

“THE CALLING VOICE”

Ka Leo Kāhea



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HONPA HONGWANJI MISSION OF HAWAII'S TRIPLE CELEBRATION

‘Understanding Our Moment in Timelessness’

As keynote speaker of Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii's Triple Celebration, Reverend Dr. Takashi Miyaji delivered an inspiring and thought-provoking address entitled “Why Life Is Great: Understanding Our Moment in Timelessness,” among the highlights of the Sept. 7 and 8 program at Ala Moana Hotel.

The first of two parts from his historic speech are reprinted here with its conclusion in June. A complete version may be viewed at <https://youtu.be/ZxOWAkI2w0>

BY REV. DR. TAKASHI MIYAJI,
DEAN, INSTITUTE OF
BUDDHIST STUDIES AND
MINISTER, SOUTHERN
ALAMEDA COUNTY BUDDHIST
CHURCH

nection to Amida Buddha and how this connection is found through the Nembutsu. That might seem easy, but there's a problem: this self that is the human being of blind passions.

Finally, I will show that despite having these blind passions, we are still embraced in the world of Great Compassion.

What is Amida Buddha? To begin with, Amida is the conjunction of two names: *Amitabha* and *Amitayus*.

First, “A-” is a prefix referring to a negation, it's like the word “im-possible.”

Next, “-mita-” refers to meter, or a measurement of something.

Then “-ayus” is life. So this word means immeasurable life. *Amitabha* means immeasurable light.

The light emanating from the Buddha is much too much for us to see and be able to understand. I'll give you an example of the power

The overarching theme of this joyous event is “Sharing the Joy of Nembutsu Together: Our Living Heart of Gratitude” and my talk is in keeping with that theme and is titled “Why Life Is Great: Understanding Our Moment in Timelessness.”

To put it succinctly, when we put our lives into proper perspective through the Buddha Dharma, we come to see how one's life is, in fact, the expression of Great Life. This understanding will naturally lead us to a life of deep gratitude where we want to share this teaching with other people.

I'm first going to talk about who Amida Buddha is. Then I'll talk about our con-



Courtesy of Alan Kubota

Reverend Dr. Takashi Miyaji: It's easy to shun, ignore and criticize things we do not understand.

of the Buddha's light.

When we think of the source of physical light, we think of the sun.

As children, we were told not to look directly at the sun, right? Otherwise, if we did, we would destroy our eyes and not be able to see anymore.

The power of the sun is much too bright and powerful for our eyes to withstand.

It's not that the sun wants to hurt us or punish us.

Rather, it's that we don't have the capability as humans to be able to afford this kind of strength.

Similarly, we don't have the capabilities to fully understand the Buddha's wisdom and power when we look directly at the Buddha's wisdom. It is indescribable, inexplicable and inconceiv-

able, or what's known in Japanese as *fukashō*, *fukaset-su*, *fukashigi*.

Thus it becomes easy to shun, ignore and criticize things we do not understand. When we don't understand something like the Buddha's wisdom, it is easy to think there's something wrong with Buddhism itself.

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The Kie Family's Gift Lights the Way Toward a Promising Future



Courtesy of the Kie Family

Rev. Soshin Kie, right, and Mrs. Akiko Kishi Kie on their 50th wedding anniversary in 1997: Their gift will support the legacy of advancing Jodo Shinshu Buddhism in Hawaii, an aspiration they worked toward all their lives.

BY JOSH HERNANDEZ MORSE,
HEAD OF SCHOOL
PACIFIC BUDDHIST ACADEMY

On May 17, 2024, Bishop Toshiyuki Umitani, President Dr. Warren Tamamoto, Business Manager Derrick Inouye, Mō'ili'ili Hongwanji President Joanne Kealoha and Head of School Josh Hernandez Morse, representing the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii (Kyodan), Mō'ili'ili Hongwanji Mission and Pacific Buddhist Academy respectively, formalized the gift acknowledgement of the Soshin and Akiko Kie's Revocable Living Trust, a gift of

Kalihi real estate and rental proceeds whose total value exceeded more than \$3 million.

Rev. Soshin Kie and Mrs. Akiko Kishi Kie's daughters, Lily Masuda, Ayumi Kie Weissbuch and Emma Kie, the Trust finalized the transfer of the Kalihi Street property and rental proceeds according to the terms of Mrs. Kie's Last Will and Testament.

The transfer accomplished, it became known as the Rev. Soshin and Akiko Kie Gift, which enabled the creation of named endowed funds for the Kyodan, Mō'ili'ili Hongwanji and PBA.

“Rev. and Mrs. Kie directed that the trust support the legacy of advancing Jodo Shinshu Buddhism in Hawaii, an aspiration they worked toward all their lives,” Bishop Umitani said.

“Given the instrumental role they played in establishing a Jodo Shinshu temple in Okinawa and their ministerial work in Hawaii, the legacy gift they made was very purposeful.

“Designating that a portion of their gift be used to support ministers and the study of Buddhism through educational programs of the

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MAUI WILDFIRE RELIEF AND RECOVERY

Lahaina Leaders Determined, United in Their Commitment to Rebuilding

BY MICHAEL MUNEKIYO, CHAIR LAHAINA HONGWANJI RECOVERY AND REBUILDING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD, WAILUKU HONGWANJI MISSION

The Maui wildfires of August 2023 devastated the Lahaina Hongwanji Mission, leaving its temple, school building, office, social hall, kitchen and minister's residence destroyed.

While still dealing with the traumatic effects of the fire, members of the Lahaina Hongwanji sangha are now looking to the future.

The cleanup of the temple grounds by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was completed in November 2024, and efforts are now underway to reimagine the campus for generations to come.

The leaders and members of the sangha have demonstrated remarkable resilience.

Reverend Ai Hironaka and temple President Aileen Cockett have been at the forefront of the rebuilding process.

Working with the Honpa Hongwanji's

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Courtesy of Rev. Ai Hironaka

Eight months after debris was removed, in November of 2024, committee members were able to view the area where the temple building once stood.

Carrying Forward the Gift of Nembutsu into 2025



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

As this is the first issue of Ka Leo Kāhea for 2025, I would like to extend my warmest greetings and a Happy New Year to you. I truly appreciate your continued participation and contribution to the services and programs of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of

Hawaii. I sincerely hope that 2025 will be a joyful and meaningful year for you.

Last year, HHMH observed the Triple Celebration, during which we celebrated the 850th Anniversary of Shinran Shonin's Birth, the 800th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Jodo Shinshu Teaching, and the 135th Anniversary of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii.

The voices of the Nembutsu resounded in the banquet room, and I felt deeply moved and grateful to recite the Nembutsu together with many ministers and members in attendance.

I experienced immense gratitude for all the causes and conditions that have united us as the Nembutsu Sangha, and it renewed my commitment to dedicate my life to listening to and shar-

BISHOP'S CORNER

ing the joy of Nembutsu with others.

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to all those who contributed to the success of the Triple Celebration – the Steering Committee members, the Choir, the HQ Staff, many members who volunteered their time and skills, speakers, the gagaku group from Yamaguchi, participants and many more.

In 2025, let us carry forward the joy and sense of oneness we experienced at the Triple Celebration in our hearts and minds, continue to listen to the Compassionate Call of Amida Buddha, and embody it in our daily lives at home, in the temple and in the community.

Today, our world and society are filled with many sad

stories and incidents that truly hurt our feelings and challenge our spirits. We are confronted by a flood of suffering, injustice, and despair.

In the face of such turmoil, it is natural to reflect on questions like, "How should we live our lives?"

"What can we do to bring peace, healing, and understanding into this fractured world?"

"What insights might Shinran Shonin offer us in these challenging times?"

As recipients of the Great Compassion, the Dharma reminds us of the interdependent nature of our lives and encourages us to be mindful of our actions, to practice kindness even when it feels difficult, to stand in solidarity with those in need, and to approach each day and every encounter with gratitude.

For me, this is Shinran

Shonin's gift – an invitation to step beyond my narrow, confined world into a realm of oneness and brotherhood within the Great Compassion. It is an invitation to embrace all beings as our family, to see beyond the differences that divide us, and to understand that our own liberation is tied to the liberation of all.

