



LAST MONTH'S EVENTS

HANAMATSURI Held at Lahaina Jodo Mission

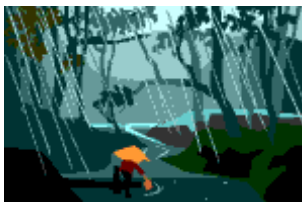


The 2012 Hanamatsuri Service and festivities in West Maui were hosted by and held at the LahainaJodo Mission. Attending the event were members of LahainaJodo Mission, LahainaShingon Mission, and LahainaHongwanji Mission. The event was open to the public as well.

This 'Flower Festival' is held annually at Buddhist temples – to commemorate the birth of Siddhartha Gautama, or Shakyamuni Buddha. - The religious service and ceremony included the pouring of sweet tea over a statue of the baby Buddha – to represent the gentle rain that fell on the day of the Buddha's birth in Lumbini Garden in Nepal – about 2,500 years ago.

The guest speaker of this year's service was the Reverent Kenji Oyama, Resident Minister of PaiaMantokuji Soto Zen Mission.

Following the service, attendees participated in recreational activities and enjoyed fellowship, a luncheon, and entertainment.



ESHINNI-KAKUSHINNI DAY Sponsored by BWA



Mrs. Mitsuyo Saito leads children in pantomiming a song.



Kokoro enjoys reunion with her former sensei.



Denise Fleetham, Sharon Nohara start off the auction of items (proceeds to go to Pacific Buddhist Academy).



"I want that! No, me, me, I want it!"
(continued next page)

Highlights of Eshinni-Kakushinni Day:

- Mrs. Saito's recitation of a poem by Lady Takeko Kujo, about the *frailty of a flower*.
- Guest Speaker Saito's wise words about three important women in the history and philosophy of Shin Buddhism: Eshinnisama, Kakushinni, and Lady Takeko Kujo.
- Her personal anecdotes of what she has learned from children, while teaching them.
- Observing Mrs. Saito in a short music lesson with the children.
- Catered Hawaiian food after the service. (No work for the BWA!)
- Collecting \$300+ in mini-auction sales, which is to be added to Eshinni Day donations to Pacific Buddhist Academy.

MUBWA Hospital Visitations and Spring Assembly



This year's hospital visitation visit for the Wailuku Hongwanji and Lahaina Hongwanji BWA units was Kula Hospital. Eleven Lahaina BWA members, along with Kokoro and Hoken (children of Rev. Ai and Mrs. Megumi Hironaka), traveled up to Kula by chartered bus. Mrs. Hironaka and the two youngest children – Ayumuchan and Minorichan, traveling by automobile, joined the group at Kula. The gift bag presented at the hospital (purchased with MUBWA funds) consisted of tubes of skin lotion and many pairs of socks.

at Hilo Betsuin. *Congratulations, Rev. Soga.* The Soga family will be moving to the Big Island before June 1st.

Other than the customary issues and business discussed at the annual spring assembly, there were the following highlights:

- A brief address by Janet Honda, President of Honpa Hongwanji of Hawaii Federation BWA. Janet and her husband Richard attended the luncheon meeting; Mrs. Honda also plans to visit with the other islands' BWA. Her main focus in her address was the concern of decreasing BWA membership statewide.
- Changes to the MUBWA Standing Rules and Procedures:
 - Definitions of 'active' member / 'associate' member, with reference to annual dues allotment for Federation BWA.
 - Re: Hospital visitation assignments Changing 'Kula Hospital' from a mandated assignment to 'care facility of BWA unit's choice'. This came about in relation to the current difficulty with Kula Hospital's morning visitation hours and MUBWA spring assembly scheduling.
 - Annual MUBWA donations: decrease donation to Jr. YBA by half; donate that amount to VIDSTA.





FUJIMATSURI

WHO: Sponsored by Maui Hongwanji Council – for members of all Maui County Hongwanji temples.

WHAT: "Wisteria Festival" It is also, at times, referred to as **Gotan-E**, which is perhaps a more formal term for commemorating the birth of Shinran Shonin, the founder of Jodo Shinshu. *Tentative program: Service / SongFest / Activities for children / Volleyball Tournament / Lunch*

WHEN: **MAY 6, 2012 – 9:00 am** Bus or carpool leaves from Lahaina Hongwanji at 8:00 am.

