

# LAST MONTH'S EVENTS



Lahaina Jodo Mission on Obon night, July 2<sup>nd</sup>

Lahaina Hongwanji members helped with food preparation and sales, as well as participating in the dancing.



Paia's Mantokuji Soto Temple on Obon night, July 9<sup>th</sup>

It was cool and slightly drizzly on the night that a few Lahaina folks attended this Obon.

## RUMMAGE SALE



LAHAINA HONGWANJI RUMMAGE, etc. DAY, July 16<sup>th</sup>

'Herbie' Nishijima, Tony Griffith, Neal Fujiwara, 'Noosh' Nishihara do the chicken huli.



Yukie Takayama, Fumie Shinyama, Jane Agawa, Yumiko Nishimoto and Asaye Aotake labor on spam musubi.



Megumi Hironaka with rummage browsers.



Earl Zaan teaches Adina about the how-tos of kimono wearing.

ARIGATO to all who made donations of goods & funds, who helped out with set-up, food prep, food sales, clean-up.

## More of July's Events



Doing the 'towel dance' at Kahului Hongwanji, July 16<sup>th</sup>.



And enjoying the 'fan dance' at Makawao Hongwanji, July 22<sup>nd</sup>.

## Airport Send-off for Maui's Exchange Students Bound for Japan

The student exchange program is sponsored by state-level Buddhist Women's Association. Read about it on the "News From Related Links" page in this newsletter



Emi Hashi of Haiku and Michelle Soga of Kahului.



Lahaina BWA members Emiko Fujikawa, Carol Inaba, & Phyllis Nakamura with Michelle, daughter of Rev. Jeffrey & Kumika.



Aloha & Bon Voyage to Emi Hashi.



Kahului Hongwanji group with Michelle Soga. Aloha !

Look who's in the Sunday MAUI NEWS !



Hey-Hey. It was a nice surprise to see Sylvia Neizman's photo in the Maui News. Photo by Amanda Cowan, at Makawao's Obon.

UPCOMING EVENTS



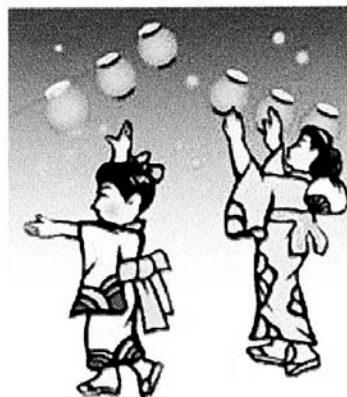
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**DHARMA SCHOOL  
PICNIC  
August 7, 2011  
Kamaole III, Kihei**

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**OBON SET-UP DAY  
SUNDAY, AUGUST 7<sup>TH</sup>  
7:00 a.m.**

*No Sunday service this date.  
Your KOKUA is always  
appreciated !*

**Lahaina Hongwanji Mission's  
OBON 2011**

**FRIDAY, AUGUST 12<sup>TH</sup>**  
6:00 p.m. Service; 7:30 p.m. Dancing  
**SATURDAY, AUGUST 13<sup>TH</sup>**  
6:00 p.m. Service; 7:30 p.m. Dancing  
**SUNDAY, AUGUST 14<sup>TH</sup> -CLEANUP**  
7:00 a.m.

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**LAY CONVENTION**

**"FACING THE FUTURE"**

Host : Maui Co. Hongwanji Temples  
Host Temple: MAKAWAO HONGWANJI  
Keynote Speaker: RAMSEY TAUM  
'Sustainability'  
Friday, 9/9: Golf Tournament  
Saturday, 9/10: Business Meeting; B,L  
Workshops  
Dinner & Program  
Sunday, 9/11: Meeting / Election / B,L

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**Lahaina Hongwanji  
OBON PRACTICE NIGHT**

**Tuesday, AUGUST 9<sup>TH</sup>  
7:00 p.m.**

*familiar, catchy music ...  
great teachers up close & personal ...  
no big crowd, room to dance !  
no feeling of being "observed".*

**Come on down!**

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Attendees from Lahaina Hongwanji: Jane Agawa, Aileen Cockett, Gordon Cockett, Emiko Fujikawa, Carol Inaba, Phyllis Nakamura, Sylvia Neizman, 'Noosh' Nishihara, Kristen Nohara, Sharon Nohara, Tara Otomo, Ron Togashi.



