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GOJI

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NEWSLETTER
of the
Honpa Hongwanji
Hawaii Betsuin
www.hawaiihetsuin.org

2017 Slogan:

Embrace Change:
Action
(Open Communications)

BETSUIN
MINISTERS

Chief Minister
Rev. Toyokazu Hagio

Ministerial Staff
Rev. Yuika Hasebe
Rev. Arthur Kaufmann
Rev. Joshin Kamuro
Rev. Sol Kalu

Obon: The Japanese Festival of the Dead Betsuin Bon Dance June 23 & 24

It's that time of year again for Buddhists in Hawaii to observe the Obon Festival honoring deceased ancestors. The traditional belief is that during this season, the spirits of the departed relatives and ancestors come back from the world of the dead to visit them. As such, memorial services are held in Buddhist temples in their honor to pay respect and express gratitude. In some homes and business establishments, people hang lanterns believing that the light will guide the spirits on their return to the physical world. The highlight of the Obon season celebration is the dance festival called Bon Odori where participants dance and sing in a circle around a raised platform called yagura. Towards the end of the season, on the last night of Obon, people float lighted lanterns, candles, or bonfires to guide the spirits back to the world of the dead.

The story of the origin of the Bon dance was about Shakyamuni Buddha's disciple who was the most gifted with clairvoyance and psychic powers, Maudgalyayana, or Mokuren Sonja in Japanese. Mokuren used his psychic abilities to locate the whereabouts of his mother who had passed away and found her to have been born in the realm of hungry spirits, the realm where denizens have needle like mouths and throats and big, protruding bellies. They are constantly hungry but unable to eat food, as their mouths and throats are too narrow or any food they try to consume turns to fire the moment they attempt to eat it. Mokuren's mother was born in the world of hungry ghosts because of her stinginess and greed during her life. Distraught at his mother's present state of existence, Mokuren asked the Buddha's help to free his mother from this awful realm and for rebirth in a higher and more favorable world. The Buddha advised Mokuren to make offerings of food and clothing to the monks coming out of their rainy season retreat, and to transfer the merit of the offering to his mother for her salvation. Combined with the transfer of the other monks's accumulated virtues and merits, Mokuren's mother was liberated from the world of hungry ghosts and Mokuren, according to tradition, started dancing with joy upon seeing his mother freed from the hell of hungry ghosts and reborn in a higher state of existence. This was, according to tradition, the origin of the Bon Dance.

The observance of the Obon season, in Jodo Shinshu Buddhism, has come to mean, not the worship of ancestors but an event described as a joyful gathering, to pay respect and express gratitude to ancestors and departed loved ones and to feel the joy of living in accordance with the Buddha Dharma.

Reminder!

*The Betsuin will be closed from
May 31 to June 3 for termite fumigation.
All programs and services are cancelled
during this time. Please call the office if
you have any questions!*



Dharma Message: “Golden Chain”

Shaku Art Kaufmann

In 1993, while I was studying for the Tokudo Ordination, I assisted Rev. Shigenori Makino, who was the resident minister at the Moiliili Temple. Sensei was the resident minister there at that time. One Sunday, after services had concluded, I overheard a conversation that one of the members was having with Rev. Makino.

The Sangha member was relating a conversation that they had had with an acquaintance about religion. The acquaintance eventually asked the Sangha member, “Well, what is it that Buddhists believe?” Not the easiest of questions to answer at the best of times since the Buddha taught for

forty years. The Sangha member offered “Well, we believe in the Golden Chain” and then proceeded to recite it. When she got to the part that reads “I shall try to be kind and gentle to every living thing and protect all those weaker than myself”, the acquaintance stopped her saying “wait a minute, what about all the plants and animal that are killed for food, that’s not being kind and gentle at all.” The sangha member did not know how to respond to that. First, let’s look at that first question, “What do Buddhists believe?”

When I lived in Denver, back in the eighties, I had a friend by the name of Bill who had been attending the Denver Buddhist Temple for a few years, as I had also been. Bill was a former educator and although born into the Christian faith, when he heard the Shin teachings, he liked what he heard.

Bill would like nothing more than to have someone come up to him and ask that very question, “What do Buddhists believe?” Bill would look very thoughtful for a moment and then, with a big smile on his face, he would reply, “Nothing”. This usually stopped the person asking the question right in their tracks.

