



Makawao Hongwanji Buddhist Temple

December 2022

P.O. Box 188, Makawao, Maui, HI 96768

Office Phone: (808) 572-7229

E-mail: makawaohongwanji@gmail.com

Website: makawaohongwanji.org

Resident Minister: Rev. Kerry Kiyohara

MAKAWAO HONGWANJI MISSION
P. O. BOX 188
Makawao, HI.—96768

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SUNDAY SERVICES ARE IN-PERSON AND LIVESTREAMED

Sunday, December 4, 2022
NO FAMILY DHARMA SERVICE
REST FROM GARAGE SALE

Sunday, December 18, 9:00 a.m.
FAMILY DHARMA SERVICE

Sunday, December 31, 2022, 4-5 p.m.
JOYA-E NEW YEAR EVE SERVICE

Sunday, December 11, 9:00 a.m.
FIRST SUNDAY FAMILY DHARMA SERVICE
DHARMA SCHOOL
BODHI DAY SERVICE
Guest Speaker: Frank Vales II

Sunday, December 25, 9:00 a.m.
NO FAMILY DHARMA SERVICE

JANUARY 1, 2023, 9:00 a.m.
NEW YEAR DAY SERVICE

We will have a brief service to mark the beginning of another year together on the Buddhist Path, and then enjoy o-zoni soup with mochi!

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Everything Changes But You Can Go “Home” Again

(Originally published on Facebook, November 14, 2022)

Returning to Los Angeles for the 13th Memorial Cycle Service for dad and the 25th cycle for Bachan, our beloved grandmother, causes and conditions created the time, place, and occasion for Los Guys—best friends from high school, college, and “real life” as adults—to gather together for lunch in downtown Los Angeles. It has been at least three years since the three of us were able to hang out.



The Truth of Impermanence: I’m a grandpa, Mike is father of high school daughters, Brad is father of college kids! We don’t party like we used to; we don’t eat Tommy Burgers but choose salads; we compare notes on various aches and pain, surgeries, and meds. I went from advertising guy and ex-pat executive in Asia to Buddhist priest in Hawaii, Brad went from piano prodigy and Julliard to award-winning composer and music producer in Hollywood, and Mike executed his “work to live” strategy perfectly and retired from LAPD Internal Affairs with full pension and benefits to become full-time co-parenting dad of two wonderful young women, and the kind of guy who likes to workout twice a day, and chooses not to drink beer(!) Or champagne.

Got to see mom and our three surviving uncles and aunties on the Kiyohara side, cousins and kids, and had the chance to talk story with my brother and sister and their spouses. Brother still creating software magic, sister is actively enjoying retired life, Disney cruises, and full-on renovation of their home.



And I got to attend Sunday service at Senshin Buddhist Temple,



where Rev Mas Kodani was in fine form, speaking without notes, explaining how to interpret the Mahayana Six Realms of Existence in modern times. As always, Rev Mas was provocative and funny but made you think—even if you’ve heard many iterations of this dharma talk!

As a temple minister, it is a rare and wonderful opportunity to just sit and listen and hear the dharma, seated in the audience, not the inner sanctum of the altar to Amida.

And I was treated to a fine display of the craziness that is the LA freeway system where the posted speed limit is 65 mph but folks are driving 95 mph and passing on the right. Take care while exiting because people will cut in front of you just in front of the exit ramp at 75 mph!

I haven’t “lived” in LA for decades and everything has changed and is changing before my eyes. But somehow, every time I go back, it feels like “home.” Mahalo Dad and Bachan for creating the causes and conditions of this moment of this day of an unrepeatable life!

NamoAmidaButsu!

Continues on Page 3

Postscript (November 23, 2022)

As Buddhists, the end of the calendar year is a time for reflection, meditation, and gratitude for the people, causes, and conditions that made 2022 yet another remarkable year in an unrepeatable life.

In reflection, the reason for observing memorial services at the temple held dear by our father, a temple president, and our grandmother, who lived the Dharma by smiling all the time, becomes obvious: you can go home again, even as the winds of impermanence blow.