## News From Related Links

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### **Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii** ***Headquarters Update***

#### PERSONNEL:

Rev. Bert Sumikawa, Interim Minister of Moiliili Hongwanji, will be assigned to Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin as its Associate Minister effective 8/1/11. Rev. Sumikawa will also serve as chaplain of Pacific Buddhist Academy and will continue his work with Kapolei Buddhist Sangha.

Rev. Ryoso Toshima, Rimban of Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin, will retire from active ministry effective 12/31/11.

Rev. Tatsuo Muneto, Director of Buddhist Study Center, will be assigned to Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin as it Rimban effective 1/1/12.

Mrs. Toshiko Umitani will be hired as Headquarters Bookstore Clerk effective 8/10/11.

#### PRE-TOKUDO TRAINING PROGRAM STATE LEVEL SESSIONS

Rev. Tatsuo Muneto, Chair of Ministerial Training Committee, will conduct the first State-Level Sessions of Pre-Tokudo Training Program – on JULY 22, 23, 24, 2011, at Buddhist Study Center. These sessions are provided for the three Tokudo candidates who finished their one year local temple orientations. They are: **Kathi Takakuwa** and **Blayne Higa** of Moiliili Hongwanji and **Kaethe Kauffman** of Hawaii Betsuin. **Dexter Mar** of Hawaii Betsuin, who is in the Minister's Lay Assistant Program, will join them for the training. The program's lectures/discussions are on: Religion / Buddhism and Shin Buddhism / Meaning of Tokudo / Who is a Minister / What is Kyodan? / Rituals & Altar Etiquette / Liturgical Practicum. Lecturers: **Bishop Eric Matsumoto**, **Rev. Tatsuo Muneto**, **Rev. Bruce Nakamura**, **Rev. Toshiyuki Umitani**, **Rev. Tomo Hojo**.

**Welcome, Rev. and Mrs. Umitani and Family**  
Hawaii Kyodan and Headquarters personnel welcome Rev. Toshiyuki Umitani, wife Yoshiko and daughters Naho and Riho. After transferring from Makawao

Hongwanji, Rev. Umitani assumed his new position as Executive Assistant to the Bishop on JULY 1, 2011.

#### 2011 BWA EXCHANGE STUDENTS GOING TO JAPAN.

The two students traveling to Japan this year are both from Maui: **Emi Hashi**, daughter of Barbara Doi of Haiku, Maui, will attend UH Manoa this fall as a freshman. **Michelle Soga**, daughter of Rev. Jeffrey and Kumika Soga of Kahului, Maui, will be completing her senior year at Pacific University in Oregon. The students' itinerary includes: orientation for exchange program / visitations to Honzan. and footsteps of Shinran Shonin / Peace Study Session at Honzan / home stay in Kyoto / attendance at Japan Jr. YBA Convention / participation in Shinran Shonin's 750<sup>th</sup> Memorial Service. The young ladies depart from Hawaii on JULY 23<sup>RD</sup>. In addition to the busy itinerary above, Emi will visit a family whom she met in Kobe City while on YBICSE; Michelle will visit grandparents in Saga city and Hiroshima-ken.

**YOUNG ADULTS RETREAT** August 12-15 at Camp Kokokahi YWCA. Former Bishop Thomas Okano will be this year's guest speaker; he will talk about the translations of the sutras, as well as the meaning and relevance to today's world.

**YBICSE TRIP TO JAPAN** 3 students and 2 chaperones departed on JULY 8, 2011 for Japan – to attend the Young Buddhists' International Cultural Study Exchange program at Honzan. They will attend study sessions at Honzan, meet with Gomonshu-sama, and participate in the Homestay Program in Kagawa Prefecture, Shikoku.

