



Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii

HEADQUARTERS UPDATE

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JUNE 2020

BISHOP'S CORNER

A further reflection on our troubled nation from a Jodo Shinshu Perspective



**Photo (repost) from Silent March around the Hawaii State Capitol Building after the June 17, 2015 Charleston, South Carolina incident. Credit: Charles St. Sure*

Today, further reflecting on the situation of racial discrimination and law enforcement in our nation which continue to, in some instances, involve violent acts and most tragically the continued loss of human life, may we go to the Buddha-Dharma for guidance. In Jodo Shinshu (or Shin Buddhism), the 18th Vow of Bodhisattva

Dharmakara/Amida Buddha is the Primal Vow which unconditionally promises Supreme Enlightenment. But, currently, my thoughts also dwell on the significance of the 3rd Vow: "If, when I attain Buddhahood, the humans and devas in my land should not all be the color of genuine gold, may I not attain the perfect Enlightenment." Several of Bodhisattva Dharmakara's 48 vows address the stark reality of samsara with suffering and inequality that is born from anger, greed and ignorance.

In Buddhism, the approach and goal is the advancement of each unenlightened being through a transformation of each person's heart and mind culminating in the attainment of supreme enlightenment. In the case of a total and immediate transformation, the person becomes enlightened like Prince Siddhartha did to become Sakyamuni Buddha. In the case of a "spiritually foolish being" (bonbu) like myself, total positive transformation awaits at some future point. However, illuminated by Amida Buddha's Light, there results a new awareness of oneself and the awareness of a Wisdom and Compassion which unconditionally embraces — the Buddha's aspiration for the peace and happiness of all sentient beings. On one hand, knowing that Amida Buddha's Compassion reaches out to all nurtures within oneself the understanding that all life can be happy and at peace — thus, I can identify with those who are suffering/hurting as victims of ignorance facing inequality and discrimination. On the other hand, the Light of Wisdom allows me to relate even to those who are manifesting unwholesome actions by making me understand that if conditions were different, I might find myself in their shoes and unable to see life differently and how my actions were causing harm. If we continue to see ourselves only in the polarity of exclusive opposites, we will remain divided and it will be difficult to come to resolution. There is a saying, that the wise seek neither victory nor defeat. This is an opportunity for both personal and societal transformation through critical self-reflection and compassionate action. Buddhist teachings have always

addressed suffering and inequality, from the rejection of the caste system in India, to occupational discrimination in Japan, to support of LGBTQ rights in the United States, etc.

Today, we, the people, including the Buddhist Sangha in communities across our nation and the world, are particularly addressing the suffering of Black people. Black Lives Matter! As we bring about changes to the external conditions of our society with new laws, policies, procedures and reform, it is essential that we also address the deep causes of suffering which arise from ignorance and its manifestations, including arrogance, pride, self-centeredness and fear. Let me emphasize that it is the inner transformation of each of us that will result in true harmony and the lasting positive change that we seek. Each of us must change for a true transformation of our society, nation and world. We need a transformative revolution of our hearts and minds. This is how we will dismantle systemic racism and uplift those who have been left at the margins of our society for too long. As a Buddhist saying reminds us, “Human beings tend to move in the direction of their thoughts.”

However, it is indeed challenging to bring about the kind of awareness and change that we are speaking about on our own especially in this Last Dharma Age. Hence, the Pure Land Tradition speaks of Amida Buddha’s Light of Wisdom and Compassion which illuminates, nurtures and embraces. For a “spiritually foolish being” like myself, my ultimate transformation takes place at the end of my finite life with birth in the Pure Land of Enlightenment made possible by the Buddha’s Compassionate 18th Vow. Guidance and insight can be derived, however, on how I should try to live each day even in my unenlightened state of being by the Pure Land of Amida Buddha. Let me state clearly the intent is not to create the Pure Land on Earth, but we can gain a vision of what we should aspire to now and forever. The 3rd Vow addresses our tendency to discriminate based on skin color — racism — thus vows that all in the Pure Land will be of the same precious golden color. The color gold is not to be taken literally and is not implying that other colors are of lesser importance. Instead, the significance of gold is that almost universally it is appreciated and valued throughout the world as being very precious. I fully realize that this “spiritually foolish being,” Eric, is unable to live perfectly, but the Vows provide me with guidance on how I should try to live, that is, without discriminating, and in ways that help secure respect and equality for all. The Buddha-Dharma provides guidance, insight and encouragement.

As Shinran Shonin said in one of his letters, “One must seek to cast off the evil of this world and to cease doing wretched deeds; this is what it means to reject the world and to live the nembutsu.” Let us deeply self-reflect and, while lamenting our imperfections and deeply appreciating Great Compassion which unconditionally embraces, gratefully respond by trying to live in a way that one and all — but especially the disadvantaged and those who have been denied fair access to happiness without fear, equal benefits and opportunities, and freedom — can live fulfilled lives.