Some religions are based on belief. Belief may, in some cases, be a requirement of entering a religion. Buddhism however, is not a belief system nor is it required to have belief in it in order to study the teachings. Belief and faith usually do evolve as a natural result of having experienced the reality of the truth of the Buddha’s teachings in one’s life experiences. I think it comes more as a feeling of

confidence in those teachings while knowing that anything may be questioned.

As far as the Golden Chain, written by Rev. Hunt back in the 1920’s was concerned, I thought I had better go back and take another look at what it was actually saying. It seems as if the “Golden Chain” is pretty much used as a reading for the children but I have always enjoyed it and I hope I shall never be so foolish as to think I could no longer benefit from reading and reciting it.

“I am a link in Amida Buddha’s Golden chain of love that stretches around the world”. (I was originally Buddha’s golden chain). This indicates that as Buddhists or Shin Buddhists, we are part of an Ohana that does indeed, stretch around the world and, as a link, we are responsible to keep our hearts and minds rooted in the teachings in order to keep the chain strong.

Continuing it reads, “I shall try to be kind and gentle to every living thing...” This is a very important part; you will notice that it does not say “I shall be kind and gentle,” it says “I shall try to be kind and gentle”. This reveals the great paradox that we all live within. Although we would like to be kind and gentle to every living thing, it is not possible for us to survive and build the things that make up our world without the sacrifice of other forms of life. That being the case, it is most important that we take the time to humbly express our deepest gratitude for those sacrifices.

In Shin Buddhism we usually say “Itadaki masu” before we begin a meal.

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GOJI

The **GOJI** is a monthly publication of the Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin, Tel. (808) 536-7044. There is no newsletter published for the month of August.

DEADLINE:

Articles must be submitted no later than the 10th of the month prior to publication by e-mail (execdir@hawaiiibetsuin.org), mail (1727 Pali Hwy, Honolulu, HI, 96813) or fax (536-0919). Address submissions to the **GOJI**. Please include your name and contact information. Original images should be labeled on the reverse side with caption and return information.

GOJI STAFF:

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The opinions expressed by individual contributors are their own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin.

Betsuin BWA News and Events

Fujiko Motobu

ESHINNI-KAKUSHINNI DAY SERVICE HELD.

Under the sponsorship of Betsuin BWA, the Dharma school students, teachers and parents held a very enjoyable and meaningful service-program on April 30th. Under the guidance of Laura Nakasone, the entire program was focused on music with the mixture of students and parents participating in the celebration of Eshinni and Kakushinni, wife and daughter of Shinran Shonin. The focus of parents and students participating together brings a valuable lesson to us. Madelyn and Caryn Okuda, MC's did an excellent job, for both mother and daughter spoke clearly articulating words carefully to be heard by all. Miyaka and Ron Nishihira and Sarene and Mikey Bradshaw, daughter and father pairs were never a usual scene in the past; therefore, it was very nice to see them presenting the lights and flowers. Student ushers, Rose Ganotisi, Talin Giang, and Lindsey Bradshaw did well, greeting the people with their nice smiles. Pianist, Debbie Kubota also added to the nice service. The BWA certainly appreciates their participation and hope that in the future we can do more things together.

The speaker was Charlene Kihara, a recent recipient of Tokudo, and studying to gain Kyoshi in order to become a full-fledged minister. She recently went to Kyoto to participate in the accession ceremony of the new Monshu. She shared videos of her experiences in Japan.

The full crowd of Jodo Shinshu followers also contributed tremendously, and unselfishly in the donation for the youth groups. Approximately \$1100.00 was received, which will be

divided equally and be given to the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and Dharma School students, for they are the real helpers at the annual bazaar and other activities held at the Betsuin. Thank you to all.

“POSITIVE ATTITUDE.”

A dharma talk given by Jaimee Yokoyama of Kalama Intermediate School to the Wailuku Hongwanji sangha was published in October, 2016 newsletter, Friend of the Dharma. Jaimee, an 11 year old student, had written such a warm, heart rendering article about the teachings of Jodo Shinshu. I received permission to publish it in our Goji last year; but unfortunately it got delayed. Therefore, her speech was printed and passed out to all the people who attended the Eshinni-Kakushinni Day service. Those who had a chance to read it have already commented about how well written it is and they were all amazed to realize that it was written by such a youth. Our recent arrival, the Rev. Sol Kalu said that he had met Jaimee's parents and grandparents while he was resident minister in Maui. What a small world. Thank you, Jaimee for sharing your profound thoughts with us.

BWA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING #2 MAY 7th.