**PACIFIC BUDDHIST ACADEMY** 1) Headmaster Pieper Toyama and other PBA leaders have been meeting with foundations and potential funders for over a year – to address issues related to the **PBA Capital Campaign**. The campaign will allow PBA to double enrollment and to operate a self-sustaining educational program. Public announcement of the Capital Campaign will occur on JULY 15, 2011.

*[continuation of Honpa Hongwanji news – Pacific Buddhist Academy]*

2) **PBA Students to Japan** 12 students and 3 teachers of PBA will travel to Japan from AUGUST 4 to 13, 2011. They will participate in Ryukoku Sogo Gakuen Joint Cultural Festival, which will be held at Heian High School in Kyoto. They will also attend the Shinran Shonin 750<sup>th</sup> Memorial Service at Honzan on AUGUST 7<sup>TH</sup>. The students' travel expense from Hawaii to Kyoto is sponsored by Ryukoku Sogo Gakuen.

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**SAGARI-FUJI AND DHARMACHAKRA PENDANTS**

Headquarters Bookstore plans to reorder the Sagari-fuji (wisteria) and Dharmachakra gold pendants. If you are interested in purchasing one, please call the bookstore at (808)522-9210, or send email to: [hqbooks@honpahi.org](mailto:hqbooks@honpahi.org)

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**DISASTER RELIEF EFFORT UPDATE**

1) As of JULY 3, 2011, a total of **\$193,013.38** has been collected for the Hawaii Kyodan Japan disaster fund. 2) As of JUNE 6, 2011, Honzan has received a donation of over 600,000,000 YEN (approximately 7.5 million dollars). From overseas districts, about 1.25 million dollars was sent to Honzan.

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**LIVING TREASURES OF HAWAII**

The Living Treasures Committee is planning for the 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Living Treasures of Hawaii recognition, which will be held on FEBRUARY 4, 2012. Any organization or person may nominate a candidate for this award by submitting an application form with information on the nominee. The CRITERIA for selection are: 1) Demonstrates continuous growth and learning in a particular field of endeavor. 2) Makes significant contributions toward a more humane and fraternal society. 3) Strives toward excellence and high standards of achievement. APPLICATION FORM available from Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii office: Phone: (808)522-9200) or download application from [www.hongwanjihawaii.com](http://www.hongwanjihawaii.com) DEADLINE: August 1, 2011.



**THE NOKOTSUDO PROJECT**

It would not be surprising at all to learn that many of you are as anxious as I am to have the Nokotsudo ready for occupancy. Wow, hasn't it been a long, arduous journey? And, if not a journey, then certainly like an expectant mother wondering when the baby would arrive. Like many babies, the Nokotsudo will be ready when the time comes. And, that time is about a week away. Yes, we will be ready for Obon, scheduled this year on August 12 & 13.

We're hoping that the columbarium can be properly dedicated with a special service on Sunday, July 31<sup>st</sup>. We may slip a few days, and if so, we will hold the service a week later. For those of you wondering about the urns you've been caring for, you may bring the urns back beginning July 31<sup>st</sup>. We will keep them temporarily if the niches are not installed.

The scope of the Nokotsudo Project has been and remains a major undertaking. The project would never have been possible had it not been for the generosity of all our members. Many have made modest but regular donations ever since the old building was first dedicated around 1960. Those donations made it possible for the Kyodan to agree to the new building. Many members also donated larger sums of money, and these donations allowed our Kyodan to agree to paying one-half the cost of the architectural design and construction. We are, of course, grateful for all the donations, large and small. Mr. Hoken Seki's major monetary contribution to the project, perhaps more than any other factor, allowed the Kyodan to begin the project. We are very thankful for his generosity and are mindful of the compassion and dedication of the Seki family: Rev. Hozen Seki, Mrs. Satomi Seki, Mr. Hoken Seki, Mr. Hoshin Seki.

Some people might say that the Nokotsudo is a final resting place for Lahaina Hongwanji members. Others may disagree, saying instead that the final resting place is in the Pure Land. Regardless of the point of view, the Nokotsudo is a place where the family can preserve the memory of their loved ones. "Okagesamade" is a statement of who we are and the importance we place on the past. We are eternally grateful for the hard work and guidance received from all who reside in our Nokotsudo. This is the principle that must be our guide as we bring the new building into use.