WHERE: Makawao Hongwanji Mission

WHY: To gather our memberships together in fellowship and in gratitude to our founder, Shinran Shonin.



GOTAN E SERVICE

MAY 20, 2012
9:30 am

Guest Speaker: Rev. Toshiyuki Umitani

Rev. Umitani is the former Resident Minister of Makawao Hongwanji. He is currently the Executive Secretary to Bishop Eric Matsumoto, at Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii.

Gotan E is a service that is held in honor of the founder of Jodo Shinshu, Shinran Shonin. Shinran was born in 1173 in Hino, near Kyoto. He was the son of Lord Arinori Hino who was a high court officer in the services of the Dowager Empress



BON DANCE PRACTICE

For da guys

LAHAINA HONGWANJI YARD
Tuesdays, 7:00pm

Instructor(s): Earl Zaan, Dan Thompson
(per availability)

We have had two sessions so far. Although the crowd is small, it's a good beginning. The men have practiced 6-8 bon dance numbers, and they seem to be enjoying it.

Come on down, guys! The more the merrier ... and when we have a good group going, we can think of a 'catchy' name! If you have any questions, please call 'Noosh' Nishihara, 870-6478.

"Tsu-u-kiga, detadeta, tsukiga-a deta ... a yoi-yoi."



BWA 101 Microwave Mochi Class

For anyone, not just for Buddhist Women's Association members.

Want to make ONOLICIOUS mocha in 15 minutes or less ???

Got a CRAVING for this sticky treat?

Well, this BWA 101 class is just for you.

Join the FUN as we will make and sample several mocha recipes.

Sunday, May 27th
10:30 am, after Sunday Service

Class size is **limited to the first 20 eager students**, so don't delay. **Sign up today.** CALL 661-0789 and leave a message.

Rev David Nakamoto's Message

Reverently we come before the shrine of Amida Buddha, our symbol of infinite wisdom and compassion. With open hearts we come to listen to the Teachings and earnestly resolve to strive to understand his great compassion. May the teachings guide us toward living daily lives of awareness and truth.

The other week I attended a funeral for my sister-in-law's mother. She was a 95 year old woman who lived a rich and full life. The minister who presided at the funeral was the resident minister of a Christian church that I attended when I was a child. Having this connection with that church in the past, I noticed that I began to listen more intently to his talk. He talked about the meaning of death and how understanding it can bring deeper awareness and appreciation for life. Yes, I thought, we talk a lot about this at our Jodo Shinshu funerals, as we never fail to bring up the "Epistle on the White Ashes" by Rennyo Shonin.

But as I listened to him speak, I noticed that I was being filled with thoughts such as the real preciousness of life. In my own reflection, I thought: With the passing of life of a person, we are separated from life itself. No longer are we able to experience this awesome, wonderful, precious thing we call life. As I looked over the room, I noticed the beautiful floral arrangements that filled the altar area. These had been designed and made by my brother who with his wife run a florist. I could tell that extra care was put into creating special kinds of designs and the use of certain flowers that brought joy, including peach blossoms and beautiful red roses.

As I sat there, I reflected on the beautiful flowers that were part of my father's funeral and my mother's funeral several years ago. These were made by my brother as well as myself as family members pitched in and we took special effort, working till late at night to make the arrangements.

We honor the lives of my father and mother and my sister-in-law's mom with these beautiful flowers. We honor their lives, not their deaths, I thought. We honor the richness of their lives, those meaningful, fulfilling, joyful, sad, challenging experiences that life brings.

As I listened to the talks given by family members on the life of my sister-in-law's mom, many stories of precious moments, especially when her grandchildren came up to talk, were shared. Stories of grandma's cooking of course, especially about her delicious cookies were all shared with joy. In their talks there were moments of humor and laughter but also tears of sadness, knowing that she is no longer with us. Throughout the talks was felt the true joy of living, living fully as a human being, interacting with life and experiencing all that life brings to our plate. How wonderful is this I thought. She truly lived life.

