

“THE CALLING VOICE”

# Ka Leo Kāhea

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## The White House Hosts Its Fourth Vesak Ceremony

Bishop Umitani joins Buddhist leaders from around the world at annual celebration



Courtesy of the White House

Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii's Bishop Toshiyuki Umitani, left, Bishop Marvin Harada of the Buddhist Churches of America, Mrs. Wangmo Dixey, President of the International Buddhist Association of America and Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara of the Jodo Shinshu International Office celebrated Vesak ceremonies at the White House on May 23, 2024.

BY REV. TOSHIYUKI UMITANI  
BISHOP, HONPA HONGWANJI  
MISSION OF HAWAII

WASHINGTON, D.C. — 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 the Biden 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,

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KAHU SHERMAN THOMPSON, 1956-2024

## Hawai'i Loses a Beloved Son

The sudden passing of a much-admired religious leader, educator and friend affects many Buddhist and Christians statewide

BY GAIL S. TAGASHIRA  
HONPA HONGWANJI HAWAII BETSUIN

Kahu Sherman Thompson, a mentor, minister, advocate for interfaith understanding who spoke and listened to all with his mind and heart, whose irrepressible sense of humor, influence and generosity was beloved throughout Hawai'i, passed away in Kauai on June 4, 2024.

He was 67.

Born in Honolulu on Oct. 1, 1956 and raised in Lahaina in a Buddhist household, he was the son of Sherman Namaau Thompson and Kiyoko (Grace) Shibao who predeceased him.

His father was a Maui Police officer

and deputy director of the Department of Liquor Control for Maui County.

His mother was Vice President and the branch manager of American Savings and Loan in Lahaina, who was active with Lahaina Hongwanji's Maui United Fujinkai, the Lahaina Business and Professional Women's Club and a bon dance instructor.

With both parents in demanding careers, young Sherman's grandparents, Yasuto and Sugi Shibao, both lifelong members of Lahaina Hongwanji, played a big part in his formative years along with his two brothers and two sisters. They were members of Lahaina Hongwanji: His grandfather served on the Kyodan

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A lifelong member of Lahaina Hongwanji, Kahu Sherman Thompson embraced inter-faith cooperation.

MAUI WILDFIRE RELIEF AND RECOVERY

## A Heartfelt Thank You to Our Donors

Contributions worldwide reaches nearly \$1M

Editor's Note: The Maui Wildfire Disaster Relief Fund was established in response to the wildfire disaster that devastated parts of Lahaina on Aug. 8, 2023.

Thank you very much for your generous contribution towards the Lahaina Hongwanji temple, their Sangha members and the people in the Lahaina community.

We would like to express our deep gratitude by acknowledging the individuals and organizations that made contributions to this fund.

The total amount received as of July 31, 2024 is nearing \$1,000,000.

Please note that this list includes donations made via cash, check and PayPal but does not include the names of those who donated through GoFundMe and Honzan's fundraising in Japan.

Due to space limitations, we are unable to include individuals who made contributions

anonymously and those who donated less than \$100.

We apologize in advance if we inadvertently missed anyone. Please visit the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii website for updates on our relief and recovery efforts.

In Gassho,  
Rev. Toshiyuki Umitani  
Bishop, Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii

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Photo by Jamm Aquino / Courtesy of the Honolulu Star-Advertiser

Rev. Gensho Hara of Lahaina Jodo Mission, Rev. Ai Hironaka of Lahaina Hongwanji Mission, center, and Rev. Takayuki Meguro of Lahaina Shingon Mission gathered at Kelaweia Mauka Makai Pond last year on Sept. 9, 2023.

# ‘From the Mud, the Lotus Flower Blooms’



BY REV. TOSHIYUKI UMITANI  
BISHOP, HONPA HONGWANJI  
MISSION OF HAWAII

Osono lived in Mikawa (present-day Aichi Prefecture) from 1777 to 1853. She got married at a young age and had two children, but unfortunately, both passed away early. This led her to seriously engage with the teachings of the Nembutsu. She eagerly took part in her monthly visits to Ryusenji Temple, her

home temple, deepening her spirituality. One day, Osono visited the neighboring temple, Fugenji, to listen to the Dharma Message of Rev. Zenkei Nishiwaki. During the conversation, Rev. Nishiwaki asked Osono, “I have been to the area where you live and it didn’t seem that Buddhism was thriving, but when I saw people like you, Buddhism seems to be thriving in your area these days.” Then Osono replied, “I am not sure about others, but in my case, yes, it’s been thriving, thriving a lot.” Rev. Nishiwaki asked, “What does the prosperity of one person look like?” Osono said, “Well, from morning to night, all the time, all kinds of thoughts arise in my mind, such as ‘I have this,’ ‘I don’t have that,’ ‘I have enough,’ ‘I don’t have enough,’ ‘I like this,’ ‘I don’t like that’ . . . the three poi-

## BISHOP'S CORNER

sons and five sensual desires are thriving!” Rev. Nishiwaki replied, “Is that not the prosperity of the Buddha-Dharma, but the prosperity of your *bonno* (blind passions)?” Osono smiled, placed her hand on her chest, and said, “Indeed. That is all I have.” As Osono mentioned, we burn the fire of blind passions all the time, consciously or unconsciously. The term “*bonno*,” or blind passion, comes from the Sanskrit *klesha*, but the literal meaning of this Japanese rendition, *bonno*, is “that which agitates mind and body.” Buddhism teaches us that this agitation of mind and body is the source of turmoil in our lives. Jodo Shinshu Buddhism is not about getting rid of a disturbing state of agitation,

purifying our hearts and minds, and becoming a special person. It is about listening and entrusting to the universal voice of wisdom and compassion, the main target of which is those who are consumed by anger, hate and self-centeredness. Shinran Shonin taught us that this universal voice of wisdom and compassion, as “Namo Amida Butsu” pursues us, continues to call us and nurtures us so that we can bloom a beautiful flower of awakening out of the mud of our own blind passions. In his major work, “Kyo-gyoshinsho,” Shinran Shonin quoted the following passage from the *Vimalakirti* Sutra: “*The lotus does not grow in the solid ground of lofty plateaus, but in the muddy ponds of the lowland marshes.*” This is an analogy meaning that we live in the mud of blind passions, but awakened and guided by Amida

Buddha, we are able to put forth the blossoms of the Buddha’s perfect enlightenment in our daily lives. Through our blind passions, we come to awaken to and appreciate the working of great compassion. In other words, what we experience in our daily lives, our feelings of agitation, frustration and insecurity, is actually a “practice hall” for us to ascertain the truth of the Dharma. While Osono felt shame and self-reproach for her “thriving” blind passions, she also experienced that the compassionate embrace of Amida Buddha was simultaneously “thriving” within her heart and mind, giving her a sense of joy, gratitude and comfort. In the very midst of these agitations, the awakening to a new and bright life, the blossoming of lotus flowers, occurs.

# Joyfully Sharing Nembutsu Moments, Gratefully Cultivating Awareness



BY REV. ERIC MATSUMOTO  
AIEA HONGWANJI MISSION

*Editor’s Note: Rev. Eric Matsumoto shared remarks he delivered as part of a brief Dharma Talk at the annual State Minister’s Association Seminar in June.*

Aloha Kakou! I fervently hope that your days are filled with moments of the Nembutsu flowing from your heart and lips. To my ears (and hopefully yours, too) there is no moment more beautiful than hearing the Nembutsu being sincerely recited. It’s hard for us to imagine how much time, energy and

effort Shinran Shonin put into compiling all his writings and especially his major work, “The True Teaching, Practice and Realization of the Pure Land Way” in an age without electricity, Internet and computers. We may wonder, why did he do it? In his own words, quoting another Jodo Shinshu Master, “I have collected true words to aid others in their practice for attaining birth (in the Pure Land of Enlightenment), in order that the process be made continuous, without end and without interruption. . . .” It was to help you and I understand or become joyously aware and grateful of Amida Buddha’s limitless and boundless Wisdom and Compassion! He was aware of just how deep and profound the Buddha’s compassion is and he was gratefully rejoicing in what was shared with him and praising what he had received. The four key composites in our opening reflection are: awareness, rejoicing, praising, and, though implied, gratitude. In the preface to his “Hymn of True Shinjin and the Nembutsu” or the *Shoshinge*, he says, “. . . wishing to realize the Buddha’s benevolence and

## MINISTER'S MESSAGE

to respond in gratitude to the Buddha’s virtue. . . and . . . taking refuge in the true words . . . I realize the depth and vastness of the Buddha’s benevolence and compose the following hymn.” To me, Shinran Shonin is responding in gratitude to Amida Buddha’s compassion which he finds illuminating, nurturing and embracing him. Together with reciting the Nembutsu, all his writings and compilations are his way of expressing his gratitude and appreciation and the wish that we all attain Enlightenment together. Shinran Shonin’s writings can be likened to a fully opened fan. It is comprehensive, immense and broad. It can be said that Rennyo Shonin, to make it easier to understand, had us focus on the *Shoshinge* and said that the Nembutsu is the Nembutsu of Gratitude. He compressed Shinran Shonin’s teachings into a folded fan to simplify it which worked well for over 500 years. In our times, today, it is optimal for us to slightly expand that essence so that people everywhere can once

again know why we appreciate Namo Amida Butsu so much. We must all, lay people and ministers, together share our awareness and joy, too. It is not enough to just say “I am grateful” or “Be grateful.” Others need to be aware of why we are so grateful, happy and how the Nembutsu Dharma makes a difference. The true Person of Nembutsu will manifest the wondrous workings of Amida Buddha very naturally, but for most people, they will begin their encounter and begin to recognize and eventually appreciate the workings of Amida Buddha by hearing and listening (about others). So, sharing our Dharma-enriched life is essential! Most of us will not write and compile voluminous writings like Shinran Shonin did, but I believe we can still all share. We can all, as we say in Hawaii, “Talk story” with our family members, friends and those who seem to want to hear more about Buddhism. The buzz is crucial. In this year of our Triple Celebration and every year, let us share our awareness, joy and gratitude of Namo Amida Butsu by living a life of Nembutsu guided and nurtured by the Dharma so others can

come to know it too. Let’s you and I share Nembutsu Moments by “talking story” about our experience. As a Nembutsu Follower, “Sharing Nembutsu Moments” is an integral part of our spiritual life. In gratitude to Amida Buddha and Shinran Shonin, it is our joyfully sharing Nembutsu Moments and gratefully cultivating awareness, as did Shinran Shonin, that will lead to the prosperity of Jodo Shinshu. Finally, as our esteemed Bishop Yemyo Imamura said, “To think of all those forgetting themselves for the Hongwanji to make today possible, I feel gratitude and am moved deeply even now,” and “The entire karma of events throughout . . . is due to nothing but the manifestations of the compassion of the Buddha.” From beginning to end, there is nothing but Namo Amida Butsu from “The Buddha’s-Name-That-Calls-Me-To-Entrust” to “The Buddha’s-Name-Which-I-Call-In-Gratitude.” Let us joyfully and gratefully “Cultivate Awareness” of All-Inclusive Wisdom and All-Embracing Compassion. Mahalo nui and Namo Amida Butsu.

