitment so please register before the deadline of August 5, 2024. The hotel will waive the resort fees and provide complimentary internet in the rooms.

Please use this link to make your Ala Moana Hotel reservations: <https://book.passkey.com/e/50708991>

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 and from Ala Moana Hotel to the airport, please email your flight numbers to triple.celebration@honpahi.org as soon as possible.

Neighbor Island Subsidy

The neighbor island participants subsidy will be mailed after the non-refundable date.

Additional Information

For additional information and updated schedule, please visit the HHMH website: <https://hongwanjihawaii.com/triple-celebration>

Questions

If you have any questions, please email triple.celebration@honpahi.org or call HQ. The HHMH Triple Celebration Steering Committee members are looking forward to seeing you at the Ala Moana Hotel on September 7 & 8, 2024.



BSC SUMMER SESSION

50th Annual Buddhist Study Center Summer Session, August 5-9, 2024 “Shifting From ‘Please’ to ‘Thank You’ – A Path to Awakening” A contemporary interpretation of Shin Buddhism



In ancient times, the unknown world was explained in mythical form with deities and the afterlife being prominent. Relating traditional myths to our modern life has its limits. We will reverse this method of going from the past to the present. By using our current knowledge from science and psychology, we will reveal the practical and spiritual benefits of Shin.

For those seeking solutions to common concerns, Shin has provided a path for ordinary people for 800 years.

Each session will be an interactive workshop that leads to an experience of the benefits of Shin Buddhism. This is a practical guide of how being a Shin Buddhist in the 21st century can resolve many issues.

Rev. Akahoshi’s retreats and workshops use innovative methods that he learned from leading philosophers, psychologists, and Buddhist teachers. Using these interactive methods, he will share an effective, simple practice of gratitude.

Come learn how to bring joy into the flow of ordinary life. For more information and registration, visit <https://bschawaii.org>, or contact the Buddhist Study Center. (Times are Hawaii Standard Time)

Held In-person and via Zoom (times are Hawaii Standard Time)

Aug. 5- Why & How of Gratitude
6-8 p.m. Practicing the non-practice of gratitude.

Aug. 6- Truth: Now and Then
6-8 p.m. Our understanding of truth has expanded from the Buddha’s time to now.

Aug. 7- Who Am I in the World?
6-8 p.m. Finding my authentic self.

Aug. 8- Benefits of Shin Buddhism
6-8 p.m. Current interpretations of ancient rituals.

Aug. 9- Being Sacred in the Profane
6-8 p.m. Being whole, not holy.

Suggested tax-deductible donation: 5 sessions \$50, single sessions \$10. Checks made out to HHMH.

Direct questions to: **Buddhist Study Center, 1436 University Avenue, Honolulu, HI 96822**

Phone: (808) 522-9200

Rev. Dr. Kenji Akahoshi

Education: Univ California San Francisco Dental School (DDS), Institute of Transpersonal Psychology (MATP), and the Institute of Buddhist Studies (MBS).

Experience: USAF Capt. In Misawa, Japan. 30 years private dental practice in San Jose, California. San Jose Betsuin Board President. Chaplain at the Santa Clara County Juvenile Hall. Former head minister of the Buddhist Temple of San Diego. Retreat leader, author, teacher.