One of the highlights was in recalling years of yonder, the long past years of our youth when we played with mostly homemade games, such as oiyami, jacks, string plays, etc. led by Carol Yamamoto and Fujiko Motobu. June Iwahashi talked stories of the past with the groups and recalled many fun days of the past. We did not have Kindle or laptops, computers, etc, so our games were all homemade.

We baked sweet potatoes when we made fires for the furo. We ate a lot of fruits such as five fingers, sour sap, mountain apples, (red and white), mangoes, guavas red and yellow, hozuki, and persimmons. We picked them off the tree or branches, never washed them and ate them. I guess we had great immune systems, for we never got ill.

WANTED: ANY GREAT RECIPES TO SHARE?

NOW FOR A GOOD LAUGH:

Why did the tomato blush?
Because it saw the salad dressing.

One Sunday service, the minister spoke about dying. He said to his audience that they should all begin to think of hereafter. A little old lady raised her hands and spoke. She said, “Reverend I always think of hereafter. I go to the kitchen and ask, what am I here after? I go to my bedroom and say, what am I here after? I go to the living room, to the laundry room, to the garage, and always ask, what am I here after?”



We are requesting donations of baked goods for our 2017 Bon dance to be held on Friday and Saturday, June 23 and 24, 2017

Donations of cookies, brownies, party mix, finger snacks, etc are greatly appreciated.

From the Green Team



Mahalo for Earth Day Green Fair

At the April 23 Green Fair after our Earth Day Service, we had planned to screen the video short Mottainai but were not able to get audio. But since everyone was already so engrossed in Green Fair activities, it was probably just as well not to interrupt. We were going to do our thank-yous before the screening, but instead will do them here:

Big thanks to BWA, Dharma School, Brownies, Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, Kokua Hawaii Foundation, Events Committee, and the Green Team for

creating such a fun and educational event. Extra mahalo to Irene Nohara for an event layout map and the Boy Scouts for tables/chairs setup and takedown! Here's to going green in '17.

- David Atcheson, for the Green Team

PS. Want to watch Mottainai on your own? It's a wacky 5-min video very much in keeping with the Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Respect theme of the Green Fair. Search YouTube.com for "Mottainai - don't waste what Nature gives you..."

Don't Forget!
You can listen
to pre-recorded
10:00 AM
services
from the
Betsuin on KZOO
radio
(1210 AM on the dial)

Sunday
mornings
at
10:00 AM



Please join our week day Morning Service!
Hawaii Betsuin opens its door to everybody who
would like to chant sutra.

Date: Monday - Saturday
Time: 8:00 to 8:30 AM
Sutra: Shoshinge

Shoshinge was written by our founder, Shinran Shonin, to encapsulate the teachings of Jodo Shinshu. It is an important sutra for Jodo Shinshu followers and encourages all to entrust themselves in Amida Buddha. You are invited to join the Hawaii Betsuin ministers every morning from 8 to 8:30 AM to chant Shoshinge, the Gatha of True Faith.

Please feel free to join any time.

No reservation is needed. Walk-ins are welcome!

If you have any questions, please contact the Betsuin Office.



Sudhana Fellowship's
Fathers' Day Breakfast

Sunday
June 18th
7:30 am
in the
Social Hall



Mark Your Calendars!

O'Bon, O'Bon
It's Festival
Time!

Hawaii Betsuin 2017

Bon Dance

Fri. & Sat.
June 23 & 24
6:00 -10:30 pm

Everyone
Welcome!



From the Betsuin Choir Wendie Yumori
May Peace Prevail...Of Such I Dream

Hawaii Betsuin's Dharma School conducted a wonderfully musical Eshin-ni/Kakushin-ni Day service on April 30, 2017. Many thanks to the Dharma School Ohana for singing with such positive energy! Warm mahalo as well to Dharma School teacher, Debbie Kubota, for sharing her terrific original gathas with us.

Following the Eshin-ni/Kakushin-ni Day service, which is also dedicated to World Peace, folks headed to the social hall to enjoy more uplifting music at Hawaii Betsuin's MusicFest. The theme of MusicFest was May Peace Prevail...of Such I Dream in anticipation of our special guest, Rev. Takamasa Yamamura of Myohoji Mission, singing May Peace Prevail at the program's conclusion

Leading off the MusicFest performances were Cameron Kubota and Caden Matsumoto of the Betsuin Dharma School Ukulele Group who sang Bruno Mars' Just the Way You Are and Elvis Presley's Can't Help Falling in Love. Cameron noted, "These two beautiful pieces are about love. We can always use more love in the world and so we're happy to be sharing some of our love with the Sangha." The Betsuin Dharma School teachers, parents, and students then combined with Betsuin Choir members to fill the entire stage and sing a rousing Do the Good You Know under the direction of Laura Nakasone.