# Rev. Dr. Jeff Wilson Returns to Bloom-Futaba Lecture Series

His new book, ‘Living Nembutsu’ raises timely questions from an unusual perspective

BY GAIL S. TAGASHIRA  
HONPA HONGWANJI HAWAII  
BETSUIN

A two-part presentation on a more active approach to Shinran Shonin’s more engaged Buddhism will be the subject of the next Bloom-Futaba Memorial lecture, now in its 25th year, sponsored by Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin. Entitled “Applying Shinran’s Radically Engaged Buddhism in Life and Society,” it is scheduled Oct. 11 at 6 p.m. in the Betsuin Annex both in-person and online. Rev. Dr. Jeff Wilson, a professor Religious and East Asian Studies at Renison University College at the Univer-

sity of Waterloo in Ontario Canada, will speak on “Radical Shinran” at 6:10 p.m., then following discussion and questions, address “Radical Sanghas” at 7:20 p.m. His latest book, “Living Nembutsu: Applying Shinran’s Radically Engaged Buddhism in Life and Society,” has received attention since it was published in May of 2023, largely in two areas: First, because Shinran Shonin overturned religious practices during his lifetime in medieval Japan by inspiring individuals and movements for social change, Rev. Dr. Wilson suggests that today’s Shin Buddhists must rather than should take ac-

tion confronting societal problems in our communities. And second, while Shinran’s teachings and life are a guide to turning our communities into places of solidarity and acceptance, it’s not enough to simply cultivate genuine inclusivity but rather, members must take inclusivity further by actively practicing it throughout society. “If our community isn’t inclusive,” writes Rev. Dr. Wilson, “then we can’t learn from all the beautiful forms that bodhisattvas take, and our community is diminished and incomplete.” Rev. Dr. Wilson will also

be taking part in the last of three Dialogue Project lectures, discussing “Living Nembutsu” on Sept. 11 at 6 p.m. and on Zoom. His final Dialogue lecture will pose the question, “What must Pure Land Buddhism, especially the Jodo Shinshu school, do to contribute to the reduction of suffering in the world, especially as caused or heightened by social ills such as discrimination, poverty, war and climate change?” Rev. Dr. Wilson earned his tokudo ordination at Nishi Hongwanji in 2012. Over the years, his research has focused on the mindfulness



Rev. Dr. Jeff Wilson will discuss what the role of today’s socially conscious Shin Buddhist should be on Oct. 11 in the Betsuin Annex as part of the Bloom-Futaba lecture series.

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# An Update on Gratitude, Grandchildren and Golf



BY DR. WARREN TAMAMOTO  
PRESIDENT, HONPA HONGWANJI  
MISSION OF HAWAII

Aloha everyone! I hope that you are well, physically and spiritually. This issue of Ka Leo Kāhea should get to you before our Triple Celebration. This issue will include some important information about Triple Celebration. I look forward to seeing you and talking story at Ala Moana Hotel.

You might recall that I retired from Kaiser Permanente four years ago, just about when I was elected to this office. I am so grateful for a wonderful 40-year career as a pulmonologist at Kaiser Permanente Hawaii and the U.S. Army Medical Corps.

I have been busy in retirement, babysitting two grandchildren, ages 4 and 1. Not at the same time, fortunately. First, I babysat my granddaughter two to three days a week.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

She was born just after the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic so we mostly stayed at home and entertained ourselves.

Then, my grandson was born soon after our granddaughter started at Aiea Hongwanji Preschool. Babysitting an infant/toddler leaves very little time for anything else (except when baby is napping). Good thing that it is for two or three days a week and not more.

My other duties keep me pretty busy on my “days off.” There are duties that come with the Office of President of the HHMH — writing articles such as this, committee meetings, board meetings and various public events.

I also keep busy by making time for golf or pickleball to exercise three to four times per week, weather permitting. Add to this light housekeeping chores and yardwork, and my week is full. We, Claire and I, have not traveled as much as I thought we might when I first retired, but we have been able to travel more than once to Japan and the mainland U.S.

I am grateful every day for all that has happened in my life.

The problem is golf. Or is it me? I have been playing golf for more than 30 years, usually with a couple of friends who I know from our college years at the University of Hawaii. Yes,

many years ago.

It is good exercise – lots of walking and occasionally swinging the club. Sometimes wandering about looking for a ball.

Lots of mental exercise too – thinking about distance, direction, slope and the wind. Choosing the right club. Finishing your backswing. Tempo. Ball first. Aim small, miss small.

“You swing your best when you have the fewest things to think about.”

– Bobby Jones

I sometimes just think too much and too often I let the results dictate how I feel about myself and my golf game. This is a character “fault” which has been with me since childhood. Golf is a great reminder for me about the intersection of Buddha’s Teaching and my daily life.

Many years ago, Rev. Ai Hironaka tried to help me by reminding me of the phrase, “No mind.” You might remember this from the movie “The Last Samurai.” I try to remember Rev. Hironaka’s words, but time and time again, I am still *bonbu*.

“Golf is a game that is played on a five-inch course — the distance between the ears.”

—Bobby Jones

I enjoy playing golf (most of the time). I’m frustrated by it (many times).

I *want* to play better. Buddha says that the root cause of suffering is our

own ego and selfish desire (or wanting things). Although I know that this is true, my ego won’t let go. I *want* to have a lower score.

I remind myself, “Enjoy the moment.” But it doesn’t last. Even worse, sometimes when I am playing well or when I hit a great shot, I don’t enjoy the experience fully, knowing that the next shot might not be as good. Isn’t that such a great example of my *bonbu* nature?

“Do not dwell in the past, do not dream of the future, concentrate the mind on the present moment.”

— Buddha

In this way golf is like life, isn’t it? We remember what Buddha tells us about the cause of suffering and the path to happiness.

Our ministers frequently remind us that Buddha’s Teachings don’t apply only while we are in the temple. We must do our best to live the Buddha’s Teaching every day. Yet we all often “fail” in some way.

However, we know that Buddha loves us and accepts us, just as we are.

Take care. Be happy. See you on the journey.

“Happiness will never come to those who fail to appreciate what they already have.”

— Buddha

In Gassho,  
Namo Amida Butsu

## 10 'Fireside Chat' Courses Aim to Deliver a Better Understanding of Buddhism

20 laypersons and ordained ministers will share their views on topics found in the book, ‘Jewels’

BY GAIL S. TAGASHIRA  
HONPA HONGWANJI HAWAII  
BETSUIN

A series of 10 online courses designed to provide the basics of Buddhism for youth and adults will start Sept. 7, 2024 and continue on the first Saturdays of every month through June 7, 2025.

“Introduction to Basic Buddhism for the West and Beyond: Fireside Chat Session with 20 Laypersons and Teachers” will feature ordained and

lay guest speakers from Hawaii, both U.S. East and West coasts, Japan, Canada and Germany.

For those who will miss Saturday’s first session to attend Honpa Hongwanji Mission’s Triple Celebration, video recordings of all “Fireside Chats” will be available for later viewing.

The series was organized by Rev. Dr. Kenneth K. Tanaka, author, former Institute of Buddhist Studies professor and former resident minister of Southern Alameda County Buddhist Church, who will use his book “Jewels: An Introduction to American Buddhism for Youth” as its textbook.

A PDF form of the book is available to be downloaded without charge on the Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai website.

Registration “fees” are by suggested donations of between \$50 and \$100 but in lieu of donations, students and those on fixed or limited incomes may make a donation to a temple, church, nonprofit or charity of their choice.

Neither Rev. Dr. Tanaka nor the six-member steering committee of volunteers re-

ceive compensation for their work on the program.

Classes will feature four segments, attendance is optional and participants may choose to join one or all 10 sessions.

Before the 2 p.m. (HST) starting time, an optional 15-minute meditation will begin at 1:45 p.m.

The format for each session is for Rev. Dr. Tanaka to first summarize the main points of the day’s topic for the first 30 minutes, followed by the lay guest speaker for the next 30 minutes, followed by a 10-minute Question/Answer period. The format repeats for the ordained speaker who will address the day’s topic for 30 minutes followed by a 10-minute Q&A.

An optional, informal “chat room” discussion will follow from 3:35 to 4:05 p.m. in a relaxed setting with guest speakers and Dr. Tanaka in attendance.

Sessions will also be available to participants in Japan



Courtesy of Musashino University

Rev. Dr. Kenneth K. Tanaka will moderate a 10-part series of monthly classes examining Buddhist teachings, history and its application in daily life.

the next day.

The schedule and topics are:

**Sept. 7** — “Three Kinds of Jewels,” lay speaker Teresa Shimogawa of Anaheim, California; guest speaker Rev. Henry Adams of San Mateo

**Oct. 5** — “Buddhism in the U.S. and Canada,” lay speakers Margaret and Alan Tanaka of Alberta, Canada; guest speakers Rev. Ron Kobata of Portland, Ore. and Rev. Phap Can of the San Francisco Bay Area

**Nov. 2** — “Life of the Buddha,” lay speaker Tatsuaki Kono of Tokyo, Japan; guest speaker Rev. Matt Hamasaki of Sacramento, California

**Dec. 7** — “How Buddhism Spread Through Asia” and “Brief History of Buddhism in the U.S. and Canada,” lay speaker Elmer Morishita of Vancouver, B.C.; guest speak-

er Rev. Rev. Todd Tsuchiya, Chicago, Illinois

**Jan. 4** — “Four Noble Truths: The Big Framework,” lay speaker Kaethe Kauffman of Honolulu; guest speaker Rev. Hoshina Seki of New York

**Feb. 1** — “Karma and the Rightful Noble Path: How to Act,” lay speaker Steve Terusaki of Albany, California; guest speaker Ven. Bhante Seelawimala of Sacramento, California

**March 1** — “Four Marks of Life: How to See Life to Reduce Suffering,” lay speaker Dexter Mar of Honolulu, guest speaker Rev. Barbara Murphy of Portland, Ore.