In recognizing that “Black Lives Matter,” may we address the real enemies of anger, greed and ignorance (the root causes of suffering and inequality) and peacefully and thoughtfully transform the conditions which perpetuate suffering, inequality and the use of excessive force against the marginalized and minorities. Again, in grateful response to All-Inclusive Wisdom and All-Embracing Compassion, let us find ways we can contribute to be(com)ing a more peaceful, equitable, and harmonious world. Let us each ask ourselves “What can I do?”

As a closing reflection, please join me for “Our Pledge” by Gomonsu Kojun Ohtani.

Reaching out to others,
I will share a smile and gentle words.
Just like the Buddha, who always calls out with Aloha.

Breaking away from my greed, anger and ignorance,
I will try to live in peace and harmony.
Just like the Buddha, who shares tranquility and kindness with all.

Moving forward from self-centeredness,
I will share a life of joy and sorrow with others.
Just like the Buddha, whose caring heart always embraces us.

Realizing that I live because of others,
I will strive to live life to the fullest with an attitude of gratitude.
Just like the Buddha, who promises to embrace us all.

Namo Amida Butsu/Entrusting in All-Inclusive Wisdom and All-Embracing
Compassion

Thank you. In gassho/anjali,
Rev. Eric Matsumoto, Bishop



The following messages are also available on the HHMH Website:

A reflection on our troubled nation (June 1, 2020)

<https://hongwanjihawaii.com/message/a-reflection-on-our-troubled-nation-bishop-matsumoto-060120/>

2020 Memorial Day message from Bishop Eric Matsumoto (May 25, 2020)

<https://hongwanjihawaii.com/message/2020-memorial-day-message-bishop-matsumoto/>

Bishop Matsumoto’s Video Messages

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL5p2UQ0W-gN4Up41QotZr6OsqcntoYVyE>

COVID-19 COMMUNICATIONS & RESOURCES ON HHMH WEBSITE

The Office of the Bishop has issued a series of memos (1-8) to provide directives and recommendations regarding temple activities and procedures during the COVID-19 outbreak. The latest memo was issued on June 2, 2020 when the four counties have made allowances for “Places of Worship” to reopen, subject to restrictions and requirements for safety. These memos are also available in the following page of our Hawaii Kyodan Website:

<https://hongwanjihawaii.com/blog/2020/03/13/covid19/>

This page includes additional important resources which would be helpful to temples, affiliates, and individual members. You can check it periodically to see if there are resources that can help you.

PREMIERE OF BON SERVICE FOR HAWAII JULY 11-12, 2020

July 11, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. (HST)

July 12, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. (HST)

YouTube: Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDuOZdicW9mWq-DNlf19Pyg>

Presented by Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii
Office of the Bishop
State Ministers Association
New Expressions Committee
Monshinto Task Force

Bon Service for Hawaii is an online “virtual” service dedicated with deep gratitude and appreciation in the memory of dearly departed sangha members and friends of the Hongwanji Temples in the State of Hawaii.

Bon Service for Hawaii will premiere on [Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii’s YouTube Channel](#) on Saturday, July 11 at 7:00 p.m. (HST) and Sunday July 12 at 10:00 a.m. (HST).

Sangha members and friends of Hongwanji Hawaii temples that will host in-person and/or online Bon Service are encouraged to attend or view the service of their Temple, and watch Bon Service for Hawaii at their convenience.

Sangha members and friends of Hongwanji Hawaii temples that are unable to host in-person and/or online Bon Service are encouraged to view the evening or morning premiere of Bon Service for Hawaii.

During these most extraordinary of circumstances, one important thing we can do this Obon is to take a moment to remember our departed loved ones, to reflect upon their continued influence on our lives, and to rededicate ourselves to living this unrepeatable life in honor of their memory.

Illuminated by Amida's All-Inclusive Light of Wisdom and embraced by Amida's All-Encompassing Compassion, let us put our hands together in *gasshō anjali*, and say Namō Amida Butsu in joy and gratitude.

For more information about the 2020 Bon Service for Hawaii, please contact the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii Headquarters at hqs@honpahi.org or (808) 522-9200.

Bon Service donations may be made directly to your local temple, Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, Pacific Buddhist Academy, or affiliated organizations, as you prefer.

If you would like to make a Bon Service donation online using any major credit/debit card, please visit HongwanjiHawaii.com/donate and click the links for the organization to which you'd like to make a donation.

Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii
Hawaii District Temples
Honolulu District Temples
Kauai District Temples
Maui District Temples
Oahu District Temples
Pacific Buddhist Academy
Buddhist Study Center
Federation of Buddhist Women's Associations

BISHOP'S AWARD FOR JAPANESE LANGUAGE SCHOOL STUDENTS

On behalf of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii Japanese Language School committee, it is my great honor and privileged announce 2019-2020 Bishop's award recipients as followed;

Fort Gakuen	8th grader: Cora Tsuyako Saito
Hilo Hongwanji Gakuen	8th grader: Yoshikazu Taufah Farmer
Hongwanji Mission School	8th grader: Mone Sugimoto
Wailuku Hongwanji Gakuen	6th grader: Jealynn Reiko Fukuda

All of them received this special honor award at their graduation day which was held in May, 2020.

Thank you,
In Gassho,
Rev. Shinkai Murakami,
Chair, Japanese Language School committee

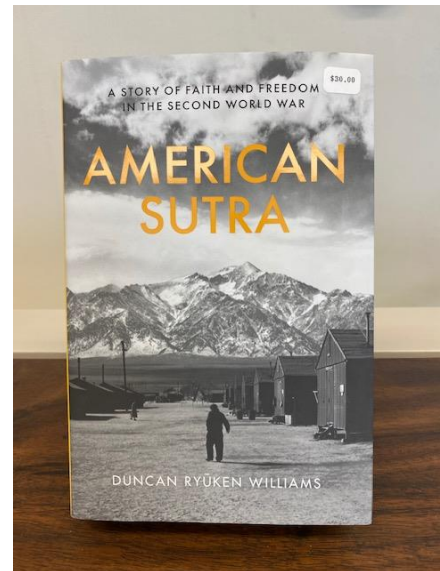
HQ BOOKSTORE UPDATE

The HHMH Bookstore is currently available to receive your order by phone or e-mail. If you are interested in Bookstore items, please contact Yoshiko Umitani, by phone (808) 522-9202 or by E-mail hqbooks@honpahi.org

You can check out Bookstore items through our web site <https://hongwanjihawaii.com/book-store/book-store-catalog/>

After we receive your order by phone or e-mail, I will prepare your order and set up the time for you to pick it up at HQ Bookstore.

We can also mail your order to your address by USPS. The shipping fee will apply. I am willing to mail Bookstore items to every customer who lives in Honolulu, Oahu, Neighbor islands or Mainland. You can pay your order by check or credit card. HHMH Bookstore offers 10% discount to orders from HHMH temples.



Bookstore has some new books and items. “American Sutra” by Dr. Duncan Ryūken Williams who is the speaker of this year’s BSC Online Summer Study Session is available now. One copy is \$30.00.

(Yoshiko Umitani, HQ Bookstore)

SAVE THE DATES: SUMMER SESSION, JUNE 22-26, 2020

“Interlinked: Understanding the Origins and Evolution of American Buddhism”

The Buddhist Study Center will offer its 46th Annual Summer Study Session as a free online class series on June 22-26, 2020 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. (HST) featuring the noted scholar, Rev. Dr. Duncan Ryūken Williams, author of American Sutra, a ground-breaking book published in 2019.

The study class series will cover the Foundations of American Buddhism, Buddhism in Hawaii during World War II, Religious Freedom and Buddhism during World War II, American Buddhism and Ecology, and Buddhist Social Engagement in a series of five two-hour lecture over five nights.



The study class series will be available online through a link available at the Buddhist Study Center website, <http://bschawaii.org>. Pre-registration is not required and the lectures are free and open to the public. Donations to the Buddhist Study Center are gratefully accepted in the spirit in which they are given. Detailed information and the full syllabus are available at <http://bschawaii.org>. For more information, please call the Buddhist Study Center at (808) 973-6555.

KAHUKU HONGWANJI SCHOLARSHIP

The Kahuku Hongwanji Mission closed its doors in February 2013 after serving its membership for 111 years. To maintain the legacy of the Kahuku Hongwanji Mission and to develop the future generations of the Hongwanji, Kahuku Hongwanji Mission established a scholarship to support students at the college level.

Eligibility:

- The applicant must be a member of the BSC Fellowship Club or an active member of a Hawaii Kyodan organization.
- The applicant must be a full-time student of an accredited college, university, or a post-high school program in the State of Hawaii, and earn a minimum of 12 college credits per semester.
- The applicant must have a required minimum college GPA of 2.5.
- The applicant must be of college age up to 35 years old.
- The applicant must submit the application form with an essay on “Dharma and My Life”.

Application Deadline: July 31, 2020

Scholarship Amount: \$2,000.00 each / two recipients

For more information of this scholarship, please contact the HHMH Headquarters at (808) 522-9200 or email at hqs@honpahi.org