Let us rejoice in this wonderful condition of encountering the Dharma, and let us work together to create a temple and community where the Great Compassion flourishes, a temple that fosters open dialogue, supports compassionate service, and creates a safe and welcoming space for all.

I believe this is how we can repay a debt of gratitude we have received.

Namo Amida Butsu

Overcoming Conflict With Others



BY REV. SHINGO FURUSAWA
HONPA HONGWANJI HAWAII
BETSUIN

When seeing our community, society and in this world, countless fights and wars happen. No matter what organization we belong to, we will inevitably encounter people whose personalities and ways of think-

ing differ from ours.

When we are with such people, conflicts and arguments are likely to arise.

Why do we come into conflict with others? It is because we all tend to be self-centered and to recognize others' faults but not our own.

Here is an example: If you go to Japan, you will find that many houses are equipped with doors covered with paper which are called "shoji" doors.

One day, a person said, "My neighbor's house has torn shoji screens, but they just leave them. They are sloppy." He looked through a hole in the shoji screen of his own house and said so...

What do you think about this person? You may laugh at him, but if we criticize others' faults without recognizing our own, we should not laugh at him. In this

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

way, our self-centered mind makes us lenient with ourselves and harsh with others.

Unfortunately, we tend to be unaware of how self-centered we are, which often allows our self-centered mind to control us. If we are manipulated by it, each of us will say, "I am right! You are wrong!" and our relationship will be broken down. In order to avoid the conflict, we need to get through the mindset, but how can we do this?

Self-reflection through listening to the Buddha Dharma is necessary to ask ourselves, "Are my thoughts really right? Are my actions really right?"

Shinran Shonin, the founder of Shin Buddhism, made a remarkable state-

ment, "I know nothing at all of good or evil ("Tannisho" or "A Record in Lament of Divergences.")

When reading his works, we can know that he was a brilliant, intelligent man. However, through Amida Buddha's Wisdom and Compassion, Shinran Shonin was aware that he was an imperfect person. He stated, "I am not a perfect person, so my view is also imperfect. I can never say that I am absolutely right."

Through listening to the Buddha's teachings, we also will be able to reflect on our imperfections, have shortcomings and can make mistakes.

You may feel uncomfortable if you are told that you are imperfect, but is there anyone who can say that they have never made a mistake in their life?

There are no such peo-

ple, are there?

Therefore, when arguing or fighting with others, we need to be calm and ask ourselves, "Am I right?" In this way, it is very important for us to reflect on ourselves that we are not perfect, not to have conflicts with others.

The "Shinshu Pledge II" states:

"Revealing the Light of the Buddha and reflecting upon my imperfect self, I shall strive to live a life of gratitude."

Those who are illuminated by Amida Buddha's light will be able to be aware of their own imperfections, and they can live their lives to the fullest.

Because we are all imperfect, we must try our best to complement each other's shortcomings and overcome conflicts.

In Gassho

After a Seven-Year Absence, Choralfest Will Return in September

BY FRANCIS OKANO
MUSIC COMMITTEE
CHAIRMAN

On Sept. 20 and 21, 2025, Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii will host Choralfest 2025 at the Hawaii Betsuin in Honolulu.

Announcements, flyers and registration forms have been sent to all temples in Hawaii as well as to a few temples with Buddhist Churches of America.

More than 100 singers are expected to participate in a massed choir presentation of beautiful Buddhist choral works.

The two-day event will begin on Saturday, Sept. 20 at noon in the Betsuin Social Hall for an all-afternoon rehearsal, interspersed with refreshment breaks.

Dinner and fellowship will follow from 5 to 6:30 p.m.

On Sunday, the festival choir will perform selected choral gathas at a music service which will begin at 10:30 a.m. in the Betsuin Hondo.

The program will conclude with refreshments and fellowship in the Social Hall.

The festival choir conductor will be Nola Nahulu, a Living Treasure of Hawaii recipient who has successfully led the biennial event



Courtesy of Alan Kubota

Nola Nahulu, center, conducted singers at the Sept. 25, 2016 Choralfest in the Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin hondo. Four members of the Hawai'i Youth Opera Chorus, foreground, wearing green mu'umu'u, were among a dozen vocalists asked to sing along with the choir.

since its 2005 inception.

Resumption of Choralfest in 2025 follows the long pandemic interruption since it was last held in 2018.

Featured in 2025 will be the following choral gathas, in English translation from the Japanese: "To My Daughters" ("Musume Tachi Yo,") "Upon Clouds" ("Nagareyuku Kumo ni,") "Where Oh

Where" ("Hotokesama wa,") "To All We Owe" ("Ikasarete,") "Surely We Will Meet Again Some Day" ("Kitto Mata Aeru Ne,") and "Gratefulness II" ("Ondokusan II.")

Brief program notes will be provided the congregation by way of introduction to each choral piece.

Whether a veteran or

first-time choral singer, everyone is welcome to join the festival choir to learn and sing the choral gathas.

And full attendance by the congregation is anticipated for the Sunday music service.

For singers, registration and a \$35 fee must be received at Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii Headquarters by April 1, 2025.

All registrants will receive a booklet and access to recorded singing parts for required preparation.

To register, please contact your temple offices or the Music Committee through Headquarters at (808) 522-9202).



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

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My Nembutsu Moment



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

Aloha kakou! I hope you are well. Last year, the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii invited followers to write a short essay on “My Nembutsu Moment.” This was described as an “Aha!” or “Wow!” moment, when we fully appreciate the depth of Amida Buddha’s presence in our lives.

We all have them at one time or another, but often don’t appreciate it as such. I’d like to share my experience with “My Nembutsu Moment” with you.

My mother was a barber for more than 70 years. Mom never completed her high school education. When she finished the 8th grade at Laupāhoehoe School, our grandfather, Tsuruda Ojiichan, sent her to barber school.

According to our Uncle Kenji, my Mom’s youngest brother, the two oldest children, Mom and Aunt Sumi-chan, left school and went to work because the family was large and there were many mouths to feed.

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Uncle Kenji shared this story with us, always appreciative of the sacrifice that Mom and Aunt Sumi made for the family. It was not unusual for older siblings to go to work to care for the younger siblings in the early years of the Issei and Nisei generation.

Mom became an apprentice barber at the Sasaki barbershop in Hilo. At age 14, she lived in Hilo during the work week. She received free room and board and for the first 6 months, she received no pay.

After six months, she received a paycheck. Mom would give her paycheck to Ojiichan and he would give her a small allowance to spend for her own needs.

Mom eventually opened her own barbershop business in Papaaloa. She rented a corner of the old Yamanouchi Store building right across the narrow road from our red wooden plantation house with the *totan*, (corrugated iron) roof.

I can still see that white, wood and glass storefront with the blue “Yamanouchi Store” sign across the street. Mom would be standing in the open door of her barbershop calling out to us, “Did you do your homework?” or happily chatting with customers as she cut their hair.

I wonder what her thoughts were when she was told to go to work at the age of 14. We accepted the fact that Mom went to barber school and then started work at age 14 as something that happened in the old days.

Over the years, she settled happily into her role as a wife, mother, aunt, grandmother, great-grand-

mother and barber. Our family did have challenges. But we survived as a family in large part because of Mom’s persistence, determination and her willingness to sacrifice her needs for our family.

My Nembutsu Moment also involves Uncle Jimmy. When Uncle Jimmy, Dad’s older brother, and the first son, passed away in Honolulu, I was asked to deliver a eulogy for him.

Uncle Jimmy was a quiet man who drove a cane haul truck for the Laupāhoehoe Sugar Company for decades, shuttling sugar cane from the fields to the sugar mill. He would drive past us in that big cane truck and he would wave at us or sometimes toot the horn.

I prepared a eulogy for him. Just before the service started, Aunt Satono, Uncle Jimmy’s sister, turned around to speak to me and said, “Did you know that Uncle Jimmy was a really good student?”

Aunt Satono wanted me to know that when Uncle Jimmy finished intermediate school, he went to work for the plantation to help support the family. As the oldest son, that was his duty to the family.

