



Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii

HEADQUARTERS UPDATE

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BISHOP'S CORNER

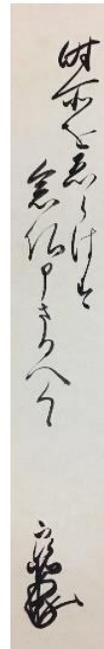
Bishop Eric Matsumoto



The month of September (usually, but not this year as the hot weather continues) is when we find respite from the scorching heat of Summer especially as we approach the Fall Equinox. Traditionally, together with the Spring Equinox, it is the time of the year which is said to be ideal for religious practice or training when compared to harsh cold of winter and, again, the scorching heat of the summer months. Thus, in many other Buddhist denominations, it is seen as an ideal time for monks and nuns to engage in religious practice(s) that will lead to Enlightenment.

Every year at the time of the Equinoxes, a quote by our 13th Spiritual Leader, Ryonyo Shonin (1612-1662) comes to my mind.

He said, "(If you have attained Shinjin or the Endowed Awakened Mind of True Entrusting,) without regard of time and place, recite the Nembutsu." It makes me appreciate the ease and simplicity of reciting the Nembutsu, in awareness, joy and gratitude of Buddha's Compassion, in which we do not have to worry about where we are and under what conditions like the seasons or circumstances we find ourselves in. It makes me appreciate the Great Wisdom and Compassion of Amida Buddha.



Shinran Shonin exclaimed, "The Universal Vow difficult to fathom is indeed a great vessel bearing us across the ocean (of pain and suffering) difficult to cross. The Unhindered Light is the sun of Wisdom dispersing our ignorance. (omit) ... the Auspicious Name (Namo Amida Butsu)...and that diamondlike shinjin so difficult to accept is true reality that sweeps away doubt and brings us to (the) attainment of enlightenment." Amida Buddha does not provide us with material wealth like a new car, a smartphone, a good job, not even good health and good luck, but Amida Buddha does promise to always be with us! This is Amida Buddha's promise that no matter what happens or wherever we are, the Buddha will always be with us and that as "Namo Amida Butsu" promises to lead us to Perfect Peace and Happiness, Enlightenment. Now this may not sound like very much, but believe me it is! Namo Amida Butsu is the most reliable and the ultimate gift. It is a gift which includes everyone and embraces everything. It is what supports us in the here and now as we live day to day, and also into the future when we attain birth in the Pure Land (at the end of this finite life) and even beyond as we return from the Pure Land of Enlightenment to samsara as enlightened beings for the sake of leading others to Enlightenment.

As testament to the wondrous workings of Namo Amida Butsu in daily life, I would like to share two experiences which I had the good fortune of experiencing which exemplifies one aspect of the life of a person of Shinjin-Nembutsu. These two lay individuals were experiencing, health wise, a traumatic point in their lives. However, they calmly accepted their circumstances, but not at all in a defeatist way. They acknowledged their condition and circumstances as a reality, but did not struggle in anger or despair. As one person stated “I have befriended my illness and live together with it.” “One should not complain, but be grateful to those helping me.” “I am not afraid to die.” Further, this person said, “Sensei, I just want to say ‘Namo Amida Butsu’ with you.” How remarkable I thought. More often than not, people say “Please pray for me” “Please help me,” but she was affirming her life just as it was including the fact that she was embraced by Great Compassion.

In the case of the other person, instead of asking for a blessing this person asked me if I could do him a favor. I was intrigued as to what he might request. “Sensei, would you allow me to read a Gobunsho or a Letter of Rennyo Shonin?” Without hesitation, I said, “Of course, you may.” As I joined him in gassho, he beautifully from memory recited a letter of Rennyo Shonin. As he recited and after he was done, we both rejoiced in gratitude at the wondrous Compassion of Amida Buddha.

In both cases, I thought to myself, this is the power of “Namo Amida Butsu.” The acceptance, the inner strength/courage, the peace, the guidance, the assurance, and the gratitude!

This is what happens when “Namo Amida Butsu” becomes a part of one’s life and the Dharma becomes integrated into one’s life. We are guided and assured by All-Inclusive Wisdom and All-Embracing Compassion (Amida Buddha). We are enabled to live and die with strength and courage from within for Amida Buddha as “Namo Amida Butsu” is always supporting and embracing us and we know that our life will joyously culminate with birth in the Pure Land of Enlightenment. This strength and courage, also, impacts all those around us too. This is the gift of Namo Amida Butsu which Shinran Shonin shared. Our life can be good, our life can be challenging, but one thing is for sure, Namo Amida Butsu is right here and always with us, now and forever!

At this time of the year at the Equinox when Nature is in balance, may we experience harmony in life too. Namo Amida Butsu.

HHMH MINISTER’S LAY ASSISTANT RETREAT

Place: Buddhist Study Center

Date: October 11-13, 2019

Anyone who is interested and recommended by their Hawaii Kyodan minister mentor is welcome to apply.

Note: Anyone who is a member of a temple must be recommended by their resident minister.

Purpose: To review and enrich the knowledge of the participants in the rituals and traditions of the Nishi Hongwanji, General Buddhism and Shin Buddhism. All of the knowledge and skills that are associated with functioning as a Minister’s Lay Assistant will be covered during the retreat. The retreat is an opportunity to learn and/or refresh one’s skills and knowledge that is associated with the role of a Minister’s Lay Assistant, but completion does not result in certification. The conditions of certification are presented in

the document Shin Buddhist Ministry in Hawaii. This retreat can be taken many times so long as it remains meaningful and helpful to the participant. Completion does not imply an obligation to become a minister's assistant. For more information and registration, please contact Buddhist Study Center at 808- 973-6555.

