

Bodhisattvas
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The Buddha said to Ananda, “Bodhisattvas in that land, supported by the Buddha's majestic powers, in as short as it takes to eat one meal, go to countless worlds in the ten quarters in order to pay homage and make offerings to the Buddhas, the World-honored Ones. In accordance with their thoughts, innumerable and countless offerings including flowers, incense, music, silken canopies, and banners, spontaneously appear just as they wish. They are rare, exquisite, excellent, and unlike those of this world. They are always offered to the great assembly of Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and sravakas. ... The bodhisattvas rejoice together, play celestial music in the air, and sing songs with wondrous voices praising the virtues of the Buddhas. They hear and accept the teaching with great joy.” (The Sutra on the Buddha of Immeasurable Life: *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, p. 61)

This passage is from *the Sutra of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life or the Larger Sutra*. Sakyamuni Buddha talked to Ananda who is one of his disciples about the Bodhisattvas who pay homage and make offerings to the Buddhas. I cannot help but read this passage again and again now.

It was recently announced that as of July 1, I will be transferred from Lihue Hongwanji to the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii Headquarters as the Executive Assistant to the Bishop. I was assigned to Lihue Hongwanji in September, 2014. Since then three years and ten months have passed like a flash. As I write my last article for the Dharma Wheel, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all of you. I have been able to perform my responsibilities until today because of your kind help, warm support, encouragement and generous advice.

Through my ministry at Lihue Hongwanji, I have had a lot of opportunities to share the Nembutsu teachings with you. I delivered my messages at Sunday services, funeral services, memorial services, various activities, etc. I had conversations and discussions about Buddhism with you occasionally. At the same time, reflecting on the period I stayed here, I feel you have enabled me to deepen the joy of listening and sharing the teaching of Nembutsu.

When you hear Buddhist temple or sangha, what comes to your mind? I guess there are many different ideas. Speaking of Lihue Hongwanji, I think of each one of you, the Nembutsu teaching, the beautiful altar, the temple buildings and grounds which contain a long history and thoughts of the past ministers and a number of members who have transmitted the Nembutsu teaching and supported Lihue Hongwanji.

In addition, if we think about temple from Buddha's enlightened viewpoint, we can see another view. According to the passage of the Larger Sutra, Bodhisattvas in the Pure Land go to countless worlds in order to pay homage and to make offerings to the Buddhas. If that is the case, where can we see them? After reading this passage again and again, I feel that I could see Bodhisattvas at Lihue Hongwanji over the past three years and ten months.

According to Shinran Shonin, Amida Buddha's working has two aspects: the aspect for our going forth to the Pure Land and the aspect for our return to this world to teach and guide all beings as Bodhisattvas. In this life, we cannot become a Buddha or a Bodhisattva because

we are ordinary human beings possessed of blind passions. However, through listening to the Jodo Shinshu teaching, I can consider everyone I have met as Bodhisattvas. There are kind Bodhisattvas, strict Bodhisattvas, and Bodhisattvas who give me a helping hand. Such Bodhisattvas kindly appeared before me as I walked the path of life to Buddhahood under Amida Buddha's wisdom and compassion.

As I am leaving Lihue Hongwanji, I cannot help but think about everyone who supported and nurtured me. I learned a lot from everyone who pays homage, makes offerings to the Buddhas and always supports the temple. Amida Buddha's calling voice reached my ears so many times when the temple resonated with the sound of Namo Amida Butsu. Remembering my tenure at Lihue Hongwanji, I just put my hands together in Gassho; and full of gratitude, I say Namo Amida Butsu.

I am assured that all my experiences at Lihue Hongwanji will become my strength from now on. It is hard to say farewell, but after leaving, I will be able to look forward to seeing you again. Until then, please take good care of yourselves. Once again, thank you very much. Aloha and a big Mahalo. Namo Amida Butsu.