Another remarkable wondrous encounter the great teachers in my unrepeatable life: we just completed hosting the Maui Nembutsu Seminar 2022: CHANGE OR DIE with guest speakers Rev. “Retired Bob” and Rev. Patti Oshita live-streaming in from California. Not everyone knows that Rev. Bob is another minister who had a tremendous impact on me as a teenager in the Jr. YBA in the 1970s, and the causes and conditions of my life created the time, place, and opportunity to re-connect with both Rev. Bob and Rev. Patti after decades!

As 2022 comes to a close, let's pause our busy lives for a moment, take three deep breaths, close our eyes, and reflect upon the people, causes, and conditions that led you to this moment, of this day of an unrepeatable life! Then, just say mahalo!

May your new year be filled with aloha, mahalo, and 'ohana! NamuAmidaButsu!

Rev. Kerry

**DECEMBER 31, 2022, SATURDAY, 4-5 P.M.
JOYA-E NEW YEAR EVE SERVICE**

We will have a brief service to mark the end 2022 and the beginning of 2023, ring the temple bells 108 times, and enjoy “toshi-koshi” soba noodles - the traditional Japanese way to observe “passing-over” into the new year.

NAMO AMIDA BUTSU

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



GOODBYE TO 2022

As we near the end of another year, I cannot help but think about some of what Reverend Bob Oshita reminded all of us at the Nembutsu Semnar last weekend. "Life is impermanent and interdependent." Two years ago when I started serving as the President, I would never had thought that Covid would change so many of our lives and literally turn things upside down. Imagine our temple being closed for several months! We could not get together for Sunday services, had to cancel events like the Garage Sale, Obon, clean ups, and many other activities that brought many of us together. I'm sure our hard working BWA women were very anxious to get back to their never ending work throughout the year. J This showed me how impermanent life can be.

When conditions got better, we were able to slowly resume some of our normal activities under some modified conditions. We were once again blessed with being interdependent with most of our members and temple supporters. We've had a very successful and well attended Obon, Summer Garage Sale/Bazaar and just recently, a wonderful 50th/115th Anniversary Celebration of Makawao Hongwanji and our predecessor, Paia Hongwanji. And presently, we are in the middle of prepping for our first Winter Garage Sale in 3 years to be held in a week. This shows again, of how interdependent we are with our members and supporters.

Thank you Reverend Bob Oshita for such a wonderful seminar. You can watch portions, or his complete seminar, at our website. Thank you Reverend Kerry for hosting the seminar online and to Mimy for the delicious lunch and refreshments.

May you all be happy and well!

Clyde

WORLD'S BEST BARGAIN

GARAGE SALE

Makawao Hongwanji Buddhist Temple

Saturday, December 3rd, 2022

7 A.M. - 2 P.M.

**Amazing household items, kitchen ware, antiques, clothing, toys, books,
art works, linens, bags, Japanese dishes and much more!**

VISIT OUR PLANTS & CRAFTS & COUNTRY STORE!

December 2022 & January 2023 Memorial Anniversaries

(Please call Temple Office to schedule your service—572-7229)

