



Last month's events

50th Lay Association Convention

By Richard 'Noosh' Nishihara

The annual Lay Association convention was planned by the Oahu Lay Association and hosted by Aiea Hongwanji Mission from September 7-9. The Convention theme was "Discovering our Future Through Our Past". There were around 100 attendees who were convention delegates, observers and guests.

Rev. Kevin Kuniyuki presided at the opening service. His message was an upbeat report about a recent trip to the West Coast where he visited with the Buddhist Churches of America and visited several temples. He described the renewed vigor among BCA temples and indications of increasing membership at the temples he visited. This upbeat theme threaded its way through the entire convention weekend.

A keynote address was delivered by Congresswoman Colleen Hanabusa. She was introduced by former Hawaii Governor George Ariyoshi. Colleen described her plantation upbringing and her recent experience in our nation's capitol, Washington, D.C. Her vivid descriptions of her own upbringing must have recalled similar experiences in the minds of many attendees.

University of Hawaii Emeritus Professor George Tanabe spoke at an evening session following the Saturday dinner. Dr. Tanabe raised issue with the gatha and service books currently in use at our temples. He pulled no punches by referring to the gatha book as outdated and so traditional in approach that its use by Honpa and many mainline churches as a contributing factor to the demise of our temples and the churches because the hymns do not allow individual worshippers to express their spirituality. He stated that the Church of England in particular was a good example. The service book, on the other hand, is presented in such a way that it fails to correctly explain the tenets of Buddhism. Since Tanabe San currently heads up the BDK, I could not help but wonder if a revised version of the service book we now use was being revised or being considered for revision. An extremely provocative presentation indeed, but sorely lacking in the "So what next?"

Each Lay Convention, like the Giseikai, allows for a preparation and submission of resolutions for consideration

by delegates. One of the more troublesome resolutions was submitted by representatives from Hawaii Betsuin. They proposed a loan to PBA in the amount of \$1.5 million to help PBA get its planned construction of new facilities underway. Apparently an application for grant funds from the Weinberg Foundation had not been approved, so commencement of construction was held up. The proposal also asked Hawaii Kyodan to be a guarantor of the loan to PBA should they default. We are all very supportive of PBA and its vision. However, at first blush, this proposal places each temple in a precarious financial position to the tune of \$50,000 should PBA default on the full loan amount. Of course, if Hawaii Kyodan can guarantee the loan from existing reserves, some of the potential sting is removed even though these reserves represent each temple's own contributions. The proposal is likely to be worked on further and could possibly be the subject of a special session of the Giseikai.

Hats off to the host temple Aiea Hongwanji. They made all their facilities available. Least of all they fed all the attendees breakfast, lunch and dinner. A magnificent effort. Big Mahalo to Aiea Hongwanji for all their good work and to the Oahu Lay Association for staging an informative, productive 50th Lay Convention.

[Lahaina Hongwanji was represented at the event by Sharon Nohara and 'Noosh' Nishihara. Mahalo.]

Lahaina Hongwanji Mission

Higan Service



Rev. Shinkai Murakami, of Wailuku Hongwanji, was our guest speaker this year.

Highlights of Dharma Message

- Gratitude for the efforts and sacrifices of our forebears, who emigrated from Japan, & who struggled during the earliest years of plantation era.
- Anecdote illustrating the concept of "what goes around comes around" – a man kindly helps a lady who is stranded on a country road, due to a flat tire. / few miles down the road, lady stops at a restaurant to eat, warm up before continuing / lady leaves \$100 bill on the table, with a note saying that kindness was bestowed upon her so she is doing the same / pregnant waitress turns out to be the kind man's wife.

Last month's vidsta (Valley Isle Dharma School Teachers' Asso.) camp



HAPPY CAMPERS !



Camp Art by Hironaka children.



Olowalu Petroglyphs?



Down time for Dharma School teacher Aileen Cockett.

A big MAHALO to VIDSTA, to Aileen Cockett and Sylvia Neizman, to Rev. Hironaka and Megumi-san.

UPCOMING EVENTS



LAHAINA HONGWANJI

FALL MINI-BAZAAR

Sat. Nov. 2, 2013

8:00 – 11:00 am



KOKUA appreciated for work before and during the Bazaar. MAHALO.