**April 5** — “Popular Passages, Metaphors and Stories,” lay guest speaker Jennifer Kane of Oahu; guest speaker Rev. Dean Koyama of Palo Alto, California

**May 3** — “Issues and Problems in Daily Life,” lay guest speaker Denise Cork of British Columbia, Canada; guest speaker Rev. Blayne Higa, Kona

**June 7** — “Questions on Buddhism, Humor as Teaching, Epilogue and Appendices,” lay speaker Johannes Wiegmann, Bochum, Germany; guest speaker Rev. Diana Thompson of Denver, Colorado

To register for the course, applications are at <https://forms.gle/YFApc-Tqs2wS88sPw5>

Questions may be directed to [shinbuddhismcourse@gmail.com](mailto:shinbuddhismcourse@gmail.com)



Photo Courtesy of Don Farber

In 2007, His Holiness the Dalai Lama received the U.S. Congressional Gold Medal in a ceremony attended by then-First Lady Laura Bush, left, Speaker of the House Emerita Nancy Pelosi, the late former Sen. Robert C. Byrd and former President George W. Bush on Capitol Hill.

## For the Record

**Windward Hongwanji** — Two names in the June 1 issue of News From the Sanghas were incorrect: Next to Tak Ueda are Annette Tashiro and Aksel Rodriguez-Reyes.

**‘The Joy of Nembutsu’ Panel** — An incorrect date for Edythe Vassall’s retirement date was stated in the June 1 issue. She retired in 2019.



**Ka Leo Kāhea**

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The Ka Leo Kāhea provides a variety of articles on Jodo Shinshu Buddhism for Hawaii residents.

The Ka Leo Kāhea, a quarterly newspaper published by the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, features organizational news and experiences by Jodo Shinshu members, and a variety of articles relating to Buddhist principles.

Editorial rights are reserved to postpone, edit, or withhold from publication anything submitted which does not meet those specifications or the specifications of the editorial staff.

The meaning of any submission will not be altered, but we reserve the right to correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation when necessary.

Editor: Rev. Toshiyuki Umitani  
Managing Editor: Gail S Tagashira  
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Continued from Page 1

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# Obon 2024: Continuing Tradition, Returning to Normalcy



Courtesy of Nic Tanaka



Courtesy of Rev. Tomo Hojo



Courtesy of Lorene Yoshimura-Tanigawa

Despite a rise in Covid cases, most temples hosted gatherings ranging from a few dozen to a few hundred in attendance. Among the highlights:

Clockwise, from top left: Honoka’a Hongwanji Buddhist Temple’s “rebranded” Bon Dance, called a “Community Memorial Service,” took place July 20 and marked its 125th. Above right, Rev. Kohtoku Hirao from Waimea Shingon Mission sang at West Kauai Hanapepe Temple’s Obon July 12-13. Below right, Kahului Hongwanji Mission held its

Obon on July 20, a day before the full moon, or Buck Moon took place. Below left, on the first of its two-nights of festivities, a drone captured hundreds of Honpa Hongwanji Hawai’i Betsuin’s Obon celebrants on June 28. In the upper right corner, cars can be seen on Pali Highway as drivers headed home at the end of a work week. At left, Shon Ancheta, center, danced at Ewa Hongwanji Mission’s Obon which returned on June 15 after a year’s respite.



Courtesy of Drone Pilot and Photographer Darren Cantrill



Courtesy of Wayde Toyama

## Thompson

Continued from Page 1

board, often took young Sherman fishing while obaachan was a Fujinkai lady who, for many years was the “kitchen boss.”

She ruled their Lahaina home, gathered the grandchildren before the butsudan to light the senko and recite the Nembutsu before dinner.

In 1970, young Sherman arrived on the Kamehameha Kapālama campus as a freshman where he was first introduced to Christianity. He boarded at the Lunalilo dormitory where he continued to live until he was hired as a dorm advisor at Liholiho before he was hired as a chaplain.

At his remembrance service at Bishop Memorial Chapel on July 13, one of four memorials held to celebrate his life, more laughter than tears of sorrow punctuated the program as hundreds of former colleagues and students recalled heartfelt stories from when a young Sherman took charge and fooled his classmates, always with fun and kindness.

“When I first met him, I thought he was the dorm advisor,” said Kahu Kaunaloa Boshard, Class of ’77, one of 11 kahu at the service. “He had keys hanging from his belt, he held a clipboard and had a walkie-talkie. If we were late, he never scolded us. He understood us. When you come from Kona, you don’t know



“He always came home to Lahaina,” Lahaina Hongwanji Mission’s President Aileen Cockett said of Kahu Sherman Thompson, ready with his downloaded songs in the temple’s yagura.

what a curfew is. But he did write, ‘Late again’ by your name in the margins.”

Young Sherman was a junior at the time.

While he used his resonant voice to start cheers at volleyball and basketball games, leading the senior bench in “Banzai!” yells, young Sherman never raised his voice in anger, according to current Director of Boarders, Charmain Wong, Class of ’67.

“At 17, he looked like a 35-year-old,” she said. “At 17, he had a 5 o’clock shadow. He was the only senior who had to shave every day.

“When he was first hired, I told him that dorm advisor is

not the best-paying position but you get to influence students’ lives. And he did. So many kept returning to campus to seek his advice.

“He took time to enjoy his colleagues, too, and he was always there if you needed to talk him.”

He was an employee of Kamehameha for 47 years and spent a majority of his life on the campus, according to Po’o Kula (head of school) Dr. Taran Chun, who opened the program welcoming celebrants and recalling how kind, loving, carefree and pleasant Kahu Sherman was, comparing him to a confidant and friend who everyone needs.

After graduating, as a student at Hawai’i Pacific University and the University of Hawai’i, Kahu Sherman remained open to understanding different faiths and beliefs.

At Honpa Hongwanji, he served as a trustee of Pacific Buddhist Academy, taught in the Dharma Light program and appeared as a guest speaker on numerous occasions at various Jodo Shinshu temples as well as at Christian churches including Kalihi Moanalua Church and Nu’uanu Congregational. At Kaumakapili Church, he took on a larger role as Youth Minister and supported Kahu David Kaupu.

But, “he always came home to Lahaina,” said Lahaina Hongwanji president Aileen Cockett. “He emceed Lahaina Hongwanji and Lahaina Jodo missions’ obon, he drummed and sang ‘Iwakuni.’ He even bought our PA system

so that the music would sound good.”

Kahu Sherman loved Obon more than the most devotees. Every year, as the season approached, he researched new songs, made playlists, kept a treasure trove of cassettes and mini-cassettes. He was a yellow pad kind of guy, one minister said.

In Honolulu, he attended obon at Hongwanji missions including Ewa, Betsuin and Pearl City as well as Pearl Country Club’s obon, held in the parking lot of the golf course late in the season.

On Maui, people called him “The Lahaina Obon Man,” as he showed up in his Reyn Spooner Aloha shirts then later in a Fedora hat with a cigar, always smiling.

Not one to shy away from indulgence, Kahu Sherman owned, until recently, more than 200 Reyn Spooner shirts, many which were worn by his nephews on July 14 where a service at Honpa Hongwanji Hawai’i Betsuin was conducted by Rimban Yuika Hasebe who offered words of comfort and understanding at his sudden passing.

“When we lose someone special, we may think we lost that person who is far away, we can’t see that person in the physical world anymore,” she said. “But through Nembutsu, we connect with them. “Sherman Thompson left this world where he shared the joy of the Nembutsu.”

When he passed away, he had collected some 30 Fedora hats including one handmade in Ecuador; a large collection

of “Three Stooges” episodes and more than 300 cigars because he had planned to start a cigar club in Kauai.

He retired two years prior to the tragic loss of the Thompson family home in Lahaina; he moved to Kauai where he reconnected with scores of Kamehameha alumni; he visited West Kauai Hongwanji a few times and enjoyed the beauty and peace of Nawiliwili Harbor where the Puali and Huleia streams wind through the area.

It was at that spot where he could enjoy a full-bodied, complex cigar, where the winds often brought a gentle rain from the mountains, young children played and fished nearby and the wide expanse of ocean made it a perfect area for peaceful contemplation.

On June 23, a Sunset Celebration memorial was held there, attended by some 70 friends, many Kamehameha alumni who were former dormitory residents who remembered the clipboard and young Sherman checking them in for the night.

For his numerous contributions to Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, he was posthumously recognized with the title of “Ko-Myo-In” by Bishop Toshiyuki Umitani at Kahului Hongwanji Mission.

Kahu Sherman Thompson is survived by brothers Kaid and Dan Kaula Thompson; sisters Konia (Mark) Thompson-Mitchell and Pauahi Thompson-Nichols, and seven nieces and nephews.

# ‘Dharma Treasures’ From Our Shin Buddhist Pioneers

BY REV. TATSUO MUNETO  
AND GAIL S. TAGASHIRA  
HONPA HONGWANJI HAWAII  
BETSUIN

Two important publications have been the focus of attention at Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii’s Bookstore because both have close themes related to Triple Celebration’s workshops.

“Dharma Treasures — Spiritual Insights From Hawaii’s Shin Buddhist Pioneers” and “Hearing the Buddha’s Call: The Life, Works and Words of Shinran,” while not new releases, serve as reminders of the archival importance of Hawai’i Island’s history and how Amida Buddha has been spiritually enriching lives for hundreds of years.

In the first of a two-part series, we look at Rev. Muneto’s work on “Dharma Treasures” that started 42 years ago when Clara Uechi, a member of Kona Hongwanji, brought him a notebook full of poems written by her parents and sangha members dating

back to the mid-1900s.

“Written originally in Japanese, these poems were unknown to their own sons and daughters and descendants who today, comprise the English-speaking congregation,” Rev. Muneto wrote.

Some poems were written in pencil, many were yellowed by age on scraps of paper, all written by the Issei in their 40s and 50s who intensely listened to their temples’ Dharma messages.