1st Year Memorial Service 2021

December - None

1st Year Memorial service 2022

January 26 Leroy Michio Shibuya

January 31 Harriet Harue Owara

3rd Year Memorial Service 2020

December 01 Miyoko Suda

December 06 Kazuyuki Nagano

3rd Year Memorial Service 2021

January - None

7th Year Memorial Service 2016

December 07 Yoshino Ruth Magarifuji

December 28 Ray Kazuo Yamamura

December 28 Yoshimi George Hata

7th Year Memorial Service 2017

January 10 Nadao Makimoto

January 24 Masaya Kametani

January 28 Jason Mitsuaki Kawahara

13th Year Memorial Service 2010

December - None

13th Year Memorial Service 2011

January 10 Chiyono Ito

January 16 Allan M. Iwaishi

17th Year Memorial Service 2006

December - None

17th Year Memorial Service 2007

January 06 Mitsuo Honda

January 10 James Tatsuo Tanaka

January 11 Robert "Heko" Taniguchi

January 15 Sueko Sameshima

January 17 Clara Masae Hamai

January 25 Jean Chikuko Shimahara

25th Year Memorial Service 1998

December 18 Yoshiko Akemoto

25th Year Memorial Service 1999

January 01 Tetsuji Tagawa

January 17 George Kazuto Murashige

33rd Year Memorial Service 1990

December 28 Akeo Nakamura

33rd Year Memorial Service 1991

January - None

50th Year Memorial Service 1973

December - None

50th Year Memorial Service 1974

January 03 Ryunosuke Kanamori

Donations - Makawao Hongwanji Mission can operate only because of the generous donations from many, many people. All donations are humbly received with sincere gratitude and appreciation. IF YOU DO NOT WISH TO HAVE YOUR DONATION PRINTED IN THE NEWSLETTER, OR IF YOU WISH TO HAVE YOUR DONATION LISTED AS ANONYMOUS, PLEASE INDICATE SO BY ATTACHING A NOTE TO YOUR CONTRIBUTION. *Thank You!*

Contributions October 27, 2022 to November 26, 2022

DONATION:

Christine Kubo
Annette Tashiro
Joann Yosemite
Minnie and Glenn Yoshimori
William and Maureen Marrs
Burton Onikama
Ira Tagawa
In memory of Shigeru and Kiyoko Okuno – Richard and Carole Taniguchi
In memory of Mike Suda – Merle and Lorna Beghtel
In memory of Janice Shiraki and Janice Watanabe – Kenneth Ichikawa
In memory of Nakamura and Tengan families – Janet Nakamura
In memory of Seiso and Tsugie Otani – Janet Otani, Caroline Otani, & Claire Morikawa
In memory of Fujiko and Otozo Nishida – Dr. Michael Nishida and family
Halloween donation – Glenn and Katherine Hamai
Ministerial Training Fund – Jean Heselden
Social Concerns – Jean Heselden, Clyde and Gail Hamai
Facilities donation – Michael Nakagawa
Nembutsu Seminar – Joanne and Peter Kealoha, Rev. and Patti Oshita,
Shirley and Ronald Yanagisawa
Eitaikyo donation – Yvonne and Toshio Kishi

115th and 50th ANNIVERSARY DONATION:

Jeannette Tengan
Annette Iwaishi
Allan and Janie Karimoto
Gail Matsuura
George and Alice Fukushima
Hiroko Noda
Charlotte Wilkinson
June Ogawa
Leslie and Alice Yamanaka
Donald and Rie Taketa



NOKOTSUDO:

Kelvin and Lynn Nakamura
Timothy and Joyce Guillermo
In memory of Yoshio and Grace Kijima – Mark Kijima
In memory of Roy and Violet Onikama – Ione Faye Isobe

OFUSE:

100th day service for Harumi Ushijima – Alton and Susan Watanabe

NEWSLETTER:

Catherine and Masami Hironaka
Toshio and Yvonne Kishi

THANK YOU FOR RECYCLING: \$75.90

MHBT ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Annual Membership Meeting will be held on Sunday January 29, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. Those sustaining members present at the Annual Membership Meeting shall constitute a quorum.

The minimum agenda for this meeting will include:

1. A written report presented by the President concerning the work of the Temple and its related activities during the preceding year.
2. Approval of the actions of the Council and its activities of the preceding year.
3. A written budget for the upcoming year presented by the Treasurer and/or the Director of Finance Committee.
4. Approval of budget.
5. Notice that a full financial report is available to any sustaining member upon request.

MHBT JUDO CLUB

By: Claude Moreau

On Saturday, 11/5/22, our judo club competed in a dual meet with Wailuku Hongwanji judo club. This was our first tournament since before the pandemic started. Our club was shut down for about two years. The same for most other clubs. We are rebuilding, and now have around twenty members. Most are essentially beginners.

The following members placed in the tournament: Benji Higuchi, Toby Borja, Jay Campos, Peter Fusato, Keola Ho, and Eliana Campos all placed first. Evan Johnson, Aalii Nakahashi, Sterling Doowright, Hollis Atkinson, and Aldon Johnson all placed second. Congratulations to all. After the tournament, we enjoyed a pot luck lunch, where all the judo families shared their aloha



Toby starting a match.



Toby and Evan with medals.



Good Job!