The school principal went to the family home to speak to Tamamoto Ojiichan to ask him to please allow Uncle Jimmy to finish high school because he was a good student and he would have better opportunities with a high school diploma.

But Ojiichan replied no, Uncle Jimmy had to start working to help support the family. So Uncle Jimmy became a cane truck driver.

That story about Uncle Jimmy having to go to work at age 14 instead of high school was a shock to

me. In that moment, I thought, “I’m the oldest son just like Uncle Jimmy!”

I realized that I was so fortunate to have been born one generation later. I was able to complete my education with the support of my family. Because I was able to finish high school and attend university, I had opportunities in life that Uncle Jimmy didn’t.

A flood of emotion washed through me as I delivered his eulogy. I recall shaking and choking up during portions of his eulogy. Why was I feeling such strong emotion?

I knew and we all knew that our mother did the very same thing as Uncle Jimmy when she became a barber at age 14. Clearly, the difference was that I was thinking about myself. Although it was with a feeling of profound gratitude, what caused such strong emotion was the focus on myself.

As I reflect on this, I am again made aware that I am basically a self-centered person. My thoughts center around myself and my family. Grateful but imperfect.

I realize the significance of gratitude in Buddhism, that the “Wise try to express their appreciation and gratitude with some return of kindness, not only to their benefactor, but to everyone.” (Rev. Taitetsu Unno).

So many people like Uncle Jimmy and my Mom have contributed to the life I live today. My response is to return their efforts by living my life in the most positive way possible.

Take care, everyone and see you on the journey.

Namo Amida Butsu.

STATE JUDO CHAMPIONSHIPS RETURN TO MAUI

Makawao Hongwanji Welcomes 121 Judoka at 62nd Event

BY CY YOSHIZU
MAKAWAO HONGWANJI
MISSION

Honpa Hongwanji Federation State Judo Championships, the oldest running judo tournament in Hawaii, made a triumphant return to the Valley Isle over the Labor Day weekend.

The Makawao Hongwanji Judo Club welcomed judoka and their families from six clubs: Hilo, Makawao, Mililani, Pearl City, Puna and Wailuku, filling the King Kekaulike High School Gymnasium in September, 2024.

Tournament head and Makawao Hongwanji Judo Club’s Sensei, Claude Moreau, who spent more than a year organizing the two-day tournament, expressed admiration for the contributions of parents and supporters that made the event a success.

“We have an amazing group of parents with many varied talents, skills and connections,” he said. “We all experienced a moment that everyone involved will always remember. All of our club members are very proud of ourselves for pulling this event off, Maui style.”

He also conveyed his gratitude for the support from Makawao Hongwanji Mission sangha members and Reverend Kerry Kiyohara, citing how the temple allowed judo club members to use the kitchen to prepare food for the tournament’s concession stand and hospitality evening.

The Makawao Hongwanji Buddhist Women’s Association served food at the Aloha Banquet.



Photos Courtesy of Cy Yoshizu

Above: Rev. Kerry Kiyohara of Makawao Hongwanji opened the 62nd Honpa Hongwanji Federation State Judo Championships with prayers and a heartfelt aspiration. At right, Risa Cabral, in the blue belt, goes in to throw Emma Toba, her Wailuku Hongwanji teammate, during the Female Intermediate 1 middleweight bout.

“The Honpa Hongwanji Judo Federation state championships are a shining example of what a Hongwanji temple can be for its community: a chance for anyone, just as they are, to be part of a community centered around the temple and its Buddhist values,” Reverend Kiyohara said.

“The judo club is a core community at Makawao Hongwanji, always willing to lend a helping hand and strong backs when the temple asks for help with garage sales, clean-ups and Obon festival. Makawao



Hongwanji would not be the same without the judo club.”

Reverend Kiyohara was impressed by how many sensei from the various judo clubs grew up within the Hongwanji judo system, beginning as young judoka and now coaches for the next generation.

Moreau expressed gratitude for the support from other judo clubs including those from Wailuku Hong-

wanji Mission, as well as donors from community members and local businesses.

They helped with match-making, scoring, refereeing, medical staff and family members volunteered in key roles, including running the concession booth.

Despite rising travel and lodging costs impacting the Honpa Hongwanji Judo State Championships, many participants remain

dedicated to this cherished tradition, with strong commitment from among those who recognize its community significance, even as some clubs withdraw from future tournaments.

Moreau noted that their club secured approval from Makawao Hongwanji for neighbor island clubs to stay in the Social Hall, thus helping to reduce accommodation expenses.

“I think it’s vitally important for the Honpa Hongwanji Judo Federation State Championships to continue because it creates the time, place and occasion for connection and reconnection, which is the primary role of a Buddhist temple,” Reverend Kiyohara said.

“United by a love of judo, young people from across the state come together, creating connections that last a lifetime.”

“Our sincere congratulations to Sensei Claude, Sensei Duane (Yoshizu), the instructors, judoka and their families for hosting a great tournament.”

Moreau expressed his honor to be a part of the special judo community and cited the camaraderie and tradition of the Honpa Hongwanji Judo Federation State Championships. Participants make lifelong friends, he said.

Pearl City Hongwanji Judo Club has graciously stepped up to host the 63rd Honpa Hongwanji Federation State Judo Championships this year.

Complete tournament results may be viewed at <https://mauinow.com/2024/09/06/results-62nd-honpa-hongwanji-state-judo-championships/>.

Stepping Stones for a New Era

With its strong, historic legacy, Wailuku Hongwanji looks forward to its next 125 years, guided by the Nembutsu

BY REV. SHINKAI MURAKAMI
WAILUKU HONGWANJI
MISSION

Wailuku Hongwanji's 125th commemorative anniversary was held Oct. 20, 2024, with the theme, "A Welcoming Spirit Grows Our Community Temple." Our mission has always been to serve as a community temple that welcomes all 'ohana (families), providing spiritual and cultural support while fostering joy and happiness through the guidance of the Nembutsu.

Since coming to this wonderful temple, I have had the honor of officiating and assisting with the 105th, 110th, 115th, 120th, and now the 125th anniversary services.

Reflecting on these milestones, I see their unique qualities, but one element remains constant—the radiant smiles and joy of our community, blessed by the spiritual guidance we share.

While we remember Dharma friends who are no longer with us, we also welcome new Dharma families who continue to walk in the footsteps of our Nembutsu pioneers.

The 125th anniversary committee began its work a year and a half ago, planning the celebration and its commemorative project.

However, the devastation of the 2023 Maui wildfires greatly impacted our members and the community, making it difficult to ask for

additional financial support.

Despite these challenges, the temple received incredible contributions and words of encouragement from members.

Their determination to celebrate this milestone, even on a smaller scale, ensured the legacy would be passed down to future generations.

Thanks to their support, we held a heartfelt commemoration service that exemplified our temple's role as a community cornerstone here in Maui.

I had a simple request for our committee: "Let's gather 125 people for this service!" While this seemed ambitious, the support of our members, Scouts and affiliated organizations exceeded all expectations.

We were blessed with more than 180 attendees.

The service began with beautiful Gagaku music, followed by Bishop Toshiyuki Umitani's "Torairan" ritual, the "Sanbujo" (Three Respectful Callings to the Buddha) and the chanting of the "Shoshin Nembutsu Ge" led by Reverend Ai Hironaka of Kahului and Lahaina Hongwanji and Reverend Kerry Kiyohara of Makawao Hongwanji.

Bishop Umitani delivered a profound Dharma message that expressed deep gratitude for our past and shared a bright vision for the future, emphasizing the infinite wisdom and compassion of Amida Buddha in our lives.



Courtesy of Donovan Ikeuchi

Celebrating Wailuku Hongwanji's 125th Anniversary, from left: Rev. Kerry Kiyohara, Makawao Hongwanji Mission; Mahina Martin, Maui County Director of Public Affairs representing Mayor Richard Bissen; Yuki Lei Sugimura, Maui County Council; Rev. Shinkai Murakami, Wailuku Hongwanji Mission; Troy Hashimoto, Hawaii State House of Representatives; Bishop Toshiyuki Umitani, Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, and Rev. Ai Hironaka, Lahaina and Kahului Hongwanji.