SOUL SHOP SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAINING

The statewide Suicide Prevention Training will be held on October 18-19, 2019 at Saint Louis School (3142 Waialae Avenue, Honolulu, HI 96816). Live webinar will be available at the five locations such as West Kauai Hongwanji Mission Hanapepe Temple, Kahului Hongwanji Mission, Kamuela Hongwanji Mission, Puna Hongwanji Mission and Mililani Hongwanji Mission.

Soul Shop is a national movement focused on helping communities and faith leaders develop skills and strategies for the prevention of suicide.

■ **Soul Shop for Youth Leaders**

Date & Time: Friday, October 18, 2019 6:00pm to 9:00pm
Registration Fee: \$10* (includes workbook)

Soul Shop™ for Youth Leaders is a half-day, interfaith training designed specifically to equip leaders and educators to minister to youth who are impacted by suicidal desperation. Special attention is focused on youth specific issues of impulsivity, contagion, and confidentiality. It includes how to recognize warning signs, how to engage in life-saving conversations, and how to keep youth safe.

■ **Soul Shop for Community and Interfaith Leaders, Clergy, and Mental Health Professionals**

Date & Time: Saturday, October 19, 2019 9:00am to 4:00pm
Registration Fee: \$20* (includes workbook and bento lunch)

Soul Shop™ is a one-day training to equip community leaders, interfaith leaders, and mental health professionals, including clergy, volunteers, and those who are passionate about doing ministry, to help those who are desperate due to any type of experience with suicide. The training includes the creation of worship resource, training in suicide awareness and basic conversation skills, and the invitation to those who have been suicidal in the past to share their stories.

This event will be presented by Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii together with BDK Hawaii, Chaminade University-BDK Hawaii Rev. Fujitani Interfaith Program and Samaritan Counseling Center Hawaii. For more information and registration, please visit the following links:

Suicide Prevention Training:

<https://soulshophi19.eventbrite.com>

Suicide Prevention Training Webinars:

<https://soulshophi19webinars.eventbrite.com>

HHMH 130TH ANNIVERSARY SERVICES & EVENTS

The following districts are holding the services and events of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii 130th anniversaries.

■ Maui District Service & Event

Date & Time: September 8, 2019 at 9:00am

Location: Wailuku Hongwanji Mission

■ Kauai District Service & Event

Date & Time: October 6, 2019 at 10:30am

Location: West Kauai Hongwanji Mission

■ Hawaii District Service & Event

Date & Time: October 12, 2019 at 10:00am – 2:30pm (Public Event)

October 13, 2019 at 10:00am (Special Sunday Service)

Location: Honpa Hongwanji Hilo Betsuin

RSG EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Ryukoku Sogo Gakuen (RSG) held the Educational Program for International Understanding at Pacific Buddhist Academy (PBA) from August 1 - September 12. This is the second time for RSG and PBA to hold this program. The object of this program was to nurture individuals with an international orientation founded on Buddhist values and perspectives through deepening their mutual understanding of differing cultures and societies. 21 students from 13 RSG high schools in Japan had a homestay in Hawaii and attended PBA with the PBA students. The closing service of this program was held at Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin.



HONGWANJI SANYOKAI VISIT

Hongwanji Sanyokai (Hongwanji Councilor Association) came to Hawaii from Japan for their study from September 13-16, 2019. Since Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii marked its 130th Anniversary this year, a total of 6 members visited temples such as Moiliili Hongwanji Mission, Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin and Waipahu Hongwanji, and Pacific Buddhist Academy. They developed their knowledge and understanding about the history of the propagation in Hawaii.



FROM THE ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

In recognition of the recent World Buddhist Women's Convention in San Francisco, the HHMH Archives Committee provides below the text of Lady Ohtani's message in the 1967 World BWA Convention booklet. You may contact the Archives Committee at archiveschair@honpahi.org. - David Atcheson

Lady Yoshiko Ohtani's Message in the 1967 Booklet

I am extremely happy to see the Third World Buddhist Women's Convention become a reality. This Convention, under the combined auspices of the Hawaii Buddhist Women's Association and the Hongwanji Kyodan, represents the coming together in one assembly of many members of Buddhist women's associations from various parts of the world, who come implemented with the year's slogan, "Grateful Service for a Better World."

As I recall, the Second World Buddhist Women's Convention, held in New York two years ago, stipulated an annual Dana Day and unanimously resolved to support observance of this Day. I have been deeply moved and gratified to learn that observance of this Day is now firmly established and is being widely practiced throughout the world by tens of thousands of our members on the same day in the same generous manner. Moreover, I am very much impressed by the fact that this assembly will now advance towards discussions bearing in mind the theme it has adopted for this Convention: "With the intent of realizing a better world, let us offer our services."

During the previous convention also, a hope was expressed that we have a song to be sung in unison by all participants. As a result, two songs, entitled "Kokoro Yutaka-ni" and "Doko-ni-mo Hikari-ga," have been composed, and I am anxiously looking forward to hearing them sung with much enthusiasm at this time.

May I voice my sincere wish that all you members participating in this happy occasion take this opportunity to listen to the words of the Buddha and that having fully entrusted all in the Compassionate Buddha you make every effort to lead your lives as mothers of the Nembutsu faith.

Before closing, I should like to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to the members of the Hawaii Buddhist Women's Association and the Hongwanji Kyodan for their untiring efforts.