2024 BSC SUMMER SESSION SATELLITE SEMINARS

Guest lecturer: Rev. Dr. Kenji Akahoshi

August 10	<p>Kauai District Online lecture: 10:00 a.m. -11:30 a.m. Topic: The Efforts of Others</p>
August 10	<p>Hawaii Island District Lecture at Kona Hongwanji: 5:00 p.m. -6:30 p.m. Topic: Shifting from “Please” to “Thank You” - - A Path of Awakening</p>
August 11	<p>Hawaii Island District Holualoa Hongwanji Obon service and Dharma talk: 9:00 a.m. -10:00 a.m. Lecture at Hilo Betsuin: 2:00 p.m. Topic: What is Shin Buddhism?</p>
August 12	<p>Hawaii Island District Lecture at Kamuela Hongwanji: 9:00 a.m. -10:30 a.m. Topic: What is the Relationship Between Amida Buddha and Shakyamuni Buddha? ----- Maui District Lecture at Makawao Hongwanji: 6:00 p.m. -8:00 p.m. Topic: Gratitude: A Path of Awakening</p>
August 13	<p>Maui District Workshop at Makawao Hongwanji for Maui Council leadership: 6:00 p.m. -8:00 p.m. Topic: Growing Our Sangha</p>
August 14	<p>Oahu District Lecture at Aiea Hongwanji: 7:00 p.m. -9:00 p.m. Topic: Thank You</p>
August 15	<p>Statewide Zoom session: 7:00 p.m. -8:00 p.m. Topic: TBD</p>
August 17	<p>Honolulu District Workshop at Windward Buddhist Temple for Honolulu District leaders: 10:00 a.m.-12:00 noon Topic: TBD</p>
August 19	<p>Oahu District Workshop for Oahu Hongwanji Council leadership at Pearl City Hongwanji: Dinner from 6:00 p.m. Session from 7:00 p.m. -9:00 p.m. Topic: Growing Our Sangha</p>

BUDDHIST STUDY CENTER FELLOWSHIP CLUB

Calling all college students! Are you interested in Jodo Shinshu Buddhism? Do you want to connect with others and make new friends? Join the Buddhist Study Center Fellowship Club for our 2024 kick-off event, Manoaphobia.

What is Manoaphobia?

Open to college-aged students, Manoaphobia is a kick-off event for the 2024 school year. Bring your friends and make new ones at the Buddhist Study Center! We'll have lunch, mixers, games, and chat about university life.

What is the Buddhist Study Center Fellowship Club?

Right now, we're just getting (re)started. The BSCFC was a registered student organization with UH Manoa that held social, service, and educational events focused on Buddhist values for college students. Unfortunately, the BSCFC has been inactive, so now is a chance to re-create a club that will grow and support today's college students and interests. Come join us!

Who: All University of Hawaii Manoa/college-aged students who are interested in Jodo Shinshu Buddhism

What: Manoaphobia back-to-college event

When: August 23, 2024, 10:00 am-1:00 pm

Where: Buddhist Study Center, 1436 University Ave, Honolulu HI (across the street from UH Manoa)

How: If possible, email ehashi@honpahi.org by August 14 to let us know you're interested and how many will be attending. You are also welcome to show up without RSVP but food may be limited. We hope to see you there!

JR. YBA CONVENTION

The 2024 Jr. Young Buddhist Association Convention was held this year from June 21-23 on the beautiful island of Maui, Hawaii, and was a memorable event that brought together young Buddhists from throughout the state. Hosted at Wailuku Hongwanji, this year's convention embraced the theme "Reach for the Stars," encouraging participants to strive for excellence and growth in their spiritual and personal lives.



The convention began on Friday afternoon with attendees arriving and gathering at Wailuku Hongwanji for an opening service. This was followed by a trip to Ultimate Air, a trampoline park, where participants enjoyed an evening of energetic fun and camaraderie. The night ended with free time at the hotel, where the Jr. YBA of the Year Contest began, highlighting some of our exceptional members.



Saturday's activities began early, with the first General Assembly, featuring discussions on the Jr. YBA's mission and future initiatives. This was followed by a convention photoshoot by the beach, which was in turn followed by an inspiring keynote address from Councilmember Yuki Lei Sugimura. Her speech

emphasized the importance of youth leadership and community involvement, resonating deeply with the audience.

The second General Assembly in the afternoon continued with the items of interest begun in the first assembly, along with other business, such as a choice of organization to support for HBY month. The day culminated with a trip to Haleakala, where attendees witnessed an incredible sunset from the summit. This experience was both awe-inspiring and reflective, perfectly capturing the convention's aspirational theme.