During the service, I shared my Shaji (appreciation) by recounting a little-known story from our history:

During World War II, our temple was slated to be condemned by the U.S. military. However, a group of dedicated members, led by an inspiring woman, petitioned tirelessly to save our temple.

Their unwavering faith and efforts ensured its survival. Learning this truth filled me with the deepest gratitude—Okagesamade.

Shinran Shonin's words in the Jodo Wasan from "Hymns of the Pure Land" beautifully capture the spirit of our pioneers:

*"Those who truly attain Shinjin (true faith),
As they utter Amida's Name,
Being mindful of the Buddha always,
Wish to respond to the great benevolence."*

Today, I feel honored to be part of such a vibrant temple.

Our Sunday morning services are attended by both familiar and new faces, each finding friendship, guidance and joy in the Nembutsu.

This special commemoration also received recognition from the Hawaii State Legislature, Maui County Council and Mayor Richard Bissen for 125 years of dedi-

cation to the community.

It was serendipitous that the County of Maui had proclaimed the third Sunday of October as "Wailuku Hongwanji Day" in 2004, precisely 20 years before this anniversary.

Through the selfless efforts of our Nembutsu pioneers and the Dharma friends who continue their legacy, Wailuku Hongwanji Mission remains a welcoming and growing community temple. With the infinite guidance of Nembutsu, we commemorated this milestone as one united 'ohana.

Arigatai. Okagesama de.
Namo Amida Butsu.
Namo Amida Butsu.
Namo Amida Butsu.

Maui Fire

Continued from Page 1

Lahaina Hongwanji Recovery and Rebuilding Committee and a strategic planning Ad Hoc Subcommittee, sangha leaders and members have identified both opportunities and challenges for the campus' reconstruction.

As of December 2024, two strategic planning sessions have been held with the Lahaina Hongwanji board and key sangha members, along with several meetings of the Ad Hoc Subcommittee and ongoing internal communications among the temple's leadership and members.

Though the process is complex, the sangha has embraced it as an essential step for healing and strengthening.

To Rebuild or Not to Rebuild: A Question of Why?

The first strategic planning session, held on Sept. 1, 2024, included the Lahaina Hongwanji board and key sangha members.

Facilitated by Ad Hoc Subcommittee member Cindy Alm, the primary goal of the meeting was to determine whether the sangha wished to embark on a campus rebuilding program, and if so, why?

The majority of partici-



Courtesy of Rev. Ai Hironaka

Inspectors from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the state's HI-EMA agency accompanied members of the Recovery and Rebuilding Committee including Thomas Fujita, far left, as they examined the Lahaina Hongwanji Mission campus a year ago on March 11 and 12, 2024.

pants expressed support for the idea of rebuilding. However, the discussion did not address specific physical elements of the campus that should be rebuilt.

Sangha members shared their reasons for choosing to rebuild:

- The need for a Buddhist presence on West Maui to share Amida's wisdom and compassion.
- Lahaina Hongwanji is a spiritual home for members to connect with Nembutsu teachings and journey together.
- The Temple holds potential to once again serve as a community gathering

place for West Maui residents to support one another.

- There is a deep sense of gratitude for the temple's founders who built Lahaina Hongwanji.
- While rebuilding is the preferred course of action, the sangha recognizes the challenges involved in sustaining a new campus, including its aging and declining membership and the attendant long-term financial implications.

Consequently, the Lahaina Hongwanji board and key members agreed that any rebuilding plan, regardless of scale, must include a

realistic financial sustainability strategy.

Financial and Operational Sustainability

A second strategic planning session was held on Nov. 2, 2024 to explore financial and operational sustainability options to support the rebuilding effort.

The discussion focused on the following guiding question: *If Lahaina Hongwanji is fully or partially rebuilt, what financial and operational strategies could ensure the project's viability?*

Several ideas emerged as potential immediate, mid-term and long-term solutions:

- Renting out the temple's commercial kitchen to community groups
- Renting temple meeting space to community organizations
- Establishing day care programs (e.g., adult day care, preschool, after-school programs)
- Commercial uses (e.g., office space, compatible retail)
- Commercial renting of temple parking stalls

Other ideas, such as workforce housing apartments were discussed but deemed less viable due to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) funding reimbursement criteria, which requires rebuilding structures to pre-

fire conditions.

Next Steps

Although specific master plan design concepts have not yet been developed, key redevelopment criteria are being discussed with the Lahaina Hongwanji sangha.

These include FEMA reimbursement criteria and funding requirements for the reconstruction program, priorities for rebuilding specific structures (e.g., the temple building, former school building, office building, etc.), and programming options that best support sustainability alternatives.

The rebuilding process for Lahaina Hongwanji is being approached deliberately and thoughtfully, with the aim of reaching a consensus-based plan that results in a preferred campus redevelopment concept.

Once this concept is identified, more detailed and equally complex steps toward implementation—such as design development, county permitting processes and funding programming—will follow.

Although this process may take time, the sangha's leadership is committed to ensuring that member input is respected and valued.

Above all, they believe that this process honors the Nembutsu spirit of Lahaina Hongwanji's founders and past generations of members.

Rev. Miyaji

Continued from Page 1

We often think, "Buddhism should be made to be more understandable for the modern age. Buddhism needs to change its methods to be more accessible and understandable for the common masses!"

We hear these criticisms all the time, both within and outside the sangha and within and outside the temple. But the problem isn't Buddhism. The problem is the egocentric mind that is immature and impatient, unwilling to learn the teaching that has so much depth.

Returning to the conversation about light, how do we connect with the Buddha's light? If it's something too powerful for us to understand, how do we know it's there? How do we even know it exists?

We know of this light when there's something contrasting it that does not emanate light. For example, let's say there's a car or a house. We know the car or house is there because it obstructs the light of the Sun. So it is through this contract of the object and the Sun's light that we can come to see the object for what it is and understand the quality and power of the Sun's light.

Similarly, it is the self of blind passions that doesn't give off any light of wisdom whatsoever and contrasts the light of the Buddha.

When we juxtapose these two, that's when the power of the Buddha's wisdom and foolish nature of the self can be seen.

Shinran Shonin states: "Obstructions of karmic evil turn into virtues. It is like the relation of ice and water. The more the ice, the more the water, the more the obstructions, the more the virtues."



Sangha members react to Reverend Dr. Miyaji's keynote speech at Honpa Hongwanji Mission's Triple Celebration at the Ala Moana Hotel.

What our founder is pointing out is that our blind passions engulf our hearts, suffocates us, and never gives us a moment's rest. It's like an anchor that pulls us down into this abyss of our suffering.

The karmic ignorance is like ice, but when there is something that changes this ice, namely the light of the heat of the Buddha's wisdom, then that very ice becomes the source of the water of virtues.

Next, there's the term "Amitayus," which means the Buddha of Immeasurable Life. I'll give you an example that explains this. We are beings of egocentricity where this "I" is the center of the world. I look at the world as the center of the universe. You in the audience are all side characters who are not as important as the all-important "Me."

However, my world is small. I could go on in this entire life without even realizing anything other than this one that I know.

Indeed, many people do this. But suppose there's something that shatters this worldview. When that occurs, I awaken to a greater reality that envelops and embraces me despite this egocentric worldview that I have. What I awaken to is

"Great Life" with a capital "L."

We call this in Japanese *muryōju nyorai*, the Tathagata of immeasurable Life. It is Great Life, hence the title of my talk today: "Why Life is Great."

Life is great because we awaken to see *muryōju nyorai*, or Amida Buddha. The "Great" part doesn't mean that I live a fulfilled and wonderful life with a loving spouse and children, where I have a white picket-fenced house in the affluent part of town, or that I live to a ripe old age.

That's not what I mean by "Great Life."

Those standards are fleeting and unrealistic. Why? What happens if I don't get any of them? What happens if one of those things on my checklist isn't met?

Does that mean I can't live a great life? Indeed, that's not what Jodo Shinshu means when they say the word "great." When Jodo Shinshu ministers say, "great practice" or "great Shinjin," "great" is actually a technical term. "Great" means it comes from the world of Enlightenment.