During this funeral was my reflecting heart becoming more aware of the preciousness of this life? Perhaps I was getting a mere glimpse of what all this means..... to truly appreciate this life.

In Ruth Tabrah's book "Just Live" is shared a further perspective however. Ruth talks about her encounter with Parkinson's disease and shares her story. "Just to be alive is important?", she asks herself. "I'd taken that for granted when I was in good health, full of energy, and able to do pretty much what I wanted to do. I've always been arrogant about my abundant energy, so much so that now, as I fell ill, I was quite unable to appreciate, or try to appreciate, the stark essential teachings "Just Live!"

She goes on to say, "I, who had been a long distance swimmer, who had walked miles each day, who was capable of doing almost everything with enjoyment and ease suddenly found myself humbled by pain and fever so intense I could move only with the greatest difficulty. I could not sleep for more than an hour before pain wrenched me awake. I, who had always prided myself on my self-reliance and shamelessly boasted about being independent, was now totally dependent on the care and compassion of friends.

Ruth says that it was at this point I realized the how-it-is-ness of "just Live" and the deep meaning of what Ty Unno meant when long ago he once told me, "When you truly become "How come? Or "Why me?" For several years I felt the strength of that statement. I thought I understood that it meant once you are settled in a life centered on the Nembutsu you no longer even think of such question. How naive of me!, she says.

Not until this illness and the perplexing advice from Professor Ueda to “Just Live,” could I begin to grasp that to be free of those two questions, “Why me” and “How Come” is..... the freedom that enables me to “Just Live.” It was a powerful message for me to receive. Before, the daily chores of my household routine were something I rushed through, my mind on other things. Now, hardly able to walk, I felt a tremendous gratitude for each step I took. How inconceivable! The ability to put one foot ahead of the other, and ability I had always taken for granted I now saw as a precious treasure.

In the same insight-opening way, to water my plants each morning became an intensely aware pilgrimage. I was totally watering the plants, mind and body, my life one with theirs. To take a shower involved being aware of each essential movement in doing so, mindfulness I had never known in the busy whirl of life before I became ill.

In a way that may seem strange, I am grateful to this illness, which has so disrupted my life. The world seems to have slowed to a rhythm where I can savor it. But, of course, it is I who have slowed to a rhythm where my mind is and emptiness that can receive all these acute impressions that were always there without my pausing to heed them. Illness was the karmic event that began to open my mind’s eye to the infinite and marvelous dimensions of “Just Live!”

Rev. Gyomai Kubose, in his book “Everyday Suchness” points out that life can be seen as, the life of becoming. The life of becoming is a becoming in the spiritual world. It is the continual revealing of truth in our lives and in all things just as Ruth Tabrah had experienced and perhaps in my own way experienced during the funeral service I attended. Truth is forever revealing itself in all forms and in all phases of life-this is the spiritual becoming; it is the continual truth in our spiritual world.

Everything is becoming in the truth of life. So it is in our life, if we remain free from selfish ego attachments and live the life of naturalness, we live in the true sense of living. In true living there is creativeness which makes life meaningful and gives its value. As we live we must constantly create, constantly grow spiritually, or we will be merely existing. When we live in the life of truth or in Buddha’s world or in the life of becoming, we are living a creative life.

Even today as my wife Irene and I provide home care for my mother-in-law after her recent stroke, we are both made to become aware of life's constant changes. One day everything is smooth and flowing and then suddenly, we find ourselves with the challenge of abrupt changes in our lives. This is not to say that this is bad as from this experience we are constantly leaning about ourselves, bringing new meaning into our lives.

As we live in this great life of becoming, we live in the life of Nembutsu, the religious life wherein Buddha and we are one. In the Nembutsu we see and feel Buddha everywhere. Life itself becomes the unfolding Buddha. The life of naturalness and the life of creativeness are summarized in this life of Nembutsu, which is the life of respect and humbleness through which the whole world and life become the Buddha's world. It is a marvelous world of adoration and it is ever creating and becoming.

In conclusion, I would like to say that we are truly grateful for this Nembutsu Teaching, knowing that it provides us with true guidance toward realizing the preciousness of this life. Let it be our guide in allowing us to... "Just Live."

Namo Amida Butsu