MESSAGES FROM 115TH/50TH ANNIVERSARY - LOOK TO THE PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

By: Marilyn Morikawa

THANK YOU, to everybody who participated in our memorable anniversary. It was wonderful to see all the happy faces. We are inspired to “LIVE THE DHARMA” and “CONTINUE OUR LEGACY”.

EMBRACE OUR LEGACY AND CARRY ON Bishop Eric Matsumoto

It is most heartwarming that you are honoring those of the past, in particular Paia Hongwanji, but not forgetting Hamakuapoko, Hana, Kula, and Pauwela, too, whose legacy is directly connected to your present. At the same time, I would like to commend you the current Sangha members for carrying forward your legacy for the past 50 years as Makawao Hongwanji.

CONNECTIONS WITH NAMO AMIDA BUTSU Warren Tanimoto, Honpa Hongwanji President

Finally, a simple but powerful reminder of our connections. The Nembutsu of those who founded our temples a century ago is the same Nembutsu that comes from our lips. In this way, we are connected across time and distance. So, as we thank our founders, we also thank ourselves for carrying on their work. There is no separation between generations because Amida’s calling voice, *Namo Amida Butsu*, is the same. In *Namo Amida Butsu*, everything is here, now, real and true. On this 50th/115th anniversary, let us remember the past and prepare for the future. But most of all, let us embrace this precious moment with *Namo Amida Butsu*

WITHOUT PEOPLE, A TEMPLE IS SIMPLY A BOX Rev. Kerry Kiyohara, Resident Minister

When we reflect upon the rich history of the Makawao Hongwanji and the generations that preceded us, we are bought to realize that without people – the sangha community of communities that spring up around the temple – a temple is simply a box.....
Having gratefully received this remarkable gift, we now must assume responsibility for ensuring the Makawao Hongwanji Temple and sangha community of communities continue to evolve, to adapt, and to thrive by welcoming all people – just as they are – to the Buddhist path of Wisdom and Compassion.

THE RESILIENCY OF OUR SANGHA Clyde Hamai, Council President

I would also like to also say thank you to all our sangha members and friends for your continued dedication and support of Makawao Hongwanji. You are the reason why we have been able to survive and even thrive during the last two years of Pandemic challenges.....
By working together and being creative, we came up with several successful Drive-Through Bento fund raisers, Shinenkai celebrations, and with zoom technology, continued to share lessons and the activities of the Temple. Thus, you have shown the resiliency of our Sangha. 50 years from now, our grandchildren and friends may not believe what we endured

WE WILL BE FOREVER GRATEFUL Carol Yamamura, BWA President

I can vividly remember attending the final church service at Paia Hongwanji and the first church service at Makawao. It seems like it was only yesterday.

Thanks to the previous members of the church, we can sit comfortably at our services today, enjoying the teachings and surroundings. Together with our BWA members, I place my hands together in gassho and will be forever grateful.

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ONE PERSON CANNOT DO IT ALONE

Jo-Ann Yosemite, Reflections of Paia and Makawao

My parent Rev. Chikai and Chihoko Yosemite were very young when they arrived at Paia. Nurtured by the people of Paia and Makawao with kindness, patience and generosity, this was their foundation of strength and love throughout their lives. They were able to change, adapt, and move through challenges and opportunities.

Wasureruna - don't forget all those who got us here, the hardships and sacrifices that were made.

Uketsuge - inherit, receive, and cherish what is given to us

Tsutaero – to convey, don't be afraid to pass it on to the next generation, let's let the future happen.

THE BODHI TREE WELCOMES ALL

Rev. Toshiyuki, Yoshiko, and Riho Umitani

We are very happy to spend precious time with all of you, sharing the joy of the Dharma. We have many good memories of Makawao Hongwanji. We are moved seeing the Bodhi tree grow so nicely. The Bodhi tree welcomes all beings to the joy of awakening, regardless of ethnic, culture or religious background, with joy, gratitude and inspiration.

FROM A SANGHA MEMBER: Congratulations on your recent anniversary celebration. A job well done by all. Thank you for dedicating the event to Mr. Yoshio Kijima. And it was _____ (no word can describe) to hear the names of the keirokai recipients. THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

Excerpts from Robert Yoshioka speech at Anniversary Celebration ...

I remember...