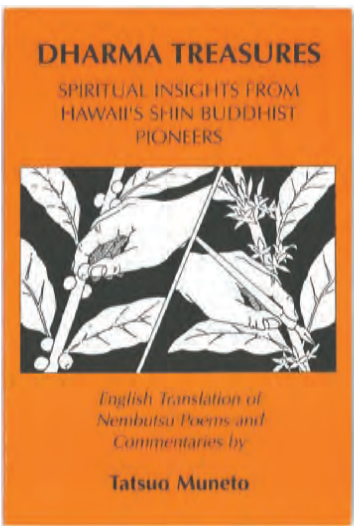
Divided into seven chapters, “Dharma Treasures” depicts the poignant, harsh lives of eight women and two men who immigrated from Hiroshima, Kumamoto, Fukuoka and Yamaguchi.

The only Hawaii-born poet, Chiyono Sasaki, touched the hearts of her fellow sangha members who shared her hard, demanding life on the coffee farm as she searched for spiritual answers. Born in 1897, she finally reached her awakening to Amida’s call, saying she was OK as she was.

When the esteemed philosopher and scholar D.T. Suzuki visited Kona Hongwanji



Rev. Tatsuo Muneto’s work translating the poems written by 10 Issei on Hawaii Island required research into their lives and a deeper understanding of Shin teaching.



shi hospitals in Hilo.

The forward to “Lilikoi no Sato” (Poems From the Home of Lilikoi) was written by Lady Yoshiko Ohtani from the head temple in Kyoto who knew Mrs. Makinodan personally and compared her writings to the legendary Myokonin Okaru.

And although Rev. Muneto holds a B.A. from Ryukoku University, a master’s from Claremont Graduate University and he earned his *tokudo* and *kyoshi* ordination in Kyoto, he felt that before he could even begin any translations, he needed to understand the process that each poet underwent.

“My appreciation of Shin teaching was way lower than the level of the members’ joy of living in Amida’s guidance,” he said. “I had to study their personal backgrounds, their process of awakening and the

spiritual aspect of Nembutsu teaching for myself.

“In other words, I had to become the one who had to realize Amida’s compassionate vows to see or liberate me. Only after this goal was achieved during my ministry in Kona in the early 1980s, was I able to translate the Japanese poems into English and I made up my mind to publish the Nembutsu poems.”

Rev. Muneto carefully researched and included biographical summaries of each writer except for Ume Hirano, who, despite being one of the first Issei poets in the early 1900s, little is known about her.

She admonishes the reader who lives an indulgent life of affluence in her “Parental Love.”

In 2022, at Kona Hongwanji’s 125th anniversary, a copy of “Dharma Treasures” was placed in a time capsule for future temple members.

A limited number of copies of “Dharma Treasures” is available from the Honpa Hongwanji Headquarters Bookstore for \$8.

**Coming in December:** Rev. Jitsuen Kakehashi, among the most respected senior scholar-teachers of Jodo Shinshu, expanded the body of literature on Shinran Shonin with his book, “Hearing the Buddha’s Call: The Life, Works and Wisdom of Shinran.”

## What Is a Green Hongwanji, Anyway?

BY STEVE LOHSE, CHAIR  
GREEN HONGWANJI  
COMMITTEE  
HONPA HONGWANJI MISSION  
OF HAWAII

In 2017, a joint resolution of the Lay Association and Legislative Assembly established a Green Hongwanji Initiative and tasked a kyodan committee, now the Green Hongwanji Committee (GHC) to develop an action plan.

So what is a Green Hongwanji?

Is the Green Hongwanji the Green Plan (<http://honpa-hi.link/greenplan>) mandated

by the joint resolution and developed by the GHC?

Well, yes, but while the Plan offers principles and practices as a founding document for the Green Hongwanji, it is not the Green Hongwanji itself.

Is the Green Hongwanji the numerous green To-Do lists that we all have access to? For example, the Green Plan offers several good lists.

Well, yes, certainly without action, there is no Green Hongwanji and To-Do lists offer menus for green nation, but action lists are not the Green Hongwanji itself.

Is the Green Hongwanji



the ‘ohana of green temples (EcoSanghas) that make up a green kyodan?

Yes, green Headquarters leadership is essential, but the Hongwanji will be as green as its temples are green, not just its Headquarters.

And remember, it’s not green practices OR money and members, it’s green practices AND money and members.

As we invest our principles in our communities and our money in our principles, everything we need for healthy temples will be as green as we can do.

Finally, a Green Hongwanji is our principled Buddhist response to Earth’s environmental crisis.

We protect what we connect with, and we connect with what we’re aware of.

At the end of the day, the Green Hongwanji is our grati-

tude for this Earth and our awareness of what we leave our children.

Let’s Green It Like We Mean It, because we have seen the Green Hongwanji, and it is us!

Proposed Five-Year Green Theme and Slogans for 2025-2029: “Nurturing Green”

2025: Cultivating Green Awareness

2026: Sharing Green Gratitude

2027: Living Green Aloha

2028: Embracing Green EcoSangha

2029: Expanding Green Community

## He Cared for Others and Lived a Life of Gratitude

As Lahaina Hongwanji Mission’s minister, Rev. Ai Hironaka came to know Kahu Sherman Thompson over several years. The following Dharma message was delivered on June 29 at Kahului Hongwanji Mission.

BY REV. AI HIRONAKA  
LAHAINA AND KAHULUI  
HONGWANJI MISSION

Today as we gather for Sherman Thompson’s funeral, I find it incredibly difficult to find words that truly express my heart. How can I praise his life enough? Any words I write seem insufficient.

To me, Sherman Thompson-san was the closest to “the ideal human being.” Did he ever hurt anyone in his life? I’ve never heard of such a thing, but I know I’ve hurt others. Did he ever trouble anyone? I don’t think so, but I have.

He was like a mirror of my true self. Sherman-san loved Lahaina and Lahaina Hongwanji Mission, always considering and helping those in need, living by the teachings of the Nembutsu which was passed on by his Grandpa Yasuto and Grandma Sugi.



Rev. Ai Hironaka will join the final panel discussion on “Sharing the Joy of Nembutsu Together” on Sept. 8 at 10:15 a.m.

Until the very end, he cared for others and lived a life of gratitude.

Sherman was more than just a minister and layperson to me; he was my mentor, a friend in the Nembutsu, and a life teacher. When I was still working at Hawaii Betsuin, I was assigned to Lahaina Hongwanji. On that Sunday, after the Japanese Sunday Service, Sherman approached me with a smile. He was so happy I was going to Lahaina Hongwanji.

Even before my official assignment, he took me to

Lahaina at his own expense. We flew on a propeller plane to Kapalua Airport, picked up bento at Nagasako Store and walked around Lahaina. Many people greeted him warmly, showing how loved he was by everyone.

On the return flight, he bowed to me and said, “Please take care of Lahaina Hongwanji.” It was a moment that made me realize how deeply people supported and loved Lahaina Hongwanji.

A year after my assignment, Sherman visited the temple and said, “Thank you for your hard work in the first year.” He gave me a gift for the anniversary — a Montblanc pen — and said, “Use this for your signatures,” with a big smile.

Later, he gave me a Nembutsu rosary and said, “Thank you for taking care of Lahaina Hongwanji.”

Although I lost the Montblanc pen in the fire, I still have the rosary with me.

We know that life eventually ends, perhaps even today. Sherman understood the concept of “White Ashes.” Even during his Non-Religion funeral in Honolulu, “White Ashes” was read. But even

though I understand this, Sherman, I feel incredibly lonely. It’s hard to accept.

Yet, the life of Nembutsu you showed me brings not only sadness but great joy. Shinran Shonin teaches us in his “Hymns of the Pure Land,”

*When we say “Namo Amida Butsu.”*

*The countless Buddhas throughout the ten quarters, Surrounding us a hundred-fold, a thousandfold, Rejoice and protect us.*

I understand you are now became one of the Buddha, and you are rejoicing now when I recite Namo Amida Butsu.

Shinran Shonin also said in his hymns,

*Those who reach the Pure Land of happiness Return to this evil world of the five defilements, Where, like the Buddha Sakyamuni, They benefit sentient beings without limit.*

Being born in the Pure Land, becoming a Buddha and now returning to me from the six characters of Namo

Amida Butsu, you watch over, benefit me, praise me when I recite Nembutsu and protect me always.

When I feel loneliness, I recite “Namo Amida Butsu,” I try to feel you, Sherman-san, as you are a holy Buddha

In sad times and joyful times, as I recite Namo Amida Butsu, I will always feel you with me until the end of my life. This is what I can do for you. When my life ends, please greet me with that smile and say, “Welcome, Sensei! Mattota yo. (I was waiting for you.)”

Sherman, thank you for everything. Even now, I still read the text message you sent after the fire, encouraging me to “Do your best for the Nembutsu!” You were Lahaina, you were Lahaina Hongwanji, you are now within the six character Namo Amida Butsu.

I will strive to do my best for the Nembutsu until the day I die, until I see you at Amida Buddha’s Pure Land. Let us all recite Namo Amida Butsu, which is Sherman-san’s wish for all of us here today, and feel Amida Buddha’s power of the wisdom and compassion.

# Reflections on a Spiritual Journey Through Wai`anae

BY PETE DOKTOR  
JI KOEN HONGWANJI MISSION

As part of an ongoing effort to honor and rekindle relations between Kānaka Maoli (native Hawaiians) and Buddhist communities in Hawai‘i, the Honolulu Hongwanji Council and the Mary Mikahala Foster Legacy Committee organized a huaka‘i, or journey, a spiritual tour of Wahi Puna, or sacred sites, along the Wai‘anae coast on March 15, 2024.

Some 32 members from various temples, at the invitation and guidance of Kahu Glen Kila, embarked on a six-hour long journey, pausing to hear a recurring theme: Recultivate respect the community.

At various sites along the Westside, Kahu Kila, a retired school principal and descendant of Wai‘anae, related the mo‘olelo, stories behind the sites from Pō‘ka‘i Bay, Malaga, which is a traditional learning center and the Kane‘ilio navigation site.

Also known as Makua Cave, Kaneana inspired creation myths and religious protocol, only to be later desecrated by the U.S. military, used as a local dumping ground and desecrated by vandals.

“Regardless of the past, anyone who calls Hawai‘i home now bares kuleana, a responsibility, to take care of this ‘āina,” Kahu Kila said.

Decades ago, the Waianae community kūpuna rejected mass development to preserve the rural way of life that has served as a pu‘uhonua, or place of refuge which it continues to function as a place for displaced Hawaiians today.