The Betsuin Choir, under the direction of Mari Murakami and accompanied by Francis Okano, sang a medley of songs, Shall I Dream a Dream?, Beyond What We See, and I Dream a World, describing the dream of a world in which peace may prevail. The lyrics of I Dream a World were written by Langston Hughes, an African American poet (1902-1967) who, in envisioning a world where "love will bless the earth and peace its path adorn", opened his poem with the impassioned words, "Of such I dream, of such I dream." These words were echoed in our MusicFest theme, "May Peace Prevail...of Such I Dream".

Following an audience participation piece in which everyone learned a spirited Bon dance called Zumpa Odori, everyone quieted as pianist, Francis Okano, clearly demonstrated impressive technique and expressivity as a soloist in playing his lovely arrangement of Hamabe no Uta, the Song of the Shore.

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Golden Chain continued from page 2

"I lift this gift above my head", which acknowledges the preciousness of the gift or gifts.

The Lakota Holy man Black Elk, one of my teachers who helped me to find the Buddha's teachings, expressed our inter-relatedness, inter-dependency in a very simple statement that said, "by virtue of the fact that we share this planet with many other forms of life, we are therefore, relatives. Some American Indians express this before a meal by saying, "All my relations." Acknowledging that, even though we are helpless to prevent the sacrificing of the lives of plants and animals on our behalf, is to express deep gratitude to those forms of life.

Sadly, we humans sometimes think that we are the most important form of life on the planet; this is wrong thinking.

I remember hearing a Japanese saying that went "while the people on the shore celebrate a bountiful catch of fish, below the waves there is great mourning."

As we continue with the Golden Chain, the word "try" is used several more times in regard to thinking, talking and doing, the three karmas or actions that we are always putting forth. This little word acknowledges that we, as human beings, have limitations. We are not always able to keep our promises or vows that we make no matter how well our intentions might be.

I have told you what I see in the "Golden Chain", what do you see?
Namoamidabutsu

MusicFest continued from page 5

The grand finale of MusicFest, May Peace Prevail, was definitely worth waiting for. Rev. Takamasa Yamamura, an operatic tenor who trained in his twenties at Rome's prestigious National Academy of Santa Cecilia, sang May Peace Prevail with great conviction and his "Namo Amida Butsu" coda to May Peace Prevail, was deeply touching. Seated nearby and so appreciative of his rendition were May Peace Prevail lyricist, Carrie Kawamoto, and music composer, Dr. Takeo Kudo. As many folks were calling "Hana hou!" and "Encore!" following May Peace Prevail, Rev. Yamamura graciously complied by singing his captivating signature piece, Sen no Kaze ni Natte, A Thousand Winds.

And, on that note, our MusicFest program came to a close. Rev. Yamamura has said in the past that he considers music to be "a tool for creating world peace." How heartwarming then, that on a day dedicated to World Peace, we were able to take in all the amazing MusicFest performances and envision a world where peace may truly prevail and echo the Choir's wish as they sang, "Of such I dream, of such I dream."

Please enjoy the performance videos which may be accessed on our temple website, hawaiiibetsuin.org, under Hawaii Betsuin MusicFest videos.

If you are unable to come to the temple and would like to have a minister visit you in your home, please call
Rev. Yuika Hasebe
at 536-7044



to request a home visit.
We miss you and do not want to lose contact with you!

*The Visteria Ballroom
Dancing Club
Invites You to Dance!*

*Mondays,
7:00 pm to 9:00 pm
in the Social Hall*



Dances change every 8 weeks!

For Information, please contact
Claire Groom (286-3486)
or Mary Fujitani (595-4533)

Betsuin Dharma School News

Debbie Kubota

April 23 - Earth Day

This meaningful event included Dharma School activities — “Make Your Own Reusable Bag” out of gently used t-shirts and “Personalize Your Own Reusable Cups.” Everyone had fun creating their own t-shirt bags and decorating their own cups and flasks!