Lester Hamai was the President of our Kyodan and Rev. Yosemite the Resident Minister. I was 34 years old and our two girls were attending Sunday services with Eric and JoAnn Yosemite and our third daughter was born.

Das, Hitoshi, Norman, Allan, Sus, Hiroshi and I were called the "Hoe Gang". We would weed the church grounds. Now, we have Allan, Andy, Rogers, Floyd and Ray as the "Weed Wacking Gang".

Sam's Huli Huli chicken was our big fundraiser. Now, thanks to Ruth, Gail, Karen, Diane, Carol, Sharon, Bobbi, Jean, the Higuchi's, Marilyn, Alison and others, we have the Bazaar, Garage Sales, and O-Bon fundraisers.

For years, I've been trying to have someone build our yagura on wheels. One day, I mentioned this to Paul and it was done!

I remember our Chanting Group... Andy, Betty, Iwa, Bobbi, Christie, Galen, Pam, David, Glen, Nalani, Hedy, Gail, Clifford was our leader.

The Keirokai ladies your see here today are the ones who gave their time energy in cleaning and polishing the alter, as well as hours in our church kitchen.

Lastly, Janie and Allan Karimoto did everything! They did pickled peaches, sambaizuke, farming, mowing, chicken hekka, Pawela Cemetery, Senor Program, Project Dana, as well as long office hours.

MHBT Participates in 2022 Maui Senior Fair: We had three tables of goodies such as Sanbaizuke, manju, persimmons, pickled peaches, bento, crafts, etc. The event was the first in-person since 2019, visited by a crowd of about 1,500 people. Big success!



SENIOR PROGRAM

By: Alison Nakagawa

Are you getting ready for the holidays? The Seniors at Makawao Hongwanji took the first step at our November meeting. We made an ornament to share with our preschool friends. As you can imagine, we all had a blast trying to make this ornament. We had to choose a ribbon and then choose which color beads and then choose which type of beads we wanted to use. Then we had to figure out how to end it with a hidden knot and a loop to hang the ornament from the tree. Oh, my! too many things for senior minds to think about. But we did it! Everyone was happy with their handiwork. Some of the seniors even took ribbons and beads home to make an ornament for their tree.

Of course, we were able to catch up with each other and then we had to end the day with a delicious lunch. Lots of busy hands, thinking brains, laughter, talking story and a full tummy make happy seniors.

Please join us in January on the second Thursday (January 12, 2023). Yes, we are skipping December. See you in January.



BWA NEWS

The 67th Maui United Buddhist Women's Association *Fall General Membership Assembly, 2022*, was held at Kahului Hongwanji Mission on November 12. The opening Aspiration was given by Reverend Shinkai Murakami of Wailuku Hongwanji with Reverend Ai Hironaka of Lahaina Hongwanji assisting in the memorial service. President Charlotte Wilkinson presided over the General Assembly meeting. New officers for 2023 sworn into office were:

President, Sharon Higa, (Wailuku)
Past President, Charlotte Wilkinson, (Kahului)
1st VP, Sharon Nohara (Lahaina)
2nd Vp, Diane Kosaka (Makawao)
3rd VP Catherine Nohara (Lanai)
Secretary, Tamara Manley (Wailuku)
Treasurer, Sandy Hirata (Wailuku)
Assistant Treasurer, Colleen Suyama (Kahului)
Auditor, Aileen Cockett (Lahaina)
Auditor, Bobbi Nakagawa (Makawao)
Director, Kallie Keith-Agaran (Kahului)
Director, Carol Inaba (Lahaina)
Director, Carol Yamamura (Makawao)
Director, Sally Takahama (Lanai)

Following the General Membership Meeting, attendees enjoyed a delicious catered bento lunch and a wonderful workshop on growing succulent plants by Gail Asato. Everyone had a great time learning about succulents, how to repot, and care for them. We were taught that all succulents need L.A.W.N...which stands for Light, Air, Water, and Nutrients.

