



# Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii

## HEADQUARTERS UPDATE

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### BISHOP'S CORNER

**"As we say good-bye to 2021, let's..."**

Bishop Eric Matsumoto



As 2021 draws to a close, I want to express my gratitude and appreciation to each and every one including our Hawaii Kyodan State President Dr. Warren Tamamoto, for your responding in gratitude to Amida Buddha in the form of your perseverance and continued moral and financial support of especially your local temple, but also our state-wide organization of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, its affiliate organizations, and various projects and programs. It has not been without struggles, but we have survived another year of this Pandemic not only for ourselves, but including trying to help others too. Thus, once again, I say "Thank you to you, the Sangha, for responding in gratitude to the Buddha and being guided by the Dharma."

The Jodo Shinshu or Nembutsu way of life, as being emphasized by His Eminence Kojun Ohtani, is very important and significant for us. As shared previously, in April of this year, Gomonshu Kojun Ohtani shared in a Message,

*Jodo Shinshu is the teaching that we will attain enlightenment beyond form and become buddhas in the "Pure Land of naturalness" through shinjin alone. In shinjin we accept without doubt the heart of Amida Tathagata's Vow of "Namo Amida Butsu" – "Entrust yourself to me. I will liberate you just as you are."*

*When we are touched by this warm compassion and learn of Amida Tathagata's wish for our life, we are empowered to live at ease, share joy and sadness with people, and a world of mutual respect and support opens up. With ease and joy, Shinran Shonin walked the path of gratitude for being saved by Tathagata's compassion. Aspiring to learn from his way of living and transmit his teaching to the next generations, I would like to express the essentials of the Jodo Shinshu Teaching in the following passage.*

## Gratitude for the Jodo Shinshu Teaching

Namo Amida Butsu.

“Entrust yourself to me. I will liberate you just as you are.” This is the calling voice of Amida.

My blind passions are embraced in the Buddha’s awakening, So the Buddha calls to me “I will liberate you just as you are.”

Gratefully responding to the Buddha’s call,

I find that I am already on the path that leads to the Pure Land.

And the Nembutsu flows freely from my thankful heart.

Living with the Dharma as my guide

Softens my rigid heart and mind.

Gratitude for the gift of life I have received

Frees me from becoming lost in greed and anger,

And allows me to share a warm smile and speak gentle words.

Sharing in the joy and sadness of others,

I shall strive to live each day to its fullest.

*In 2023, we are going to conduct a Joint Celebration of the 850th Anniversary of Shinran Shonin’s Birth and 800th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Jodo Shinshu Teaching. In gratefulness for the birth of Shinran Shonin and his expounding of the teachings of Jodo Shinshu, let’s recite “Gratitude for the Jodo Shinshu Teaching” together, work together, and live a life of Nembutsu together to spread his teaching.”*

Today, I want to conclude by especially having us take note of His Eminence’s words **“live a life of Nembutsu together to spread his (Shinran Shonin’s) teachings.”** We, the Hongwanji Sangha, each and every one of us, have a part to play in sharing Amida Buddha’s Wisdom and Compassion. Thus, as we come to the end of 2021, let us take a moment to reflect on this and in the New Year, also, rededicate ourselves to our Hawaii Kyodan Mission Statement *“to share the living teachings of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism, so all beings may enjoy lives of harmony, peace and gratitude.”* Thank you and Namu Amida Butsu.

## **CONDOLENCE**

**Rev. Yoshiko Shimabukuro**, a retired minister of Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, passed away on July 20, 2021, at the age of 109. A private family service was held on December 18, 2021 at the West Kauai Hongwanji Mission Hanapepe Temple. The Ingo (Posthumous Title) of 淨香院 (Jou-Kou-In) which means "Imbued with Pure Fragrance" has been conferred upon Rev. Yoshiko Shimabukuro by the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha Denomination in grateful recognition of her exemplary achievements and accomplishments.

## MINISTERIAL ASSIGNMENTS

**Reverend Toyokazu Hagio**, currently serving as the Rimban (Chief Minister) of Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin, will retire from the active ministry of Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii as of December 31, 2021. Rev. Hagio became a Kaikyoshi minister in May, 1981 and has served at Waialua Hongwanji (also, in charge of former Kahuku Hongwanji), Honomu Hongwanji (also in charge of Papaaloo and Honohina Hongwanji), Wailuku Hongwanji (also in charge of Lanai Hongwanji), Waipahu Hongwanji (also in charge of Waianae and Ewa Hongwanji), Honpa Hongwanji Hilo Betsuin (as Rimban), Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin (as Fuku Rimban) before assuming the Rimban of Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin.