To review, Light is a metaphor for the Buddha's wisdom and Life is a meta-

phor for the Buddha's compassion. Wisdom and Compassion is Enlightenment itself. Thus, absolute truth is *wise* precisely because it is the summation of all things interconnected. Absolute truth is also *compassionate* because no one gets left out of this picture.

Amitabha and *Amitayus* is Buddha. It is the one and the same Absolute Truth.

Another question I get is, "Well, if Amida Buddha is a representation, like a metaphor, then does that mean Amida Buddha is not real?"

The answer is that Amida Buddha is very real. It is as real as your existence is. Without you, there is no Amida Buddha. This is called *imotsushin* in Japanese, meaning Amida Buddha's purpose is to liberate the sentient being of blind passions.

In other words, the world of Buddha, or wisdom, reveals itself to us as compassionate activity.

How does it reveal itself to us? In the form of Amida Buddha, the Pure Land and the Nembutsu: the audible voicing of the world of truth, which we Shin Buddhists know to be "Namo Amida Butsu."

How do we know that this came to be? In the *Larger Sutra*, Śākyamuni

Buddha talks about how there is the Amida Buddha, Śākyamuni explains that the quintessential archetype that embodies the highest goal of Buddhism is Amida Buddha. Why is Amida the most supreme of all Buddhas?

It is because Amida Buddha has established a path to spiritual liberation for all sentient beings, even the ones who have no hope of attaining enlightenment for themselves. And the way to be born in

SEE PAGE 6

Sagarifuji Wreaths Available



A limited number of silk-wisteria flower wreaths created for Triple Celebration by members of Mō'ili'ili Hongwanji are now available.

They cost \$5 each plus postage.

Approximately seven inches in diameter, the two-tone lavender wreaths may be hung on a wall as a reminder of Amida Buddha's infinite wisdom and compassion.

They replicate the *sagarifuji* logo of the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji organization.

Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii's Bookstore will accept orders at (808) 522-9202 or by email at hqbooks@honpahi.org

HQ to Host Cyber Security Workshop Aimed at Spotting 'Phishing' Emails

CISA advisor Giovanni Williams will discuss the growing number of phony email scams

BY DAVID ATCHESON,
COMMUNICATIONS
COORDINATOR,
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Maybe it's happened to you: You receive an urgent email that appears to be from a trusted person — a minister, for example. There is a "discreet" matter and the minister needs your help. The email asks for your prompt response.

You are about to hit "Reply," but little details make you pause: an unfamiliar email address, uncharacteristic typos. And wasn't there something in the HQ Update about email scams? You delete the email and decide to follow up with the minister by phone.

Congratulations! You just escaped a "phishing" attempt!

Phishing is a word that emerged in the 1990s and is a play on the word "fishing." (The use of "ph" at the beginning of the word is linked to an early hacker scam called "phone phreak-

ing.")

In the example above, the email was the bait and your hunger to be of service nearly made you take it.

If you had, you may have been "reeled in" to unwittingly purchase gift cards for a fraudster or provide details that compromise a bank account.

The pervasiveness of phishing emails is staggering. It's estimated that 1.2% of all email traffic is phishing, amounting to billions of messages a day worldwide.

Your email service may be blocking many of them, but some will inevitably get through. Recurring reports from members about emails like the one described above confirm this.

There are practical steps we can take to guard against phishing emails and other cybersecurity threats, and among the first is by educating ourselves.

That's where a workshop on Saturday, May 10, from 10:30 a.m. to noon comes in.



Headquarters will host an introductory session, both in person at the Hawaii Betsuin Annex as well as on Zoom, with presenter Giovanni D. Williams, a Cybersecurity Advisor with the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

The emphasis will be on phishing and geared toward a general audience, but additional cybersecurity topics will be introduced.

There will be ample time for Q&A.

The session will allow members of Honolulu United BWA members meeting from Mō'ili'ili enough time to join the workshop remotely.

Please register (even if you are a "maybe") so you can receive confirmation of workshop details.

Visit honpahi.link/cybersecurity or use the QR code.



Courtesy of Clyde Sugimoto

Dr. Takashi Manago, seated at left, and Mabel Hashisaka, right, greeted guests and fellow honorees at the "Lighting Our Way" banquet. Standing at left, Beverly Yoshioka, Scott Nishimoto, Tiare McClellan, Norman Hashisaka, William Kaneko and Claude Onizuka.

'Lighting Our Way' Honors Community Leaders

Pacific Buddhist Academy's 17th annual "Lighting Our Way" banquet celebrated the outstanding contributions of three community leaders and one remarkable organization.

Honored on Nov. 15 at the Ala Moana Hotel were Mabel Hashisaka, the founder of Kauai Kookie; William Kaneko, civil rights attorney, civic leader and partner in the global law firm Dentons; Dr. Takashi Manago, 100th Infantry/442nd Regimental Combat Team veteran, and Claude Onizuka and the Astronaut Ellison S. Onizuka Memorial.

A key fund-raising event in support of the PBA's peace education curriculum, the event also is an integral part of the learning experience. Students interview each recipient, write program descriptions, then decide on and perform a song appropriate in their recipient's honor.

Senior Alex Michibata, assigned to interview Dr. Manago, said the experience taught him more about World War II and the sacrifices Japanese Americans made at a time when they came under suspicion.

"Being Japanese American too, I learned so much and it was an honor to meet Dr. Manago," Alex said.

Rev. Miyaji

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Amida's Pure Land is explained in the process of the five vows: the 17th, 18th, 11th, 12th and 13th. In the 18th Vow, it states:

"If, when I attain Buddhahood, the sentient beings in the ten quarters who, with sincere and entrusting heart, aspire to be born in my land and say my name even ten times should not be born there, may I not attain the perfect enlightenment. Excluded are those who commit the five gravest offenses and those who slander the right Dharma."

Simply, it says that if there are those who encounter the Nembutsu awaken the entrusting mind and respond to the Buddha by saying the Buddha's name, then they will have a path to spiritual liberation regardless of who they are.

Allow me to give an example that might help to explain this.

Suppose there is a pregnant mother who continually talks to her unborn child and says, "Call me 'Mama.' I am Mama. Mama."

Before the baby is born, the mother is already instinctively talking to the



Courtesy of Alan Kubota

Rev. Takashi and Mrs. Kaori Miyaji during the service portion of Triple Celebration's festivities.

child: "Call me 'Mama.' I am Mama. I am here for you."

Then the baby is born and as the mother holds the child, she continues to say, "Mama, Mama. Call me 'Mama.' I am here for you," and the baby at first hears this and does not understand or respond.

However, over time, the baby comes to associate the word "Mama" with warmth, care and love. Over time, the baby starts to make this connection and thinks if I say "Mama," I know I will be cared for.

It's the same thing with us. The world of absolute truth calls out to us and says, "This is the world of truth that embraces you as you are: Call my name 'Amida.'"

At first, this calling voice

sounds like a bunch of gibberish. "What is this 'Namo Amida Butsu?' " we may think to ourselves.

However, over time, as we continue to listen with open hearts to the Buddha Dharma, we start to realize we are actually being nurtured by the world of absolute truth and the words "Namo Amida Butsu" naturally spills out of our mouths in response.

It is a process of call-and-response that is taking place. We are being called upon by the world of truth whereby we respond by recognizing this world of truth and voice this affirmation.

As I mentioned earlier, Amitabha and Amitayus, the two names of Amida Buddha, are boundless light

and life; boundless wisdom and compassion. In other words, Amida is the embodiment of limitless-ness.

It's the Transcendence of diametrically opposed entities like black and white, up and down, left and right, good and evil, and right and wrong.

In the context of space, the Pure Land is without bounds. In the context of time, Amida Buddha's wisdom has existed since the infinite past and will continue on into the infinite future.

So how does the world of limitless-ness and our world of the limited come into contact? Where does it meet?

It meets when we say "Namo Amida Butsu." Furthermore, this can happen at any time. You can be going for a walk by yourself; or when you see your grandchild take his first steps. It can be at a funeral of a loved one as well.

When you say, "Namo Amida Butsu," right there in that moment, the Buddha emerges. In the utterance of the name, we come into contact with the world of the unlimited.