The purpose of the BWA Federation is as follows: 1) To perpetuate and expand Jodo Shinshu (Pure Land Sect) in the State of Hawaii; 2) To promote development of Buddhist women's organizations; 3) to notify and cooperate with all United Honpa Hongwanji Buddhist Women's Associations in the state of Hawaii; and, 4) to participate in the promotion of Buddhism throughout the world and to work for world peace. Anyone interested in joining the BWA may contact Makawao Hongwanji Office for further information (808) 572-7229.



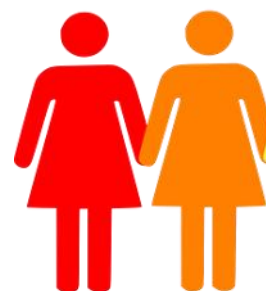
Makawao Hongwanji attendees: Front row L to R - Pam, Jean, Diane, Sharon, Gail. Back row L to R - Joanne, Alison, Mieko, Pearl, Marilyn.



Installation of officers for MUBWA 2023.



Gale Asato conducted workshop on succulent planting.



TRUNK OR TREAT AT MAKAWAO HONGWANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE



Dharma School kids, friends and families enjoyed Trunk or Treating in the temple lawn. This was followed by spookie movie viewing with hot dogs and pop corn in the Social Hall. BOOOOO... what fun!

CUB SCOUT ACTIVITES



Pinewood Derby



Hiking



Safety

PACK 18 - Our scouts represented well at this year's Camp Maluhia Spook-o-ree. Lots of crafts, costumes and camping fun for all!



MAKAWAO HONGWANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE

Council Minutes Highlights

Sunday, November 27, 2022

1. Treasurer's Report: Report submitted.
2. Garage Sale:
 - Co-Chairpersons Karen Ishizu and Gail Hamai reported that there are less inventory than July.
 - Marilyn Morikawa will oversee items in the Breezeway. Donations of home baked goods should be delivered by Friday afternoon 12/2/2022.
3. Wrap-up for 50th/115th Anniversary:
 - Jean Heselden posted photos in a blog entry on the temple's website
 - Diane Kosaka submitted financial report.
4. Maui Nembutsu Seminar Wrap-up: Rev. Bob Oshita and Rev. Patti Oshita conducted "Change or Die" seminar via Zoom, a big success. Over 70 registered for Zoom.
5. Ballot for 2023 Officers and Directors: Ballot published in the newsletter did not need to include Floyd Nagoshi the Immediate Past President who serves automatically, Sharon Higuchi should not have been listed as Co-Director of the Funeral/Columbarium Committee, and Advisor John Yannell's last name spelling needs correction.
6. Legislative Assembly (Giseikai) February 10-11, 2023: The meeting will be held in-person at HQ in Honolulu and via Zoom. Voting delegates will be Carol Yamamura via Zoom and Jean Heselden in person. We may have unlimited number of observers and advisors. Sharon Higuchi, Gail Hamai, and Clyde Hamai will attend via Zoom.
7. AED Training on Thursday 12/15/2022 at 9 a.m.: Clyde Hamai arranged for the training session at temple Social Hall for those interested. No sign up needed.
8. Budget for 2023 approved.
9. Annual Membership Meeting on January 29, 2023: Council approved meeting to be held January 29, 2023. Installation of officers and directors will be held at the Sunday Service that day.
10. Buddhist Education: Sharon Nagoshi and Rev. Kerry reported that the statewide Dharma School gathering will be held via Zoom on February 19, 2023 at 9:00 a.m.
11. Activities:
 - Council approved cancellation of mochi-tsuki this year
 - General Clean Up for December was cancelled
 - New Year's Drive Through Celebration was approved by Council. More information to come.
12. Membership: Report submitted. Diane Kosaka reported that Maui might be reduced to 3 members for the statewide Board of Directors in 2023, instead of 4.
13. Funeral/Columbarium: Report submitted.
14. Properties: Gail Hamai reported that all 4 leases were renewed.
15. Maui District Hongwanji Council:
 - Fujimatsuri will be held 5/28/2023, organized by Lahaina Hongwanji.
 - Bon Dance 2023 schedule shows Makawao Hongwanji on Friday and Saturday July 21-22, 2023. The deadline to decide whether we will celebrate Obon on two nights or only one is in May.
16. Preschool: Kalua Pork fundraiser prepared by Pukalani Superette at \$11, with pick up at the store on Monday through Wednesday, January 9-11, 2023.