April 30 - Eshinni and Kakushinni Day

Dharma School conducted the service honoring these two very special women. Mrs. Caryn Okuda and her daughter, Maddie were emcees. The Dharma School students, parents and teachers sang many songs throughout the service which focused on living gratefully and peacefully. The Dharma School Ukulele Group (Cameron Kubota and Caden Matsumoto) accompanied the group and also performed at the Music Fest after the Service. During the Music Fest, it was the first time that the Dharma School performed together with the Betsuin Choir. What a treat for all!



May 7 - Sports Day / Undokai

The Honolulu Dharma Schools (Betsuin, Jikoen and Moiliili) along with the Cub Scout Pack 49 had a “funtastic” day on the lawn at Hongwanji Mission School. Thanks to the coordination and leadership of Thanh Giang, PTO President, there were relays (three-legged race, over/under using soccer balls, hula hoops, carrying golf balls on spoons) and tug of war. Mrs. Tamayo Matsumoto and Mrs. Minako Kamuro coordinated the “Tamaire” game in which teams had to toss ping pong balls into baskets carried on the backs of two tall adults who ran around the field. The activities culminated in a water balloon toss. Delicious bento lunches were served, and everyone had their fill of fun and onolicious food. Stay tuned for more Dharma School fun.....



**Hongwanji
Radio Programs
JUNE 2017**

**KZOO 1210 AM
Japanese Language
Saturday at 7:30 AM**

- 03 Rev. Shindo Nishiyama
10 Rev. Yuika Hasebe
17 Rev. Sol Kalu
24 Rev. Daido Baba

Betsuin Services

Asaji Service 8:00 AM

- 04 NO SERVICE
TEMPLE CLOSED
11 Rev. Joshin Kamuro
18 Rev. Yuika Hasebe
25 Rev. Yuika Hasebe

**Adult English Services
10:00 AM**

- 4 NO SERVICE
TEMPLE CLOSED
11 Dharma School
Graduates Service 9:30 am
Rev. Yuika Hasebe
18 Rimban Toyokazu Hagio
25 Rev. Joshin Kamuro

Nicchu Service 1:00 PM

- 04 NO SERVICE
TEMPLE CLOSED
11 Rimban Toyokazu Hagio
18 Rev. Joshin Kamuro
25 Rev. Sol Kalu

Dharma School Service 9 am

- 04 NO SERVICE
TEMPLE CLOSED
11 Dharma School
Graduates Service 9:30 am
Rev. Yuika Hasebe
18 No Dharma School
25 No Dharma School

In Memoriam



APRIL 2017

The Hawai'i Betsuin extends its deepest sympathy to the families of the following members who recently passed away. May the family members find solace and comfort in the Nembutsu. Namo Amida Butsu

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2 KODAMA, Benjamin Takayoshi (91) | 23 KANESHIRO, Yoshie Kawamoto (87) |
| 7 MURAMATSU, Katherine Toshie (92) | 25 MARUBAYASHI, Hanako (99) |
| 8 TATEISHI, Chieko Nishikawa (101) | 28 MUNEOKA, Masashi (92) |
| 11 NII, Harry Mikio (72) | 29 TOKORO, Hisayo (101) |
| 11 NISHIMURA, Margaret Toshiko (89) | 30 FUJIMOTO, Hideaki (87) |
| 15 OKADA, Saneo (90) | |
| 16 MASUNAGA, Helen Ayako (87) | |
| 16 OJIRI, Jerry Genhachiro (95) | |
| 18 YAMAUCHI, Mildred Machiko (86) | |

2017 Memorial Service Schedule

2017 is the memorial year for those who passed away in:

2016 – 1 year	2005 – 13 year	1985 – 33 year
2015 – 3 year	2001 – 17 year	1968 – 50 year
2011 – 7 year	1993 – 25 year	1918 – 100 year

Nursing Home Services

- 01 Hale Nani – cancelled
Hale Ho Aloha – cancelled
08 Maluhia – Rev. Kaufmann
Liliha – Rev. Kalu
09 Kuakini – Rev. Kalu
22 Nuuanu Hale – Rev. Hasebe
23 Leahi – Rev. Hagio



The great practice is to say the Name of the Tathagata of un-hindered light. This practice, comprehensively encompassing all practices, is perfect and most rapid in bringing them to fullness. For this reason, it is called "great practice." Saying the Name then breaks through all the ignorance of sentient beings and readily brings all their aspirations to fulfillment. Saying the Name is in itself mindfulness; mindfulness is nembutsu; nembutsu is Namo-amida-butsu.

-Shinran