In addition, the easiest place where that can happen is at the temple.

The temple *hondō* is the portal to the world of the unlimited.

This why the temple is

such a crucial and sacred place.

It is not just some place where one goes to light incense and doze off as the minister is talking about having a bad experience at the DMV.

The temple is a sacred place. It is the juncture of the world of the unlimited and the world of the limited meeting. Of course, this point of contact can happen anywhere, but the temple is set up specifically for that purpose.

It is designated for this rare and wondrous occasion to occur, and the Nembutsu is the key to that connection.

That is why the temple is a sacred place and why we emphasize reciting the name Namo Amida Butsu.

What if we do not allow ourselves the opportunity to hear and receive the Buddha's calling voice? Then we'll continue in this cycle of birth and death. Shinran Shonin encourages us to seek the path and listen to the Buddha Dharma with open hearts.

Coming in June: The conclusion of Rev. Dr. Miyaji's pivotal speech from the indescribable, inexplicable and inconceivable; "When's the next time you are coming home?" and what greater gift can we leave behind?"

A Life of Dedication



Courtesy of Ewa Hongwanji
Rev. Soshin Kie, circa 1960.

Reverend Soshin Kie (1922-2005) and Mrs. Akiko Kishi Kie (1925-2021) served the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii from 1951-1969, at Papaaloa Hongwanji on Hawai'i Island, and at Waipahu, Ewa and Wai'anae Hongwanji on O'ahu.

Rev. Kie actively spread the Nembutsu teachings and engaged with the many affiliated organizations, growing the membership at the temples, while Mrs. Kie worked as *bomori*, or temple office manager, and played the organ, as was the custom in those days.

Rev. Soshin Kie grew up on a farm in Hyogoken, Japan and taught elementary school. The suffering he witnessed and experienced while in the Japanese Navy during World War II led him to become a Buddhist minister.

He graduated from Ryukoku University and married Akiko Kishi, daughter of Rev. Hiroyuki and Tomeko Kishi of Gekkuji Temple in Yamaguchiken, Japan.

Mrs. Kie's parents served at Olaa (Puna) Hongwanji during the prewar years, and after Rev. Hiroyuki Kishi's early death, Mrs. Kishi obtained Tokudo ordination and joined the family in Hawaii.

She arranged flowers for the altar, taught ikebana classes, officiated occasional services and was a vital support to the family when one of Rev. and Mrs. Kie's daughters died in a car accident in Papaaloa at the age of four.

In 1958, Rev. Kie was assigned to Waipahu, Ewa and Wai'anae Hongwanji, and in addition to their temple responsibilities, they both taught at the Japanese Language School.

After 18 years in Hawaii, they decided to move with their family to continue their ministry in Okinawa.

Due to the war, Okinawa suffered an estimated 150,000 civilian deaths and the displacement of tens of thousands of homes and farms requisitioned for military bases.

Through the encouragement and support of Rev. Chiro Yosemori of Kumejima Hongwanji Fukyojo, also the founder of Jikoen Hongwanji, the Kies were able to establish Yomitan Hongwanji and Koza Shinshuji.

Their desire was to have the peaceful gong of the temple bell heard in the community. Rev. and Mrs. Kie lived in Okinawa for 33 years before retiring to Hawaii.

In 1988, a realtor family friend suggested the purchase of a modest Kalihi warehouse to support them in their retirement.

Rev. and Mrs. Kie arranged to bequeath the property to benefit the Jodo Shinshu community in Hawaii. Their intention was to contribute toward the development and education of young Buddhists and Jodo Shinshu ministerial aspirants, and to support the well being of the ministers serving the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii.

Rev. and Mrs. Kie lived simply and frugally, aware of the interdependence of all beings. With the immeasurable support of the Jodo Shinshu community, they were able to dedicate their lives to the Nembutsu.

— Lily Masuda, Ayumi Kie Weissbuch, Emma Kie

Kie

Continued from Page 1

Kyodan, the programs of the Moiliili Hongwanji sangha that they loved, and Pacific Buddhist Academy's mission to nurture its students with Buddhist values, ensures that our organizations will provide more opportunities for people to encounter the Dharma."

In estate planning, the Rev. Soshin and Akiko Kie Gift is what is referred to as a "planned gift" which can take many forms – property, as in the case of the Kie Trust – or gifts of equity, life insurance, personal property, cash and so on.

"After taking care of family, many individuals and families work with estate planners to structure planned gifts to promote the interests and causes dearest to them. Working with their attorney and estate planner, Rev. and Mrs. Kie established the revocable trust that will carry on the work they did when they were alive.

"Buddhism teaches us that all things are impermanent," Mr. Hernandez Morse said, "but through planned giving and legacy gifts such as the one made by Rev. and Mrs. Kie, members of the temple community can ensure the Buddha-Dharma persists in Hawaii.

"At PBA, though conversion to Jodo Shinshu Buddhism is not a goal of the school's mission, the encounter with Buddhist teachings most certainly is. PBA looks to the proud achievement of ministerial training by alumni like Rev.

Blayne Nakasone Sakata and 2018 PBA alumna Kano Hashimoto as examples we hope other PBA graduates will follow.

"The support of bequests such as the one made by Rev. and Mrs. Kie will help the Buddhist mission persevere in the islands. They leave a profound legacy."

The third recipient of the Kie gift is Mō'ili'ili Hongwanji Mission.

"Two of Rev. and Mrs. Kie's daughters and their families are very active at Mō'ili'ili Hongwanji, a testament to how their parents inspired them to put Jodo Shinshu teachings and values into action," Joanne Kealoha, President of Mō'ili'ili Hongwanji, said.

"The Kie sisters envision their parents' gift will carry on the work that their parents dedicated their whole lives—that is, sharing the Dharma with others."

"From the perspective of our organizations," said Kyodan President Dr. Warren Tamamoto, "we feel that the Rev. and Mrs. Kie Gift provides a beautiful template for others to follow who might wish to leave a planned gift.

"Ask yourself, which temple sangha sustained you in this world? How might you perpetuate Buddhism in Hawai'i? Through a specific temple? Through one of our schools, the network of Buddhist pre-schools, Hongwanji Mission School, Pacific Buddhist Academy?"

"Our temple's history weaves deeply through the fabric of our islands, and we want it to continue. Consider making a planned gift."

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.

Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin's Japanese-language Dharma talks are archived on hawaiibetsuin.org/multimedia-category/Japanese-language.

And video messages are on the HHMH YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/@HonpaHongwanjiMissionofHawaii

Looking Back at 2024 and Ahead to Dharma School Educational Programs

BY DEBBIE KUBOTA, CHAIR
COMMISSION ON BUDDHIST
EDUCATION

It was a busy 2024 for educational and statewide offerings under the auspices of the Commission on Buddhist Education:

Dharma-Centered Living 101

D. Trinidad Hunt is an international author and instructor whose character building curriculum for students from kindergarten through high school has received worldwide recognition.

She presented three workshop sessions held at Kona Hongwanji, Hawaii Betsuin and Wailuku Hongwanji with districts throughout the state participating via Zoom.

These sessions focused on the character values of listening, self-awareness, comfort zone, kindness, caring, reflection, respect and self-reflection. Recorded video sessions and handouts are available at <http://honpahi.link/dcl101>.

Trinidad will be presenting one final educational workshop on Oahu, *The Power of Compassion - Rediscovering Your True Value* scheduled on March 8 live at Hawaii Betsuin and via Zoom to other specific sites,



Courtesy of Alan Kubota

At the first of three workshops in Kona, author and trainer D. Trinidad Hunt spoke to Dharma School and Preschool teachers at the Kong Hongwanji.

one per district. (The QR code leads to the registration page.)



The engaging, hands-on session will focus on:

- Clarifying one's purpose: What do you want to achieve by the end of your lifetime?
- Reviewing and refreshing our most important values;
- Developing more

meaningful interactions with others;

- Deepening your experience of the Golden Chain;
- Discovering the Four Pillars that support the Golden Chain,
- And realizing the power of influence and inspiration in your life.