He described how Kānaka, the Japanese and Uchinānchu (Okinawan) plantation camps evolved into multicultural communities with the Hawaiian language serving as the common tongue while diverse cultural practices blended into



Photos Courtesy of David Atcheson

Kahu Glen Kila, center, addressed members from several different O‘ahu temples on the “Huaka‘i to the Waianae Coast” trip in March at Pokai Bay, originally named Malaea meaning calm, or serene.

one.

Scattered throughout the trip were numerous examples of proverbial wisdom and Nembutsu moments such as those explaining the interconnectedness of all life and indigenous practices.

The question, “O wai kou inoa?” cannot be simply translated as, “What is your name?” but rather the literal translation, “From what water do you come?” acknowledges the relationship between human and nature including the water which we are largely composed of.

What many refer to as “he-iau,” or temple mounds built by later migrations of Polynesians as “Ka‘a nani au” or “Sacred sites to manage the beauty of the season,” sheds wisdom on a way to understand the role of religious space and their relationship to cultivating an interconnectedness between all things.



At Waianae Hongwanji Mission, Huaka‘i organizer Jon Matsuo presented Kahu Glen Kila with calligraphy as a token of appreciation for his guidance on the day-long outing.

To conclude the journey, we shared lunch at the Wai‘anae Hongwanji where we listened to member and volunteer Roland Matsuda, tell his stories on the history and future facing the isolated

temple, how impermanence and challenges are prevalent

I was compelled to Gassho with reverence and gratitude at the Pohaku ‘o La‘ila‘i, a dragon-like deity that could be easily mistaken for a pile of

rocks to those unfamiliar with the mo‘olelo and the god Kanaloa, a symbol of interdependence.

It was inspiring to realize that the Dharma has always been here in Hawai‘i, that it has always been accessible to the awakened mind.

## A Postscript

The group that took part in the Wai‘anae Huaka‘i reconvened on June 4 to engage in a deeper dive into the experience.

While Huaka‘i literally refers to a trip or travel experience, the metaphoric meanings are “foam on the crest of a wave” or “planting seeds that will one day bear fruit.”

After the excursion and during the session, many said they had never been to that part of O‘ahu and certainly had never heard the kind of stories shared by Kahu Glen Kila who took part in the post-script session via Zoom.

The idea of reuniting the participants was proposed by Dr. Logan Narikawa who teaches at the University of Hawai‘i and who works at the nonprofit Education Incubator with Dr. Miki Tomita Okamoto.

Both were on the Huaka‘i and grew up attending Honpa Hongwanji Betsuin and Wailuku Hongwanji, respectively.

With so much interest in continuing the huaka‘i for Hongwanji members and friends, the Mary Mikahala Foster committee organized another trip, the “DeTour — an ‘Aiea Ahupua‘a Experience” on Aug. 16, 2024.

The group visited Kea‘iwa Heiau, the Aiea Loop State Recreation Area; Loko I‘a Pā‘aiau at McGrew Point, the 400-year-old Hawaiian fishpond site, and ended up at A‘iea Hongwanji for lunch.

— JON K. MATSUOKA  
Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii  
Betsuin

## Vesak

Continued from Page 1

“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 hu-



Courtesy of Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara

Bishop Toshiyuki Umitani, left, Bishop Marvin Harada and Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara pause to take a selfie outside the White House gates.

mility 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.”

## Jeff Wilson

Continued from Page 2

movement, regionalism, economics, rituals and Buddhist engagement with social, environmental and political issues.

He is the author of six previous titles including “Buddhism of the Heart: Reflections on Shin Buddhism and Inner Togetherness.”

In 2010, he was the Bloom-Futaba lecturer when he delivered a speech on “Shin

Buddhism: An American Religion” and he was Buddhist Studies Center’s summer session speaker on “Mindfulness and Buddhism in America” in 2016.

Dr. George Tanabe, professor emeritus of the Department of Religion at the University of Hawaii and President of BDK America will emcee the session.

Bloom-Futaba lectures are offered without charge but donations are welcome. They are largely funded by the Futaba Memorial Lecture Fund, the UH Foundation, Milander

Fund and Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin.

The series is endowed by Dr. Alfred and Mrs. Dorothy N. Bloom to honor the memory of their friend, Professor Kenko Futaba, a noted Shin Buddhist scholar who served as President of Ryukoku University from 1983 to 1995.

After Oct. 6, a Zoom link will be available to register at <https://hawaiiibetsuin.org/calendar>.

After Oct. 20, a recording of the session will be available on the Hawaii Betsuin YouTube channel.

# Hongwanji-ha Calls for End to Warfare in Middle East

*Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii would like to share the Statement calling for an immediate ceasefire and an end to warfare between Israel and Hamas presented by Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha in Kyoto, Japan. The statement was released on November 23, 2023.*

On Russia’s aggressive invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, we, the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha Buddhist organization adopted the following resolution on the occasion of our annual General Assembly (March 4, 2022): “As people of Japan, the only nation that has been hit by atomic bombs, as Buddhists who cherish every life, and as Nembutsu followers who aspire for peace across the world, we condemn this aggression by disapproving the self-righteous excuses made by the authoritarian government. As learning from human history, we wish for this war to end at once.” Sadly, we must restate this passage once again as another armed conflict takes place.

Triggered by Hamas’ October 7, 2023 missile attack, the warfare between Israel and Hamas has

brought about a hellish situation to the Gaza Strip. A devastating attack by Israeli military of a hospital in Gaza City has stood out as an outrageous example of warfare’s cruelty and unlawfulness. This is a battle between armed forces who use unarmed civilians as their human shield and the world’s leading powerful military who doesn’t mind victimizing those people. Lost in such battle are civilians’ lives, many of whom are women and children. As of November 11, it was reported that 11,000 people have been killed, of which more than 40 percent or 4,506 were children. During a November 6 interview, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres described the situation saying, “Gaza is becoming a graveyard for children” and hearing so has struck our hearts greatly.

Shinran, the founder of the Jodo Shinshu teaching had also lived during a warring age in which many people suffered. Identifying himself as one [of] them, he described the most marginalized people as, “they are . . . none other than we who are like stones and tiles and pebbles.” Shinran never wished for his own happiness only, and in reference to himself and

others as “we,” represents his deep feeling of bond with all humanity tied together through the Nembutsu teaching. It is a matter of course, that we would like to have his teaching as the basis of our lives, but it is also necessary for us to learn from his way of living.

As the saying goes, “Nobody wins a war.” In the first of the Forty-eight Vows that says, “there should not be hell, the realm of hungry spirits, or the realm of animals in my land,” Amida Tathagata pledged to guide us to a world that is free from suffering. As Nembutsu followers who have encountered this Buddha’s wish, we naturally come to aspire for a world in which everyone can live in peace and harmony. In accord with the Buddha’s vow, in consideration of those who have been suffering from this battle, we call for immediate ceasefire and an end of war.

November 23, 2023

Governor General IKEDA Gyoshin  
Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha

# Urasenke Grand Tea Master Pays Homage to Lahaina Wildfire Victims

BY DIANA SALTOON-BRIGGS  
AND GAIL S. TAGASHIRA  
SPECIAL TO KA LEO KĀHEA

A special memorial Japanese tea ceremony, a *kenchashiki* or tea offering, took place at Wailuku Hongwanji Mission to remember Maui wildfire victims on July 13.

The ceremony was conducted by Urasenke Grand Tea Master Dr. Ho’unsai Sen Genshitsu Daisosho in conjunction with Chado Urasenke Maui Association with help and support from sister organizations throughout Hawaii.

At 101 years old, Dr. Sen presented a somber, yet elegant service that touched the hearts of everyone present at the temple.

In his lectures, Dr. Sen emphasizes how tea ceremony is rooted in the study and

practice of *chado* and its four principles of harmony, respect, purity and tranquility.

To Dr. Sen, what is important is the human heart, to go beyond the self and extend “a warm hand” to others who are also suffering.

“The tea used in *chado* is green, a color that soothes the heart and soul,” he said to those gathered to reflect upon and support those affected by the wildfires.

He hoped those receiving the tea would pause and “observe the green color before drinking the tea to treasure that greenness and peace within it.”

Born and based in Kyoto, Dr. Sen is the 15th generation Grand Master of Urasenke, one of the most widely known schools of Chado, the Way of Tea.

In 1949, he received the title *Hounsai*, (鵬雲斎).

After World War II, he began extensive travels including an association with the University of Hawaii. He has donated tea houses and tea rooms worldwide, creating a network of International Chado Associations with the intention of spreading peace through a bowl of tea.

Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs named him the Japan-U.S Goodwill ambassador and he later served as advisor to the ministry after holding consular posts for Peru and Portugal in Kyoto.

Upon his retirement, his son, Zabolai Sen Soshitsu succeeded him and Dr. Sen discontinued using his Soshitsu name, taking the name Sen Genshitsu.

His son, Zabolai, the 16th Sen Soshitsu, is married to Masako Sen, formerly Princess Masako of Mikasa,



Courtesy of Brooke Auchincloss

Urasenke Grand Tea Master Dr. Ho’unsai Sen, left, offers a bowl of tea to Wailuku Hongwanji Mission’s Rev. Shinkai Murakami in a tea ceremony to remember Maui’s victims of the wildfire.

granddaughter of Emperor Taishō.

Diana Saltoon-Briggs is an author, poet, media assistant and a member of the Urasenke Maui Tankokai (Association) of Chado, the Way of the Tea. She is a licensed instructor of Chado.

# Jikoen Remembers a Tragic War and Hopes for Peace

BY PETE DOKTOR  
JIKOEN HONGWANJI MISSION

Jikoen Hongwanji Mission held its 2024 annual “*Irei no Hi* Okinawa Peace Memorial”commemoration on June 23 to honor the hundreds of thousands of lives lost in hellish Battle of Okinawa and to “console the souls of the war dead” and recommit ourselves to peace in the hope that such horrors of war are not repeated.

A uniquely Okinawa Memorial Day, *Irei no Hi* recognizes the dignity of each human life lost regardless of nationality or status, and does not idolize military deaths over those of civilians who made up the majority of casualties — almost one in three Okinawans who perished from this war.

This legacy was expressed through stories, song, dance and art.

The program focused on the tragedy of the cargo-passenger ship Tsushima Maru on its 80th anniversary when, as it was evacuating school children from Okinawa to Nagasaki, it was torpedoed by the USS Bowfin, which now sits in the USS Bowfin Submarine Museum and Park at

Pearl Harbor.