Maui United BWA FALL ASSEMBLY Sat. November 9, 2013



REGISTRATION: 8:30 – 9:00 am MAKAWAO HONGWANJI MISSION

Speaker: John Nakashima State Food Safety Consultant

Sign-up lists to be posted soon.



Lahaina Hongwanji Fall Hospital Visitation SAT. NOV. 16, 2013

Once again, we will have the opportunity to do important DANA work when we visit people in the care facilities, and offer donations.

Although this season in Hawaii doesn't bring the beauty of autumn leaves – we can still look forward to the pretty, orange persimmons from Hashimoto Farm.

LOOK for the sign-up list on the Temple bulletin board and in the Social Hall.

Community Outreach / Kokua for Lahaina Town

WHO: A call to Lahaina Hongwanji members to help with community solidarity. WHAT: Need for donors to meet a goal of \$395 for one holiday wreath to adorn Front St. The wreath would bear the name of Lahaina Hongwanji – for 20 years. WHEN: By OCT. 18TH. HOW: Donation of \$15-20 to Lahaina HM (on envelope: wreath) WHY: To be a committed part of our community, even if Christmas is not a part of the Buddhist path.



NEWS FROM RELATED LINKS

Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha (Honzan, Kyoto) HONGWANJI INTERNATIONAL CENTER

Release of new publication:

The Pure Land Writings, Vol. 1 – The Indian Masters: Chapter on Easy Practice, Twelve Praises of Amida Buddha, and Treatise on the Pure Land.

This is the initial volume of the new Shin Buddhism Translation Series: The Seven Pure Land Masters' Writings.

From the publication committee: "Our new publication, with the translation faithful to the original text in principle, provides a variety of information such as footnotes and appendices, which introduce Shinran's unique interpretation that distinguishes Mahayana thought in Jodo Shinshu."

Buddhist Churches of America

WHEEL OF DHARMA

"Expanding Our Ministry through MAP"

By Rev. Marvin Harada, CBE Co-Director

"Recently I had the opportunity to speak to the Boise howakai (Dharma-talk-group) of the Idaho-Oregon Buddhist Temple (IOBT), my home temple that I grew up attending. Due partly to the fact that two of the IOBT's minister's assistants, Kathy Chatterton and Anne Spencer, live in Boise and nearby Caldwell, Idaho, the temple was able to create an outreach program by starting a howakai in Boise about two years ago. The Boise howakai has been meeting every Tuesday evening under the guidance of resident minister, Rev. Dennis Fujimoto and his wife Sharmon (who is also a minister's assistant at IOBT). It started out as a six-month pilot program, and after six months, the group decided it wanted to keep meeting. Amazingly, two years have now passed. The other night when I went, there were over twenty people in attendance. They have a service with the chanting of Juseige, a Dharma talk, and either a lecture or Dharma discussion. This is followed by refreshments and fellowship, often late into the evening. Individuals of various ages and backgrounds are present. A few families with children also attend." (next page)

(continuation of "Expanding Our Ministry")

"I think that the IOBT is showing all of us in the BCA how we can reach out to the greater community by starting the *howakai* or branch in another city or town. I see no reason why any temple in the BCA cannot start a similar outreach program. Because of our trained and educated minister's assistants, we can now expand our ministry by creating satellites and Dharma groups here and there, thus sharing the Dharma and bringing more people to our own local temples and Sanghas. Some of the individuals who attend the Boise *Howakai* have become IOBT members. Although the IOBT is located in a small town in Eastern Oregon, it has a bright future, as shown by the *howakai* that has been created in Boise, Idaho."

Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii HEADQUARTERS UPDATE

Hawaii Kyodan Urges Support for Same Gender Marriage *Excerpt from a letter sent to the Hawaii State Legislature from the office of the Bishop, Honpa Hongwanji:* "On behalf of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, ... (it is our) belief that same-gender couples should have equal rights and have access to the quality of life as conferred by legally recognized marriage. We commend the Legislature and the Governor for enacting the Hawaii Civil Unions law in 2011. We hope you will mindfully consider full marriage equality for all couples in our state regardless of gender. We believe the issue of marriage equality to be a matter of civil rights. As the largest Buddhist denomination in Hawaii, we affirm the dignity and worth of all people and that everyone deserves to be treated equally within our society."