To register, visit <https://forms.gle/87XTYgFnk4NZFi8CA>

Virtual State Dharma School Gathering

We were fortunate to have Trinidad as our guest speaker for our 6th Virtual State Dharma School Gathering on Nov. 17, themed *"Sharing Joy Together: The Golden Chain of Love."*

The granddaughter of Reverends Ernest and Dorothy Hunt, author of *"The Golden Chain of Love,"* Trinidad is a resident of Kona.

She presented in person

at Kona Hongwanji and virtually on Zoom to other districts across the state.

Some 150 participants from across the state took part in the gathering.

First, Dharma School teachers had a session with Trinidad in which she checked-in to see how her character building activities were being applied, then, she presented a Dharma message during the service focusing on listening.

Finally, during the breakout session, she shared the history of her grandparents speaking about their lives with the Hongwanji temples.

Please save the date of Sunday, Oct. 17, 2025, for our 7th Virtual Dharma School Gathering.

The session will open with an hour for Dharma Educators from 8:45 to 9:45 am; followed by a service with Dharma School student emcees and ministers from each district; a breakout session for students by grade level and a guest speaker for the adults, then a wrap-up with students sharing their digital creations from 11:40 a.m. to noon.

More information may be obtained by contacting Debbie Kubota at dekub88@gmail.com

IN BRIEF

A Few Upcoming, Newsworthy Events of General Interest

PBA's Taiko Festival Lives the Spirit of Wabi Sabi

Pacific Buddhist Academy's 19th annual Taiko Festival will return to Moanalua High School Performing Arts Center on March 16 at 4 p.m.

The popular event will feature Hyaku Sen Ki Kai, the school's premier taiko ensemble lead by esteemed taiko instructor Jay Toyofuku.

This year's theme, "Wabi Sabi," will celebrate the beauty of impermanence and imperfection. It promises to offer a moving and inspiring program.

All freshmen at Pacific Buddhist Academy are required to study taiko, which helps to ground students mentally, physically and spiritually.

Throughout the year, PBA students master a repertoire of traditional Japanese, Korean, Hawaiian, Filipino and Okinawan songs and ballads.

The highlight of the program is the school-wide performance of "Soran Bushi," the traditional and physically demanding Japanese fisherman's dance symbolizing strength and unity.

Tickets and sponsorship information are available through the PBA website at pacificbuddhistacademy.org or by calling 808 532-2649.



"Global Awareness of Interdependence Brings Peace," Aiea Hongwanji's winning poster.

Aiea Hongwanji Takes First Place in Poster Contest

Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawai'i's first theme and slogan poster contest has concluded with Aiea Hongwanji's sangha and Dharma school taking first place for its entry, "Global Awareness of Interdependence Brings Peace."

Following HHMH's 2025 theme of "Nurturing Nembutsu: Cultivating Awareness," the winning entry as well as Alan Kubota's second place entry, "Revealing the Truth," will be reproduced into posters and distributed to all temples statewide.

Other winners were Masako Sakata from Na'alehu Hongwanji in third place; David Atcheson of Hawai'i Betsuin in fourth place, and Ms. Sakata's "In Gratitude We Call Out Namō Amida Butsu" in fifth place.

All winners received cash prizes.

Chairing the competition were Reverend Shawn Yagi of Lihue Hongwanji and Debbie Kubota, chair of the Office of Buddhist Education, who said, "Every submission was outstanding" and winners showed "exceptional creativity and connection to the contest theme."

Judging the entries were Bishop Toshiyuki Umitani, Rimban Yuika Hasebe and Yumi Suzuki, HHMH Calendar Committee chair.

All entries may be viewed on the HHMH website.



Courtesy of Emi Hashi

YESS Camp's candlelight bonding exercise will move from the Buddhist Study Center where it was held last year to Camp Erdman on Oahu's North Shore.

YESS Camp Will Return to the Great Outdoors

"Mālama Amida" is the theme of this year's YESS Camp, the annual three-day, two-night event open to participants between 13 and 23 years of age.

Otherwise known as Young Enthusiastic Shinshu Seekers, YESS camp is scheduled April 18-20 at YMCA's Camp Erdman on O'ahu's North Shore.

The event will feature guest speakers, workshops, games and other social activities geared to anyone interested in Jodo Shinshu Buddhism.

Regular \$75 registration is open until March 15 with late registration at \$90 closing on April 8. Campers who invite a friend attending for the first time will receive a 50% discounted registration fee.

Neighbor island participants may also apply for financial reimbursements.

Registration forms and more details are available at yesscamp.com

Questions may be emailed to yesscamp@honpahi.org and updated information is available on Instagram account (@yess_camp).

Expressing Heartfelt Gratitude to the Legacy of Mary Mikahala Foster

A panel of speakers from across the globe including Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawai'i's Bishop Toshiyuki Umitani, spoke on the life, legacy and lasting influence of Mary Elizabeth Mikahala Robinson Foster on Feb. 1, 2025.

Entitled "Recalling Mary Foster: The Hawaiian Royal Who Transformed World Buddhism," the tribute was hosted by the British MahaBodhi Society in Sri Lanka in collaboration with the American Buddhist Study Center in New York and featured both in-person and participants on Zoom.

Numerous facets of Mary Foster's impact were cited including her first meeting with Anagarika Dharmapala in Honolulu, her collaboration with Bishop Yemyo Imamura to design the present Honpa Hongwanji temple, her support of relief efforts after the 1900 Chinatown fire and her friendship with Queen Lili'uokalani.

"Her compassion, humility and dedication enabled the Buddha-Dharma to flourish in Hawaii," Bishop Umitani said.

The event coincided with the publication of the second edition of the late Patricia Lee Masters' "Searching for Mary Foster," available through the HHMH Bookstore.



Mary Elizabeth Mikahala Robinson Foster

NEWS FROM THE SANGHAS

Helping Kupuna, Tapping Into Solar Power, Honoring a 'Hero'

Here's a brief compilation of news and various activities from around Hawaii temples.

Updates of interest may be sent to newsletter@honpahi.org

MAUI

For years, Bodhi Day services at **Wailuku Hongwanji Mission** were held at Kepaniwai Park in Iao Valley's Heritage Gardens.

Sangha members looked forward to the cool breezes, the earthy smells from bamboo and monkeypod trees, seeing the koi pond, tea house and Japanese gardens. Until the rains came and the grassy surfaces became uneven.

Today some seniors find it hard to walk on the lawns carrying their chairs.

Enter the Dharma School students who, in December 2024, took charge and pitched in to make the sangha's return to Iao Valley a reality, starting with helping the kupuna get settled.

Tate Quipotla, June Petro and Kora Beauchamp greeted visitors and handed out programs, Kaden Beauchamp rang the bell with help from Eric Ikeuchi, and Ryan Petro served as emcee.

Later, Dharma School teachers prepared and served coffee, tea and cocoa as well as refreshments after Reverend Shinkai Murakami delivered a Dharma message about Prince Siddhartha's yearning to learn the truth about suffering.

O'AHU

Aiea Hongwanji Mission members expressed their appreciation to Amida Buddha and Shinran Shonin by decorating their expansive front lawn with 86 solar-powered lotus blossoms during the holidays and kept them up weeks after Ho'onko.

Dozens of blossoms were installed throughout the temple grounds as an expression of gratitude, remembrance and appreciation to those family members and friends who have departed to the Pure Land.

The colorful stems appear pink and white in the sunlight, then after sundown, turn blue, pink, green, red, orange, purple and fuchsia while some remain white.

Ten stems were also placed in the hondo as well as along both sides of the Shinran Shonin statue outside near the entrance.



Courtesy of Krystle Beauchamp

Wailuku Hongwanji Dharma School's June Petro, center, bows as she offered incense at Kepaniwai Park. Tate Quipotla, left, and Kora Beauchamp, wait in line after helping seniors at Iao Valley's Heritage Gardens.



Photos Courtesy of Aiea Hongwanji Mission

By day, Aiea Hongwanji's 86 solar-powered lotus blossom stems appear pink and white on the sunlit front lawn. Then at night, they change to blue, red, green, fuchsia and purple, including the ones around Shinran Shonin's statue.