Senior officials of the Tsushima Maru Museum in Naha joined the program live via Zoom from Okinawa during the event, including Masakatsu Takara, one of the 59 students out of 1,788 civilians who survived the attack. He shared recollections of his ordeal and his *ikigai* or life purpose, to end war and seek peaceful co-existence.

Memorial attendees at Jikoen were asked by a show of hands if they had ever heard of the Tsushima Maru compared to the Titanic, in which fewer died in the luxury liner. The disparity spoke to society’s historical biases. Setsuko Yamazato, another war survivor who spoke in a pre-recorded interview from Ishigaki Island, not far from Taiwan, recalled surviving the malaria outbreak and starvation that killed more people than the bullets fired during and after the war.

She described the fears that Okinawans continue to live with, as evacuation drills have resumed, more military have occupied the tiny islands and residents increasingly consider themselves a target. The Ryukyu Kingdom was first militarized by Imperial



Photo Courtesy of Wayne Shinbara

At Jikoen Hongwanji Mission’s annual “*Irei no Hi*,” videographer Oren Tsutsujmi, left, connected with four members of the Okinawa Museum in Naha via Zoom.

Japan in 1879.

The survivors’ testimonies echoed what was expressed at the official *Irei no Hi* in Okinawa this year in Ryukyuan language: “*Nuchi du Takara*: Life is Our Treasure,” and that we must protect life by opposing threats to it like war. With Okinawa being used across generations for wars and preparations for the next one gears up, Okinawans feel war has never ended, but is kept alive through the semi-permanent military occupation.

Jikoen resident minister Rev. Shindo Nishiyama, in his Dharma talk said, “War doesn’t create anything. War only creates suffering, sorrow and hatred, and destroys human dignity.”

The event was far from a mere history lesson, but offered a message to the world.

Members of the Hawai’i Okinawa Alliance including Chihiro Komine, Rinda Yamashiro and Kozue Uehara, my former graduate students who are now teachers and professors, set up an exten-

sive visual display depicting the Battle of Okinawa from invasion to occupation.

Also participating at the program were representatives from the Hawai’i for Palestine Coalition, including Syrian-Jordanian Ma’en Halawani who shared a du’a, or prayer that was sheer poetry for the oppressed, and Palestinian guest speaker Ma’an Odah who expressed solidarity with an aspiration for peace and merciful justice.

The event closed with incense offering as Rev. Nishiyama chanted the *Juseige* and a community art peace project allowed participants to write messages of peace and solidarity to Okinawa on the leaves of a mock maile lei. It will be donated to the Tsushima Maru Museum along with donations from the event.

Donations to Palestinian families were also encouraged, as many have been experiencing symptoms similar to Tsushima Maru survivors every day.

The memorial program may be viewed on Jikoen Hongwanji Mission’s YouTube page under the title “Annual Irei no Hi Okinawa Peace Memorial: A Requiem for All War Dead.”

A variety of Dharma messages are available online in English, Japanese and on YouTube.

Moiliili Hongwanji Mission’s “The White Way” broadcasts are available at [www.moiliilihongwanji.org/radio-broadcasts](http://www.moiliilihongwanji.org/radio-broadcasts).

Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin’s Japanese-language Dharma talks are archived on [hawaiibetsuin.org/multimedia-category/Japanese-language](http://hawaiibetsuin.org/multimedia-category/Japanese-language).

And video messages are on the HHMH YouTube channel at [www.youtube.com/@HonpaHongwanjiMissionofHawaii](http://www.youtube.com/@HonpaHongwanjiMissionofHawaii)

# YESS Camp Bounces Back, Even Better Than Before

After four years on hiatus, the annual three-day event drew a diverse group with common interests

*Editor's Note: Rev. Kerry Kiyohara, resident minister of Makawao Hongwanji Mission, was guest speaker over the 2024 Memorial Day weekend's YESS Camp 40 at Buddhist Study Center. The three-day long event drew 17 registered campers including two from Maui and four from Hawaii Island. A staff of 12 aides and seven counselors pitched in to coordinate the camp, the first in-person one since 2019. Rev. Kiyohara recounted his experience in Makawao Hongwanji's June newsletter:*

**BY REV. KERRY KIYOHARA**  
MAKAWAO HONGWANJI  
MISSION

Launched 40 years ago by the late Rev. Sandra Hiramatsu, the Young Enthusiastic Shinshu Seekers camp is a unique opportunity for young people to expand their community, experience the Dharma and have fun in a welcoming, open and safe environment. Remarkably, the camp co-directors, staff and cabin counselors were all YESS campers themselves, so it was also a chance for people to reconnect with old friends. The three-day schedule was absolutely packed with activities that fostered new connections through interaction, games, skits, KP duties (serving food/cleaning up), cooperative activities, service projects, religious searches and Dharma talks by a Hongwanji minister.



Courtesy of Emi Hashi

YESS Camp counselor Cristina Gervais, right, lead the group in morning stretches.

The energy level was incredible and almost immediately, the diverse group of campers were one sangha community, using each other's names, watching out for each other, talking story, laughing as they discovered common interests. I was most impressed by the creativity of the campers: They were artists, writers, mathematicians (!), actors, natural leaders and "shy" kids who revealed hidden talents much to everyone's surprise. The discussion groups I observed were surprisingly profound with everyone sharing their thoughts on the insights and ideas of Buddhism and the nuances of Jodo Shin-

shu Buddhism, after each of the four Dharma talks I gave. In the evenings, there were cabin-level group discussions facilitated by counselors with a list of talking points to encourage sharing and bonding. The skits created, staged and performed by the campers were hilarious and free time was filled with old-fashioned card games, board games, drawing on chalk boards — amazingly, no one was playing with their phones — everyone was having real fun with real people in real time. Campers spent two hours in the hot Honolulu sun cleaning up the Mōi'li'ili Japanese

Cemetery which was restored and is maintained by volunteers. One camper said they felt "peaceful and happy" collecting old flowers, refilling incense burners and emptying trash receptacles. When camp leaders explained the objectives of the service project, the young people immediately self-organized, agreed who was going to do what and went off to accomplish the tasks — all the while talking, laughing and having fun. But as for me, I was sweating after the first two minutes, but deeply grateful for the opportunity to reconnect at the cemetery. My wife, Mimy

and I lived in the neighborhood from 2013 to 2017 and we saw first-hand the transformation from an almost abandoned cemetery to a beautifully restored and re-landscaped space maintained by families and the greater community. Our friend, Ann Nakata from Mōi'li'ili Hongwanji has been deeply involved restoring the cemetery from the beginning as is Laura Ruby, recognized as a Living Treasure of Hawaii for her inspiring leadership and work. YESS Camp is a shining example of what the Hongwanji can be in young people's lives — a defining experience of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha in the Hongwanji tradition. Everyone is welcome just as they are and together, learn not only "how to get along with people who are different," but also to talk story, laugh and have fun. Years later, original campers keep coming back to help. Alan Matsumoto from Kona Hongwanji keeps saying, "I'm going to retire from YESS Camp," but he keeps coming back to help every year for the past 36 years. I am deeply grateful to the people who worked so hard, especially Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii's Children and Youth Activities Specialist Emi Hashi, camp co-chairs Cristina Gervais and Dwight Matsuo for bringing the YESS Camp experience back to life, bouncing back even better than before.

# PBA Graduates 13 Seniors in Its First Post-Covid Class

'They came to us in August . . . and we didn't get to see their faces until spring'

**BY JOSH HERNANDEZ MORSE**  
PBA HEAD OF SCHOOL

Under the spotlight beaming at the lectern of the Moanalua Performing Arts Center on May 19, 2024, Class of 2024 Valedictorian Mari Miyasato delivered the punchline of her valediction: "Every present moment I shared with you, classmates," she intoned, "if I could live them again, I would go back and appreciate each of them the way they deserved. But I'm only me, and I tell each of you now, I cherish you in this moment, just the way you are. One lane, many roads." Not long after delivering her speech, Mari and the 12 other candidates for graduation received their diplomas, joining some 268 previous graduates of Pacific Buddhist Academy. "The Class of 2024 was small in number but great in influence," said Head of School Josh Hernandez Morse. "When they came to us in August 2020, we had just completed revising our Covid-19 guidelines yet again. We didn't really get to see their faces until the following spring. But they persevered, saw us through to the other side, and gave great leadership to the school community." Mr. Hernandez Morse's keynote address described the Class of 2024 as "companionable." He highlighted how each of the 13 graduates had



Courtesy of Alan Kubota

Celebrating with Pacific Buddhist Academy's Class of 2024 were Bishop Toshiyuki Umitani, left, school chaplain Rev. Blayne Nakasone Sakata, back row, and Head of School Josh Hernandez Morse, right. Proud PBA graduates were Jenny and Leilani Chang, Mari Miyasato and Angelina Ka'ai, front; Lycan De Vol, Sophia Price, Mone Sugimoto and Vance Maruya, middle row, and Rintaro Kawai, Ryan Lim, James Robinson, David Burkett and Jaden Peckham, back row.

guided the school through thick and thin in ways direct and indirect. "The Class of 2024 was really remarkable," said Admissions Director Blanche Yarnell. "I had launched the Social Media Ambassadors Club a few years before they joined the school. Mari and the Chang sisters really took our social media messaging to new levels. They set the bar high for future classes." "I couldn't agree more about the Class of 2024's influence," said Advancement Director Megan Lee. "They were phenomenal interviewing this year's honorees for the Lighting Our Way Banquet. I'm always nervous taking the stu-

dents to speak face-to-face with community heavy hitters like the CEOs of Hawaii Gas, KUPU, the East-West Center, and Rev. and Mrs. Eric Matsumoto. These students hit it out of the park." In addition to the Valedictorian Award presented to Mari, Jenny Chang accepted the Salutatorian Award for the second highest GPA. At the Baccalaureate Service, Sophia Price, Mone Sugimoto, Rintaro Kawai, and Vance Maruya received the Hongwanji Award from Jodo Shinshu Honwanji-ha for best emulating the virtues of the Six Paramitas. At the Baccalaureate Service, Mari Miyasato received the Dolphin Award for the

Hongwanji Mission School and Pacific Buddhist Academy graduate starting at Hongwanji Mission School from his/her preschool years. She also received the Dr. Albert Miyasato Award for best representing leadership, intellect, and spirit in the service of peace from Dr. Miyasato's daughter Leigh-Ann Miyasato at the Commencement Exercise. PBA Trustee JoAnn Yosemori was on hand to give the Chikai and Chihoko Yosemori Award for the student best representing independent thinking to Rintaro Kawai during Commencement. And PBA Board Chair Eugene Nishimura bestowed the Shinichi and Onao Kurisu

Saito Award for the student best representing perseverance and diligence to Jenny Chang, while sister Leilani Chang received the Kono Foundation Award for the student best representing the spirit of dana, or selfless giving. "I'm really excited to see what this group accomplishes in their future," said Dean of Students Liane Viloria. "They are a group of innovators and adventurers," said Mr. Hernandez Morse. "This was the crew that brought back the Gratitude Tours of the Buddhist Club. Some 10 of 13 of this crew were members of the Buddhist Club. They are irrepressible." And even the graduates who will travel further afield of Hawaii have designs on returning. Valedictorian Mari Miyasato, for example, headed to Seattle University for SU's program in elementary education, hopes to one day work for her elementary school alma mater Hongwanji Mission School. "My elementary school teachers had such a profound influence on me," she said. "I'm excited and scared to leave the islands, but with my family networks here, and all of the deep relationships I have with my friends and teachers, I look forward to the chance to give back to the place that raised me. Attending Hongwanji Mission School and Pacific Buddhist Academy was a wonderful adventure."