Sunday began with an early checkout from the hotel and a final gathering at Wailuku Hongwanji. The day's events included a moving Sunday Service, featuring an oratorical contest where members shared personal stories and insights on Buddhist teachings, and how they related, in turn, to the theme of reaching for the stars. Following the service, a Model United Contest took place, and the convention concluded with a closing service and the installation of new officers, ensuring the continuity of leadership within the Jr. YBA.

The 2024 Junior YBA Convention strengthened the bonds among young Buddhists and inspired them to pursue their dreams with determination and compassion. The experiences and friendships gained from this event will be valuable tools for future endeavors.

Congratulations to the following contest winners from the 67th Jr. YBA State Convention:

Jr. YBA of the Year, Riho Umitani

Jr. YBA of the Year Runner Up, Emma Fujikawa

Essay Contest Winner, Chihiro Okawa with essay titled "Reaching for the Stars: A Journey in Astrophysics and Self-Discovery"

Art Contest Winner, Emma Fujikawa

Oratorical Contest Winner, Yuma Kamuro

Wesley Kosaka

Co-Chair of the 67th Jr. YBA Convention

MINISTER'S LAY ASSISTANT RETREAT

The HHMH Ministerial Training Committee will host the Annual Minister's Lay Assistant Retreat held at Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin on October 12-13, 2024. This retreat is specifically designed for individuals who have been designated as Minister's Lay Assistants (including Certified MLAs) at their temple and are actively involved in collaboration with their minister mentor. The retreat aims to provide a platform for participants to review and enhance their knowledge and skills relevant to their roles as MLAs. This year, we are proud to announce that the esteemed instructors for this retreat include Rev. Dr. Jeff Wilson, Bishop Toshiyuki Umitani, Rev. Blayne Higa, Rev. Jeffrey Soga, Rev. Kojun Hashimoto, Rev. Daido Baba, and Dr. Dexter Mar. Stay tuned for more information, including registration details, which will be shared with temple ministers and leaders soon. Additionally, a travel subsidy may be available for those coming from the neighbor islands. For those who are not yet designated as MLAs but are interested in attending the retreat, please consult with your temple minister about the process of becoming an MLA. We look forward to welcoming you to this enriching and educational event.

2023-2024 SOCIAL CONCERNS FUND DRIVE UPDATE

Reminder that the current Social Concerns Fund Drive will run till August 31, 2024. The Committee on Social Concerns requests that temples please submit all collected donations to Hawaii Kyodan HQ by September 30, 2024.

Through your generosity, the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii is able to support worthy organizations and programs with funding to continue their work in our community and gives us the ability to provide aid during times of disaster. We continue to award Golden Chain Grants to encourage sharing the Dharma through compassionate service and have established the Dana Matching Grant to double the impact of charitable giving by organizations within the Hawaii Kyodan Ohana.

Your support directly impacts the lives of others. Mahalo for your generosity!

In Gassho,
Rev. Blayne Higa, Chair
Committee on Social Concerns

BASIC BUDDHISM ONLINE COURSE FROM PROFESSOR KENNETH TANAKA

Rev. Dr. Kenneth Tanaka will moderate an online course entitled “Introduction to Basic Buddhism for the West and Beyond.” Ten monthly sessions begin September 2024. The course is subtitled “Fireside Chat Sessions with 20 Guest Lay Persons and Teachers” and is designed to provide the basics of Buddhism for those seeking a religious/spiritual foundation through the Dharma.

The class format includes a 30-minute summary by Dr. Tanaka, 30 minutes of presentation/facilitation by a lay person, and 30 minutes of presentation/facilitation by an ordained guest speaker. Optional informal discussion follows. Among the guest speakers are four from Hawaii — three lay people and Kona Hongwanji’s Rev. Blayne Higa.

Dr. Tanaka is Professor Emeritus, Musashino University, Tokyo. He was previously Associate Professor and Assistant Dean, the Institute of Buddhist Studies, Berkeley. He is the author of *Jewels: An Introduction to American Buddhism for Youth, Scouts and the Young at Heart* and *Ocean: An Introduction to Jodo-Shinshu Buddhism in America*.

For more information, including registration details, see the accompanying flyer or visit honpahi.link/tanakacourse.