Members and non-members were invited to visit the illuminated display even after hours as they visited other seasonal light displays.

□

To keep **Kahuku Hongwanji Mission's** legacy alive after its doors closed in 2013, a scholarship honoring its 111-year history continues to this day.

Any student attending or is registered to enroll in an accredited college, university or post-high school program in the State of Hawaii is eligible to apply for one of two \$2,000 grants.

The recipient must show an interest in Buddhism and be active in a Hongwanji program either at a Hawaii temple or at the Kyodan level.

When applying, the candidate must have either earned a high school, college or university grade point average of at least 2.5 in the State of Hawaii.

As part of the application process, the candidate is required to submit an essay on "Dharma and My Life."

Deadline for applications is July 31.

For more information, contact HHMH Headquarters at 808 522-9200 or email hqs@honpahi.org

KAUAI

Preschoolers at **Lihue Hongwanji Mission** received a delightful surprise when Sasha Lee, then a high school senior from California, visited them to read her book, "The Hanapēpē Hero."

Now an undergraduate at Cornell University, Sasha wrote a fictionalized tale about her grandfather, Ron Kinoshita, who died in 2017 at the age of 73.

In the story, the protagonist as a young boy, walks across the Hanapēpē area in search of a birthday present for his mother.

Since the tale mentions familiar areas including Salt Pond Beach and Hanapēpē Bridge or the "Swinging Bridge," as well as local foods — butter mochi, mountain apples and Spam musubi — the preschoolers identified with the tale.

The first two orders of "The Hanapēpē Hero" quickly sold out at Talk Story



Courtesy of Roberta Yanagawa

Attending Hanalei Nihonjin Kai Cemetery's dedication ceremonies were Irwin Haraguchi, left, president of Hanalei Nihonjin Kai Cemetery; Rev. Tomo Hojo of West Kauai Hongwanji; Rev. Kohtoku Hirao of Waimea Shingon Mission, and Rev. Shawn Yagi of Lihue Hongwanji Mission.

directed to Hanalei Nihonjin Kai, Attn: Bobby Watari, P.O. Box 38, Hanalei, HI 96714.

HAWAI'I ISLAND

Eighteen senior citizens from **Puna Hongwanji Mission** took part in a special luncheon at Hakalau Jodo Mission at the invitation of the irrepressible Akiko Masuda who coordinated the event through Project Dana.

Kupuna from the Honohina-Papaaloo and Papaikou temples, along with visiting former Hakalau residents, took part in the September 2024 event that started with short videos, exercises and inspirational messages from Sandi Claveria and Hakalau Jodo Mission vice president Mike Stomp.

Chef Clifford and sous chef Keri Furukado from Puna Hongwanji, who regularly plan and create meals for Mrs. Masuda's monthly luncheons, served five-courses for 50 seniors and volunteers at the joint luncheon.

One attendee from Puna Hongwanji said, "Akiko taught us that there is no shame in asking for help when we need it. As we get older and cannot do things that we were able to do before, asking for help is more critical."

□
The 79th annual Tsunami Memorial Service in memory of the 24 people who lost their lives in Laupāhoehoe will be held March 29 in the Large Pavilion at Laupāhoehoe Point in the Beach Park.

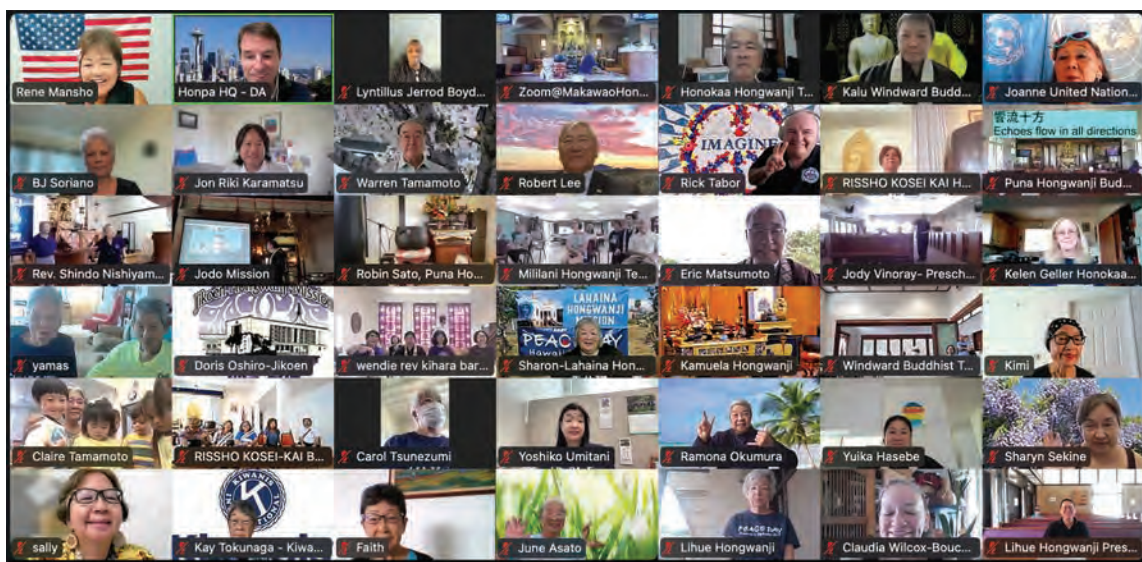
Reverend Blayne Nakasone Sakata of **Honpa Hongwanji Hilo Betsuin** will officiate at the 10 a.m. ceremony which is expected to draw 40 survivors of the 1946 tragedy on the north Hamakua Coast.

Members of the **Honohina-Papaaloo Hongwanji Mission** annually honor the memory of the 16 students, four teachers and the family of four who died as a result of the tsunami, called the most destructive in the state's history.

An 8.6 magnitude earthquake off the Aleutian Islands triggered destructive 50-foot waves which took the lives of 159 people throughout Hawai'i. As a result, the groundwork began for today's present day early warning system.

The memorial at Laupāhoehoe Beach Park was funded by donations from families in Honohina, Ninole, Papaaloo, Laupāhoehoe, Waipunalei and O'okala. It was created by the late Rev. Kakusho Izumi and dedicated on April 4, 1947.

Ring Your Bells for Peace



More than 1,600 people took part in the annual Ring Your Bells for Peace on Sept. 20, 2024 from throughout Hawaii, from Arizona and California to Pennsylvania and Texas.

Ukulele virtuoso Jake Shimabukuro performed and Bishop Toshiyuki Umitani delivered a message for peace. "No matter our differences, we share the same hopes for a more harmonious and compassionate future," he said. "May we continue to build bridges of understanding and spread the message of peace in everything we do."

Bookstore in Hanapēpē where owner Ed Justus has reordered more copies.

It is also available online either from thehanapehero.com website or from Barnes & Noble. All proceeds from sales are donated to Ele'ele Elementary School and Hawai'i Literacy programs.

□
Hanalei Nihonjin Kai finished building its cemetery's memorial wall and dedicated it in January with a service conducted by Reverend Tomo Hojo of **West Kauai Hongwanji Mission**, Reverend Shawn Yagi from **Lihue Hongwanji Mission** and Reverend Kohtoku Hirao from Waimea Shingon Mission.

Also participating was Roberta Yanagawa from **Kapa'a Hongwanji Mission** which Hanalei Nihonjin Kai supports and works closely with throughout the year.

The cemetery was extensively damaged in April of 2018 when landslides covered most of the graves and some headstones were upended and remain unidentified.

To this day, there are 31 markers with names of those with no known relatives. Some are identified only by their last names.

No burials are currently allowed due to the instability of the mountain and the possibility of another landslide.

A stone monument that was chipped and damaged was repaired and is displayed with its inscription, "Showa 3 1928 built July — Namo Amida Butsu" as translated by Rev. Hirao and Rev. Mieko Majima, formerly of Kapa'a Hongwanji.

A Scattering Garden has been created to allow families who wish to release ashes of their loved ones.

General inquiries may be directed either to Karl Miyake at karl.miyake@gmail.com or to Irwin Haraguchi at irwinharaguchi@gmail.com

A donation drive and \$100 membership renewals began in January. Inquiries may be