Rev. Hagio served Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii for almost 38 years. Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii would like to express our deepest appreciation and gratitude to Rev. Toyokazu Hagio for his dedication and effort of spreading the Buddha-Dharma to our members and community. Thank you Rev. Hagio and congratulations on your retirement.

## ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING A MINISTER

**Rev. Jeffrey Soga** has been selected as a Police Chaplain, volunteer position in the Honolulu Police Department from December 2021.

## CONSOLIDATION

Papa'aloa Hongwanji Mission will consolidate with Honohina Hongwanji Mission from March 2022. They will be having its final service as "Celebrating 118 years Papa'aloa Hongwanji Mahalo Service" on Wednesday, January 19, 2022.

## PEARL HARBOR ANNUAL MEMORIAL CEREMONY

On December 9, 2021, Bishop Matsumoto and other Hawaii Buddhist Council Bishops and ministers attended the Annual Memorial Ceremony conducted by the Consulate General of Japan and the US Navy Region Hawaii on Ford Island to commemorate those from both Nations who lost their lives in the attack of Pearl Harbor 80 years ago.

The Consul General of Japan in Honolulu Mr. Yutaka Aoki and Commander Navy Region Hawaii Rear Admiral Timothy J. Kott gave remarks and the Keynote Speaker was Ms. Elissa Lines, Executive Director of the Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum.



## THE INTERFAITH ALLIANCE HAWAII AWARD

The Interfaith Alliance Hawaii (TIAH) had the 2020 and 2021 Community Award Virtual Celebration on December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The Kapa'a Interfaith Association was presented with the "Challenging Religious or Political Extremism Award." This award seeks to recognize a Hawai'i based organization or institution that – through its witness and actions – has effectively challenged religious or political extremism in Hawai'i in the past year. The Kapa'a Hongwanji Mission and the Kauai District Hongwanji ministers are part of the Kapa'a Interfaith Association.

Rev. Blayne Higa of Kona Hongwanji Mission also received "Flame of Hope Award." This award seeks to recognize a Hawai'i resident, who through his or her witness and actions has ignited or fanned a flame of hope in Hawai'i. Congratulations!

You may see the recorded celebration below,

<http://www.interfaithalliancehawaii.org/community-awards/>

## JOINT CELEBRATION

HQ sent the email invitation for "the Joint Celebration and the 17th World Buddhist Women's Convention in 2023" to all temples on November 24, 2021. Joint Celebration means the 850th Anniversary of Shinran Shonin's Birth and the 800th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Jodo Shinshu Teaching. Hongwanji members in Japan and all over the world will celebrate it together in 2023 in Kyoto.

Each member and participant needs to submit the Preliminary Application Form to Linda Nagai at [hibelle@hawaii.rr.com](mailto:hibelle@hawaii.rr.com) by December 31, 2021. If you didn't receive the information yet, please contact your temple.



## PACIFIC BUDDHIST ACADEMY

Pacific Buddhist Academy (PBA) fulfilled the requirement for the \$1.5 million capital campaign gift from the Weinberg Foundation by establishing a PBA Weinberg Building Endowment of no less than \$500,000 in July. PBA notified the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation of its conformance with the May 22, 2014 Gift Agreement by mail on October 11, 2021. Officers of the Weinberg Foundation affirmed receipt of the letter on October 20, 2021. PBA hopes to give a tour of the PBA Weinberg Building once the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic permit.

## HAWAII KYODAN HOLIDAY

At the Board of Directors meeting on December 4, 2021, the Board decided to add Juneteenth Day as Hawaii Kyodan Holiday. In 2022, Juneteenth Day will be observed on June 20<sup>th</sup>.

Juneteenth, official name of federal holiday is Juneteenth National Independence Day, is also called Emancipation Day, Freedom Day, Jubilee Day, Black Independence Day, and Juneteenth Independence Day, is a holiday commemorating the end of slavery in the United States, observed annually on June 19.

## HEADQUARTERS OFFICE

The HQ will re-open the Pali HQ office from January 4, 2022. However, due to recent rise in cases, it might be reconsidered. Due to covering the BSC , some HQ staff will continue to work from BSC at times. If you need to personally see a staff member, please make an appointment with them in advance.