(Full text of Council Meeting and reports can be obtained from the Temple Office.)

HEADQUARTERS UPDATE

1727 Pali Highway, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Phone: (808) 522-9200 Fax: (808) 522-9209
Web: www.hongwanjihawaii.com Email: hqs@honpahi.org

BISHOP'S CORNER

November 2022

Season of appreciation and gratitude!

Bishop Eric Matsumoto



As we approach the Holiday Season including the Thanksgiving Holiday, and also in the Eitai-ai-kyo Season with Bodhi Day upon us, one word that comes immediately to mind is gratitude. Due to Sakyamuni Buddha and the commitment and dedication of past Sangha members, we gratefully have our temples where we are able to receive the Dharma especially hear the Compassionate call of Amida Buddha who promises “*Vowing not to attain Buddhahood “if they are not born.”* Amida Buddha is saying that unless, you and I, are not born in the Pure Land, then, I (Amida Buddha) have not attained perfect enlightenment. “Wow!”

Recently, I attended the 61st Nuuanu Valley Interfaith Thanksgiving Service, the longest running interfaith service in Hawaii, held every year prior to Thanksgiving to express gratitude and each year a worthy community organization or entity which benefits the community is highlighted with donations collected given to it. As I sat there I remembered the teaching that encourages us “*some of it (our earnings) must be shared with others, some of it must be saved for an emergency, some of it must be set aside for the needs of the community, and some of it must be devoted to the needs of religious teachers.*”

Reflecting, again, the next day, a verse from one of Shinran Shonin’s poems came to mind “*Casting off the pain of birth-and-death since the beginningless past, We are certain of attaining supreme nirvana. This is through Amida’s directing of virtue for going forth and returning; Our gratitude for the Buddha’s benevolence is truly hard to fulfill.*” In our Jodo Shinshu Teachings, the credit goes to Amida Buddha for our being able to go to the Pure Land and also (after having attained enlightenment) our return from the Pure Land to help others also realize the same joy, peace and happiness. Amida Buddha is the reason for our “going” to and our “returning” from the Pure Land of Enlightenment. Such is Amida Buddha’s Great Compassion which will not stop until, one and all, are like Amida Buddha, completely enlightened to the point that Amida Buddha promises (as noted earlier) “*Vowing not to attain (perfect) Buddhahood if they (people) are not born (in the Pure Land).*” Truly as Shinran Shonin said, “*Our gratitude for the Buddha’s benevolence is truly hard to fulfill.*”

Yes, indeed, how immense is Amida Buddha’s compassion and how grateful I am for it! However, when one deeply reflects one comes to understand that the overwhelming gratitude I experience is not from me, but arises because of Amida Buddha. It is Amida Buddha’s pure, sincere and compassionate actions which makes gratitude arise in me. In this sense, it is not “my” gratitude and I find myself responding to that gratitude by living a life of Nembutsu imbued with gratitude.

We have so much to be grateful for including our temples. In the midst of this season of thanksgiving and gratitude, let us remember the expression “Knowing gratitude, Respond in gratitude.” Let us be guided by the (Buddhist) teaching of “*The wise show appreciation not only to the person(s) who helped (them) by returning some act of kindness, but to all those around them.*” Namo Amida Butsu.

December 2022

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|---|--|-----|-----------------------------|------------------------------|-----|--|
| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| | | | | 6:00 pm ~ 8:45 pm Judo | | 7:00 am ~ 2:00 pm Garage Sale |
| 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| No Family Service | 6:00 pm ~ 8:45 pm Judo | | 10:00 am Monthly Service | 6:00 pm ~ 8:45 pm Judo | | |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 9:00 am First Sunday Dharma Family Service & Children's Dharma School | 6:00 pm ~ 8:45 pm Judo | | | 6:00 pm ~ 8:45 pm Judo | | |
| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 9:00 am Family Service | 6:00 pm ~ 8:45 pm Judo | | | 6:00 pm ~ 8:45 pm Judo | | |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |
| No Family Service | Office Closed *Christmas Day Observed | | | 6:00 pm ~ 8:45 pm Judo | | 4:00 pm New Year Eve Service |