NEWS FROM THE SANGHAS

Lumbini at 60, Dragons Fighting Cancer, Scouts Visit ‘The Wall’

An abbreviated look at news and temples from around Hawai‘i. Updates of interest may be sent to newsletter@hon-pahi.org

OAHU

**Jikoen Hongwanji Mission’s** Lumbini Preschool celebrated its 60th anniversary with a tidal wave of color, song, dance, games and activities, organized by Rev. Shindo and Mrs. Suzue Nishiyama.

Jikoen co-president Pieper Toyama honored the Rev. Jikai Yamasato and his wife, Haruko who started the preschool in 1964 and named it Lumbini after the garden in which Shakyamuni Buddha was born more than 2,500 years ago.

Mrs. Chihoko Yosemori who worked tirelessly to strengthen the program, along with 11 teachers on the staff were also recognized.

A May Day program complete with kahili and ho’okupu bearers, the blowing of the conch shell or pū and the solemn, regal presence of Queen Kaley Salcedo and King Kingston Hill preceded the anniversary program.

At the last minute, the Blood Bank of Hawaii suddenly needed a host when one of its scheduled collection sites unexpectedly cancelled. Luckily they found one at **Mililani Hongwanji**.

Using the large Education Building on the temple grounds, the Blood Bank set up at 5:30 a.m. on June 15, got the word out to prospective donors and the event went on as planned, winding up a huge success.

Then Mililani’s board of directors voted to allow the Blood Bank to use the building to hold its regular monthly collections through the end of the year on Sept. 14, Oct. 12, Nov. 16 and Dec. 14.

“Community organizations are the driving force that don’t just keep the Blood Bank afloat, but move them toward a better tomorrow,” Mililani’s President Rene Mansho said. “We appreciate making a commitment to saving lives and giving priceless moments to local patients and their ‘ohana.”

Hawai‘i’s Blood Bank, particularly during the summer months, faces an urgent need for donors, particularly platelet and Type O blood.



Rev. Shindo and Mrs. Suzue Nishiyama spearheaded the 60th anniversary of Jikoen Hongwanji's Lumbini Preschool celebration.



Members of Wailuku Hongwanji’s Troop 49 paid a visit to the Wall That Heals earlier this year. Dominic Rabago, above, completed a “name rubbing” of the late Dan Bullock, a 15-year-old who lied on his application to join the military. Below, Matthew Yang proudly stood next to his grandfather’s boots in a special display.



**Pearl City Hongwanji’s** BWA won the grand prize when the Oahu United Honpa Hongwanji BWA conference and seminar was held at

Waipahu Hongwanji Mission last fall.

The prize? A “bokashi” composting kit, complete with bucket and starter microorganisms, donated by Chief Operating Officer of EM (effective microorganisms) Hawaii, Chikako Nago, who demonstrated the system that converts kitchen food waste into useful, odorless compostable material for gardens.

The Pearl City BWA donated the unit to their temple’s kitchen, members are contributing kitchen scraps and president Miles Tamura’s duties now include overseeing composting.

MAUI

For members of **Wailuku Hongwanji’s** Troop 49, this year’s Scout Sunday will be one they won’t soon forget. A major highlight was a visit to “The Wall That Heals,” the three-quarter-sized replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial exhibit in Washington D.C.

Currently on tour to 31 U.S. cities, the traveling piece began 2024 by making its first stop in Hawaii, starting at Hilo Bayfront then moving to Maui, to Wailuku’s War Memorial Complex.

The Scouts heard a lecture on the draft system, in the ‘60s, listened to stories about volunteers who served and made the ultimate sacrifice, they did rubbings of soldiers’ names and saw memorabilia which added dimension to their understanding of history.

In September, the Wall That Heals will be in Ohio and Connecticut followed by stops in Virginia, South Carolina and Georgia, closing out the year in Florida in November.



Jana Ogle’s logo of a toothy dragon adorned headbands as Lihue Hongwanji’s Dharma Dragons returned to American Cancer Society’s Relay for Life walkathon.

Members from all of Maui’s four Jodo Shinshu temples — Lahaina, Kahului, Makawao and Wailuku — gathered at **Makawao Hongwanji Mission** in May to celebrate the birth of Shinran Shonin.

Following morning service, activities in the social hall began with Stacy Nikaiko teaching the new “Lantern Song” bon dance, youngsters then took part in games and crafts, an “ice cake” was served and the annual Cornhole Tournament took place.

After a hard-fought battle, Kahului was declared champions of 2024’s Maui Fujimatsuri Cornhole Tournament.

Bento lunches, dessert and lots of talk story time closed the celebration.

KAUAI

For the 14th year in a row, **Lihue Hongwanji Mission** sponsored its Dharma Dragons team at American Cancer Society’s Relay for Life on Aug. 17, 2024.

Lynne Matsumura and James Yamamoto served as co-captains of the 21-member team, raising more than \$7,000 even before they began their six-hour long relay at Vidinha Soccer Field.

The team sold luminaria for \$5 in memory of family and friends who have lost their battles to cancer, sold dinners, baked goods and craft items on the day of the event and set up an online donation program.

Relay for Life’s 2024 theme, “Knock Cancer Off the Board,” refers to a chess game but the Lihue Dharma Dragons took the theme even further. They borrowed a large game board from their preschool and chose “Connect 4 to Beat Cancer” and played a

game on the field with children wearing Dharma Dragon headbands.

Jana Ogle, now a professional artist, designed the Dharma Dragons logo when she was still in high school. Even during Covid, the team managed to field a modified team of relayers since 2012.

HAWAI‘I ISLAND

**Puna Hongwanji Mission** has taken an innovative step to both help two local businesses while increasing the temple’s income.

When police began enforcing an ordinance prohibiting roadside vendors in Kea’au, Puna’s board voted to offer vendors a chance to use the temple parking lot to sell fresh-caught fish and Mexican food.

Hilo-based Ellie Girl Fishing (named after their dog) has been renting space for the past year and as word spread, their fresh catches — mostly ahi, ono, marlin and mahimahi — quickly sold out.

At \$20 a bag, two bags for \$30, local residents have been quickly buying and raving over the quality and easy access to fresh-caught fish for pokē and sashimi.

Using only one local commercial vessel, Ellie Girl Fishing specializes in hand line and troll caught fishing, mainly pelagic (open ocean) and reef-caught fish, thus following sustainable practices. And they are a state-certified business.

More recently, Da Hawaicanos Taqueria has set up in the parking lot behind Longs Drugs to offer their Mexican and local cuisine.

Vendors pay the temple a nominal fee each day that they operate.

**Honpa Hongwanji Hilo Betsuin** briefly brought back its Friday Movie Nights this spring, sponsored by its Board of Buddhist Education.

In the Social Hall, on the big screen, a dozen fans watched “Zatoichi Challenged,” which is ranked in the Top Five best among the 26 “Zatoichi” films.

Younger film buffs who preferred their movies without blood or samurai donned their hot pink dresses, sweaters and blouses to watch “Barbie” on a smaller screen in an annex room.

Everyone was treated to hotdogs, soft drinks, popcorn, arare and chips.

Jr. YBA Convenes in Wailuku



United Jr. Young Buddhist Association of Maui hosted the 67th Jr. YBA State Convention at Wailuku Hongwanji from June 21-23, 2024. The event brought together youth from across the state who formed new connections, strengthened old ones and conducted organizational business including passage of two key resolutions to foster connections across Buddhist denominations and enhancing inclusivity. Yuki Lei Sugimura, vice-chair of Maui County Council, addressed the group.

### Living Gratitude Program

Living Gratitude:  
Building the future of Buddhism in Hawaii

The Living Gratitude Program will support Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii's efforts to EDUCATE members, youth, and the public about Jodo Shinshu, INNOVATE through the use of technology and targeted outreach, and SUSTAIN Hawaii Kyodan into the future.

#### EDUCATE

We EDUCATE our members and the general public about Shin Buddhism.

- Dharma centered programs for members, youth and the public.
- Ministerial education and lay assistant programs.
- Technology based tools for education.

#### INNOVATE

We INNOVATE by utilizing technology to expand our Dharma outreach.

- Digital ministry program
- Video production studio at the Buddhist Study Center
- Facilitate distance learning and online dharma
- Marketing and outreach team

#### SUSTAIN

We SUSTAIN the essence and maintain the heart of Shin Buddhism in Hawaii.