2014 Living Treasures of Hawaii

- **Reverend Ida Keli'okalani (Hanapi) Chun** ... is a respected composer and singer, and one of the last 60 known Hawaiian language native speakers. At age 90, she continues to use her knowledge and understanding of the Hawaiian language, culture and music to benefit Hawaii's people.
- **Dr. Samuel M.O. Gon III** ... has played a significant role in two large areas: first, in our understanding, appreciation and preservation of Hawaii's unique environment and second, in understanding Hawaii's important culture. He has become a respected interpreter of culture and conservation. In the words of the sponsors, Sam is a "premier leader in understanding a new paradigm in conservation which merges native Hawaiian and western science ways for caring for our aina."

- **Mr. Robert Mitsuru Hamada** is a self-taught wood carver, who learned to work with wood from the age of 12. He is a gifted and talented artisan who also learned self-discipline and perseverance from his father, who was a Japan-trained immigrant blacksmith and a skilled wood carver and stone carver. His works have been acquired by various organizations and individuals all over the world.
- **Arthur and Rene Kimura** are being recognized as joint Living Treasures of Hawaii for their collaborative efforts in promoting education in science for students throughout Hawaii. Both have been recognized locally and nationally for their outstanding achievements and dedication to science education. These include Arthur receiving the first Presidential Award for Excellence in Science in 1983, Outstanding Biology Teacher of the Year in 1978, and the Christa McAuliffe Memorial Award for Excellence, presented by the Aerospace Education Foundation.
- **Reverend Chikai Yosemori** Dedicated to Buddhism, he is recognized for his innovations in church propagation. He was elected as the 14th Bishop of the Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Kyodan in 1996. In this capacity as bishop he is responsible for initiatives such as the planned giving program. He provided leadership to develop a private high school affiliated with the church, named the Pacific Buddhist Academy. Above all, in his many years as minister and bishop, he emphasized Shin Buddhist's concept of interdependence among all beings. He constantly worked towards improvement of Buddhism in meeting the changing needs in changing times.

These individuals will be honored on February 8, 2014 at the Legislative Assembly Aloha Luncheon during the Living Treasures Program. (Details to be announced later.)

Buddhist Study Center's **METTA**

Tariki, or Other-Power, meditation is a new and developing form of Zen and mindfulness meditation adapted for Shin Buddhists. It involves learning mindfulness (*sati*), or the practice of becoming fully aware and present in the hear-and-now. This meditation class will emphasize the value of an Other-Power-based approach to mindfulness practice. Mindfulness meditation has received remarkable support in the West via recent scientific research showing that it changes brain structure in healthy ways. Thus, learning mindfulness meditation will improve not just concentration and attention, but the ability to learn, remember, and to connect to others and to one's activities. The class is 90 minutes long. Students will learn the basics of sitting and walking meditation.

Classes begin at 1 pm on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month at the BSC. Instructor: Patrick Jichaku

Dharma Message from Resident Minister, Rev. Ai Hironaka

Good morning everyone. Welcome to our Service today in memory of those who passed away in this month of September.

Lahaina Hongwanji Bon Dance is finished. I would like to extend my deepest appreciation for all those who helped and supported for this event. I think it was very successful event. I hope that this Hatsu-Bon Service and Bon Dance has healed and delivered joyful mind for those who lost their beloved one this past year.

Lahaina Hongwanji Service is usually held in day time except for New Year Eve Service and this Bon Service and Bon Dance. So we use many lights at Bon Dance night. The people's faces which were brightened by our lights were so nice I thought. Each of them has own experience this past year but all are equal at this Lahaina Hongwanji Mission. We as human beings all know that importance of light. If we do not have light, we cannot recognize other people. My daughter Ayumu, she sleeps in children's room but somehow in the morning, she always comes to sleep in our bed. Once in a while I wake up and see Ayumu standing and looking in our room in very dark night. It looks like small girl trying to look in my room. It makes me surprised and scared. We should thank Thomas Edison for his invention. Anyway, also Light has a special meaning for all Buddhist followers. In Buddhism, the Wisdom to perceive all things as they are is often likened to Light. Shinran Shonin declared that True Land or Amida's Pure Land, the Land of wisdom and compassion, is Light.