--- Richard 'Noosh' Nishihara

## Common Chants and Readings Used in Jodo Shinshu Services

*[Excerpts from Shin Dharma Net website – “Jodo Shinshu: A Brief Introduction” by Rev. Kenryu Tsujii]*

- **AMIDA KYO** This is the Smaller Sukhavati Vyuha Sutra, chanted during most memorial services. *[perhaps done more often in Japan than in Hawaii]* A commonly mistaken notion is that the chanting itself and the service bring benefits for the deceased. Jodo Shinshu entertains no such ideas. The Amida Kyo is chanted because it is a sutra extolling the virtues of Jodo and Amida Buddha.

Those who attend or hold these [memorial] services should gather with the idea to learn about Buddhism and to realize the Infinite Compassion and Wisdom of Amida.

- **SHOSHINGE** Shoshinge, or the Hymn of True Faith, was written by Shinran Shonin. In this hymn, or *wasan*, Shinran praises Amida Buddha as well as the Seven Spiritual Fathers who showed us the way of salvation through Faith in Amida.
- **JUNIRAI** Junirai, or the Twelve Hymns of Worship, were written by the first of the Seven Spiritual Fathers, Nagarjuna. It praised Amida Buddha, His Land and the Bodhisattvas.
- **SANSEIGE (JUSEIGE)** Sanseige or the Three Sacred Vows is from the “Larger Sukhavati Vyuha Sutra”. These vows were made by Amida while he was still a Bodhisattva. They express the deep Compassion of Amida for all men.
- **SANBUTSUGE** Sanbutsuge, or The Praises of the Buddha, are taken from the “Larger Sukhavati Vyuha Sutra”. It is a hymn that was sung by Hozo Bosatsu as he was about to make the 48 vows before the Buddha – Se ji zai o Butsu.
- **PSALMS OF SHINRAN SHONIN** These psalms were written in praise of Amida Buddha, His Ojodo, His Name, Namu Amida Butsu, and urging his fellow beings to place their Faith in Amida.

- **DIALOGUES OF RENNYO** Shonin Rennyō Shonin, the ninth descendant of Shinran Shonin, was a great reformer who is often spoken of as the master who actually organized the Jodo Shinshu Church. These short sayings are on a variety of subjects and are truly good advice for the ordinary layman.
- **EPISTLES** Epistles, or Gobunsho, are letters written by Rennyō Shonin to followers living in outlying districts. These letters were written on various occasions to inspire those who were in despair after losing a loved one, instructions to priests, etc., and always urging every one to place their Faith in Amida and recite the Nembutsu with a grateful heart.

### About the Pure Land Sutras . . .

*[From DharmaNet International website – excerpts from Prof. Taitetsu Unno's RIVER OF FIRE, RIVER OF WATER.]*

“The **Larger Sutra**, also known as the Sutra of Immeasurable Life, contains a discourse given by Shakyamuni Buddha. He tells the story of Dharmakara who makes a series of forty-eight vows to save all beings, ultimately fulfills them, and attains supreme enlightenment to become Amida Buddha, the Buddha of Immeasurable Light and Life.”

“The **Smaller Sutra** is a much shorter scripture that depicts the indescribable beauty of the Pure Land in fantastic imagery, symbolic of the state of supreme enlightenment.”

“The **Sutra on Contemplating Amida** outlines sixteen forms of meditative practice that lead to liberation and freedom.

## Resident Minister Ai Hironaka's Dharma Message: **OBON**

When we study Obon, we find its origins in the Urabon sutra. I will relate to you the story as it is explained in the sutra. However, if we look at this sutra simply on the surface, it could lead to great misinterpretation. Therefore, Shinran Shonin did not consider this sutra as one of the true teachings. This was to avoid misunderstandings. In Jodo Shinshu Buddhism, obon is not given a place of prominence. Therefore, in Hiroshima where there are many enthusiastic Jodo Shinshu followers, they do not hold many bon services. Please look beyond the surface and think deeply about the implications of the sutra as I relate the story of Obon.