- Headquarters support with maintenance and upgrades
- Kyodan operations and ability to provide spiritual guidance throughout Hawaii
- Grow the Living Gratitude Endowment Fund

## HONPA HONGWANJI MISSION OF HAWAII'S TRIPLE CELEBRATION

# Welcome! It's Time to Celebrate and Share the Nembutsu



# TRIPLE CELEBRATION FINAL SCHEDULE

## Saturday, September 7, 2024

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

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| 9:00 am-10:00 am   | Registration  |
| 10:00 am-11:00 am  | Commemorative Service (Shinsei Gohonden Saho in commemoration of the 850th Anniversary of Shinran Shonin's Birth & 800th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Jodo Shinshu Teaching) |
| 11:00 am -11:15 am | Break   |
| 11:15 am -12:15 pm | Keynote Speaker: Rev. Dr. Takashi Miyaji  |
| 12:15 pm -2:00 pm  | Lunch   |
| 2:30 pm-3:30 pm    | Workshop I  |
| 3:30 pm-4:00 pm    | Break   |
| 4:00 pm-5:00 pm    | Workshop II   |
| 5:00 pm            | Hotel Check-in  |

## Sunday, September 8, 2024

135th Anniversary of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| 7:00 am-7:30 am     | Choir Rehearsal  |
| 7:30 am-8:30 am     | Buffet Breakfast   |
| 9:00 am-10:00 am    | HMMH 135th Anniversary Commemorative Service               |
| 10:00 am-10:15 am   | Break  |
| 10:15 am -11:30 am  | Panel Discussion<br>"Sharing the Joy of Nembutsu Together" |
| 11:30 am – 12:00 pm | Closing  |

## A Few Tips

**Parking:** Validations for cars parked at Ala Moana Hotel available at the Convention Registration desk outside the Hibiscus Room.

**Restrooms:** In addition to seven Women's restrooms near the Hibiscus Room shown in the map at right, six more are on the Lobby level mauka of hotel registration, and five are on the Third Floor next to Cafe Dada with more inside the Fitness Center. (Room key card required for Fitness Center access.)

Ala Moana Center Dining: More than 125 choices— 34 sit-down restaurants; 40 fast food and casual restaurants in three food courts (Makai Market, the Lanai and the Mall); 47 offer light snacks and drinks.

Grocery stores – Foodland Farms and Nijiya Market offer prepared meals To-Go.

All four major department stores (Bloomingdale's, Macy's, Neiman Marcus and Nordstrom) feature restaurants in their stores.

Ala Moana Hotel Dining:  
**Cafe 410** outside lobby entrance: Breakfast from 6:30 to 10 am. Thursday and Friday; 7 to 10:30 am. Saturday and Sunday.

**Cafe at Dada** on Third Floor: Sandwiches and breakfast all day, take-out available. 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily.

**Pint + Jigger** off lobby: Cocktails, craft beers, burgers, Scotch eggs. Thursday from 4:30 p.m. to midnight (kitchen closes at 11 p.m.); Friday and Saturday from 4:30 p.m. to 2 p.m. (kitchen closes at midnight)

**Signature Prime Steak and Seafood:** Fine dining with views of the beach, ocean and park from the 36th floor. Reservations suggested. Open nightly from 4:30 to 10 p.m.

**Starbucks** in the lobby: From 5:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; beer and wine served from 9 a.m. to closing.

*Greetings From Bishop Toshiyuki Umitani*

With a profound sense of joy and gratitude for the countless causes and conditions that brought us together, I would like to welcome you to the Triple Celebration in commemoration of the 850th Anniversary of the Birth of Shinran Shonin, the 800th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Jodo Shinshu Teaching, and the 135th Anniversary of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii.

I am really excited about this amazing opportunity! As someone who has served as a minister in Hawaii for more than two decades, I can't help but express my profound respect and gratitude to all the ministers and sangha members of the HHMH for their sacrifices, dedications and contributions to the spread of Jodo Shinshu teaching over the last 135 years. Through their unwavering commitment and perseverance, the Hongwanji temples took firm

roots in Hawai'i as "abodes of Light and Love," as described by Bishop Yemyo Imamura.

Those who entered our temples took refuge in the Light of Wisdom and Compassion of Amida Buddha and lived their lives to the fullest in the face of challenges while reciting the Nembutsu with their family and friends. We owe them a tremendous debt of gratitude.

We have all been raised in different environments, have different values and lead different lives. Sometimes, those differences bring conflict and division. However the teachings of the Nembutsu make us aware of our self-centeredness and we encounter the warmth of Amida's Compassion which promises to embrace all beings. We are taught that all people, ourselves and others, live their precious and unrepeatable lives within the Great Compassion.

Today, we are gathered for

a grand celebration. I sincerely hope that through the Triple Celebration, each of us will reaffirm the warmth of life and the power of interconnectedness and share the joy of Nembutsu together: our living heart of gratitude.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the Triple Celebration Steering Committee members for their dedication and hard work in coordinating and carrying out this event. They have dedicated many hours to planning, and I am truly grateful and proud of their contribution to making this celebration possible.

To all the participants,  
please enjoy the wonderful  
experience of the Triple Cele-  
bration!

Namo Amida Butsu

In Gassho,  
Rev. Toshiyuki Umitani  
Bishop  
Honpa Hongwanji Mission of  
Hawaii

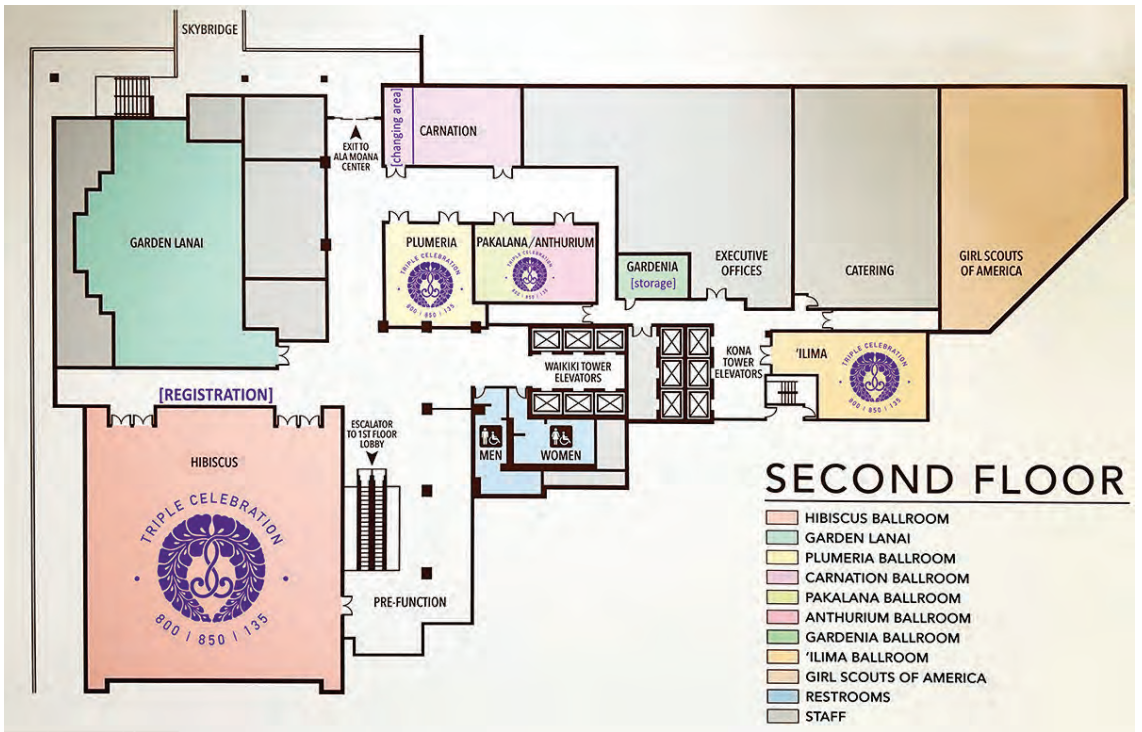
## Late Changes and Additions

Previously announced as a Continental Breakfast, Sunday morning's breakfast will be a Buffet Breakfast from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. in the Hibiscus Room.

After Sunday's Commemoration Service and a brief break, the Panel Discussion on "Sharing the Joy of Nembutsu Together" will feature Rev. Ai Hironaka of Lahaina and Ka-

hului Hongwanji and Dan K. Thompson, brother of the late Kahu Sherman Thompson.

They will join Edythe Vassall of Honpa Hongwanji Hilo Betsuin. The panel will be moderated by Rev. Dr. Takashi Miyaji, minister of Southern Alameda County Buddhist Church in Union City, California.



## Things To Do, Places to Go, Music to Hear, Hula to See

*Free activities between Friday and Sunday, all within walking distance from art, music, dance, culture and, of course, the appeal of Ala Moana Beach Park:*



**Friday-Sunday, 5-5:30p.m.**  
**Daily Hula Show**  
*Centerstage, Ala Moana Center*  
Celebrating both kahiko (traditional) and 'auana (modern) styles

**Friday-Sunday, 5:30-6:30 p.m.**  
**Pau Hana Music Series**  
*Ewa Wing Stage, Ala Moana Center*  
Local singers and songwriters perform a variety of pop, R&B, reggae, rock, soul and, of course, Hawaiian songs

**Friday, Sept. 6 7:55-8:05 p.m.**  
**Fireworks From the Duke Kahanamoku Lagoon**  
*Hilton Hawaiian Village*  
*Waikiki beach front*  
A brief local tradition kicks off every weekend.



**Saturday, Sept. 7 10 a.m.-4 p.m.**  
**Honolulu Makers Market**  
*Mall Level 2, Mauka Wing, Ala Moana Center*  
 Ceramics, handmade items, plants, snack items

**Sunday, Sept. 8 10 a.m.-5 p.m.**  
**Island Crafters Market**  
*Mall Level 2, Mauka Wing, Ala Moana Center*  
 Handcrafted jewelry, apparel, paper craft, sewn totes,

etched, vinyl and resin art items

Sunday, Sept. 8 1 p.m.  
**Keiki Hula Show**  
Centerstage, Ala Moana Center  
Hawaii's children keep the  
hula tradition alive

## Ongoing

**Multi-Million  
Dollar Art Walk**  
10 a.m.-8 p.m.

***Ala Moana Center Mall: Level 2 and "Waiala" on Street Level 1; see map.*** Seven large sculpture reflect both the cultural diversity and beauty of Hawai'i and the Japanese spiritual aesthetic. Yayoi Kusama's "Pumpkin," Bumpei Akaji's "Birds Aloft" and the Tsutakawas' bronze works highlight the collection

**Ala Moana Beach Park**  
4 a.m.-10 p.m.

Blue waters, gentle waves protected by reef draws 4 million visitors a year to the 100-acre park. Views of Diamond Head with amenities: showers, restrooms, snack bar. Safe for waders and swimmers. Check signs by lifeguard Tower 1E near Magic Island for box jellyfish warnings.