Shinran Shonin taught us about the Pure Land and The True Buddha and Land of the Pure Land Way CWS. P.177,

Reverently contemplating the true Buddha and the true land, I find that the Buddha is the Tathagata of inconceivable light and that the land also is the land of immeasurable light.

The world of Amida Buddha's Pure Land is not world of darkness or delusion, but the world of fulfillment of inconceivable Light. Those who humbly receive Shinjin or Amida's Primal Vow and rejoice in the teachings of Nembutsu, when this life in this world ends, through the great working power of Amida Buddhas Original Aspiration, we are transformed into the Light of Pure Land and become supreme Buddha of Enlightenment.

On the other hand, that being who I am is Mu-Myo or No-Light, which means ignorance. The character Myo in the word Mu-Myo means Wisdom. Mu means none or nothing. Therefore, Mumyo means the None of Wisdom, or not being able to fully understand things or principles. Ignorance is the fundamental cause of our suffering and unhappiness and it is manifested as foolishness or activities of delusional mind in our lives.

We can make a fire, but we don't have any light in our own body. We cannot become lighted by our own power. I haven't met people who say, "When it is dark, I can create light like squid. I have no problem." Some may say that "Sensei, I think your head is brilliantly shining enough to see something in the dark." But, my head does not shine if there are no lights... Around the day of the Bon-Dance, I was able to talk to many people who recently lost their beloved one. Each case is different. Some are able to accept, some are now trying to accept, some are still in pain. It depends how close to the day of death, how close to the beloved ones and how close to the precious teachings of the Shinran Shonin.

When we deeply think about our beloved one who passed away, moment of pain and sorrow arises and it makes tears from our eyes. We may think ... I wish I could have done that. I should have done that during that time... Many minds of regret, repentance and remorse come alive. No matter how we extend regrets, it is too late. Even if you do not separate from your loved one, the time comes equally to all. This is human nature. But, if we just think in this way, our life is only a

feeling of emptiness or uselessness. But, if we deeply listen to the Amida's working of Wisdom of Compassion, the sad tears are transformed into tears of Joy and happiness.

In Japan, when they hold Memorial Service or Ho-ji, the Amida-kyo or Smaller Sutra is the most frequently chanted sutra. That is the one which I chanted at our Hatsu-Bon Service. In the first half of the Smaller Sutra, the adornments of the Pure Land where Amida Buddha resides are described. The pond in the Pure Land is described as follows:

There are lotus flowers, as large as chariot wheels, growing in the pools. Those of blue color emit blue radiance; those of yellow color emit yellow radiance; those of red color emit red radiance; and those of white color emit white radiance. They are exquisite, wonderful, fragrant and pure.

You may think that it is simply natural for blue flowers to shine blue, yellow ones to shine yellow. But, it is not a simple matter at all when we think about the world in which we live now. Do we really recognize the unique talents that have been given to people. Sometimes we are envious and jealous of others and make complaining comments with our calculating mind. I can catch and appreciate a brilliant flower which is my favorite --- when my mind is peaceful.

Lotus is often used for example of pureness of Buddha nature. Also most of Buddha and Bodhi Sattva are standing or sitting on the Lotus flower which is called Renge-za or Lotus seat. And one of the Seven masters in India, Seshin or Basubandu called Rengezo-Sekai or The Lotus-repository world as Amida Buddha's Pure Land. What it means is, in the Pure Land, whether it is very small or very huge, everything shines together as they are, everything illuminating each other. The world of illuminating each other is called Pure Land and, it teaches us that we really seek the way to get this true wonderful Land from bottom of our heart.

Your beloved ones who passed away before, reborn in this wonderful land of Light. This light, also reached to your place here and now. As they became a Buddha, they are trying very hard to guide us to the Land of Light. Where are we necessarily going to. Amida Buddha established the Land of Wisdom Lights, and guides us on our way in darkness by the light of Wisdom.

When I was Ryukoku student, one of the professor said "we are just like a light ball. Light ball is not able to light itself. But it can be lit by the power of electric energy. We too. We as Bonbu, we cannot shine ourselves. But, we can be brilliant by the power of Amida Buddha's Wisdom and Compassion." Our life is shining by the Buddha's Land. Because the way is guided by the Wisdom Light, it is very supportive and our pain and sorrow will be transformed into enriched life of true Joy of Onembutsu.

I would like to conclude my Message with Nembutsu.

Namo Amida Butsu