Among Sakyamuni Buddha's disciples, Mogallana or Mokuren Shonja had extra special sensory powers beyond what an ordinary person could see. After Mokuren's mother died, he wondered, "Is my kind and gentle mother living a pleasant life in the Pure Land?" Using his special powers, he went to visit his mother. She was nowhere to be found. In desperation, he looked for her in all the different worlds to no avail. Thinking it was not possible, he peeked into the world of suffering. To his dismay, she was in hell.

In order to save his mother, Mogallana offered her food. When she tried to eat it, the food would burst into flames. "How can I save her?" he thought and went to seek advice from Sakyamuni Buddha.

The Buddha responded saying, "The monks and priests are returning from a retreat. Why not offer your hospitality and entertain them with a feast on that day?" As suggested, Mogallana offered a bountiful meal to the large number of monks. Consequently, Mogallana's mother was saved from hell.

The day that the feast was offered to the monks is said to be the origin of Obon. In one of the books, it says that when Mogallana saw that his mother was saved, he danced with joy. Some say this was the reason why we have bon dances.

In Japan there are many people who believe that those who have departed return during Obon season. However, there is nothing written about this in books. Rumors or gossip spread by people can be frightening. Superstitions and curses are a part of rumors or gossip created by human beings.

The part of the sutra I would like to focus on is where the kind, gentle mother fell into hell. She was kind and gentle and yet why did she fall into hell?

The mother's love for her child was so deep that it became the cause of a serious crime or offense. Consider for example, if a tsunami inundated Hilo, many people would be washed out into the ocean. When they become conscious of their surroundings, they notice everyone is struggling to stay afloat in the ocean. Looking around, elderly people, babies, many people are in the water. Included in this group, a mother notices her own child. Frantically she rushes over to save her child. Another child nearby is sinking, ready to be submerged. All around are children in the same predicament. Just then the mother notices a door floating

nearby. On that door there is room for only one person to stay afloat. In order to save her child, the mother goes to retrieve the door and placed her child on it. Relieved, knowing that her child is safe, the mother quietly slips into the water and is never seen again.

Anyone who understands a parent's feelings for her own children would surely empathize and understand the actions and feelings of this mother. The act of love is not one that can be cultivated and is a wonderful selfless behavior. However, if we look at it from this standpoint only, it is not Buddhism. We must look deeper into its meaning. Behind the mother's deep love is the fact that there were many other children and elderly people struggling in the water. From the viewpoint of these people, how did they regard the mother's action? There were other children about to drown. If the door were made available, another person would be saved. Among those drowning may be a mother leaving behind a newborn baby. Among others may be a caretaker of a bedridden parent.

If we were to look only at the mother's love, the majority of people may agree with what the mother did in this story. Many would have done the same thing. At the same time, in the eyes of those floating nearby, the mother's action was an inexcusable, offensive act. For the mother to save her own child she would be willing to do anything no matter how serious the crime may be. Consequently, she would find herself in the world of suffering or hell.

In order to raise a child, whether in small or large measure, it is necessary to make many sacrifices. At the same time such a deep mother's love will permeate the child's heart and nurture him. This is because this love cannot be overcome by the seriousness of the crime committed. However, depending on the situation, this love can be viewed as a serious offense. It is understandable why Shinran Shonin said whatever a human being does, it cannot be 100% honorable or pure in deed.

Shinran Shonin taught us that there is a ship that will save all of us from drowning. This is the ship of Amida Buddha's compassionate vows. It is the ship that he established to save us all as though we were all his children.

During this obon season, there may be many who will visit the cemeteries. Many will think only of their ancestors and visit their graves. Visiting graves of our family and relatives is a very good gesture. However, if your thoughts are only on your ancestors, you are no different from Mogallana's mother. Other religious sects may say that this is fine. However, on this occasion of Obon, in addition to your ancestors, let us express appreciation to all who have gone before us and to all living beings. Most of all, let us recite the Nembutsu in gratitude for Amida's ship that saves us all from drowning and falling into hell. As Jodo Shinshu followers we must not forget that in entrusting ourselves to the Primal Vow, no other form of good is necessary, for there is no good that surpasses the Nembutsu.