



1727 Pali Highway  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

# GOJI

Vol. 76 No. 02



FEBRUARY 2021  
NEWSLETTER

of the  
Honpa Hongwanji  
Hawaii Betsuin  
hawaiibetsuin.org

2021 Slogan:

Building  
Healthy Sanghas:  
Nurturing Empathy  
and Respect

BETSUIN  
MINISTERS

Chief Minister  
Rev. Toyokazu Hagio

Ministerial Staff  
Rev. Yuika Hasebe  
Rev. Sol Kalu  
Rev. Shingo Furusawa

## Nirvana Day is February 15

This month, on February 15th we will observe Nirvana day when Shakyamuni Buddha, the founder of Buddhism passed away. It is said that he was born as a prince of the Shakya clan about 2500 years ago, and he could have had a luxurious life. However, he realized that we all must get old, get sick, and someday must pass away even though we had everything that we wished for. So He left the castle to be a monk to seek true happiness. Six years later, he became a Buddha or awakened one under the bodhi tree. After becoming the awakened one, Shakyamuni Buddha traveled to many places to share his teachings. The Buddha passed away at the age of 80.

You may wonder what Shakyamuni Buddha taught. Shinran Shonin, the founder of Shin Buddhism told us that Shakyamuni appeared in this world to reveal Amida Buddha's primal vow. Amida Buddha vowed to let all of us be born in the Pure Land and become awakened ones there. Needless to say, our lives will end someday. However, our death can be a transformation as we are born in the Pure Land. That is, Shakyamuni Buddha told us to take refuge in Amida Buddha.

On Nirvana day, let us extend our gratitude to Shakyamuni Buddha who revealed about Amida Buddha's Great Compassion.

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Shakyamuni Buddha asked Ananda, his disciple, to help him lay down. Ananda prepared a bed for him, and Buddha slowly lay down; facing west, his head was in the north direction, and his right arm hung down.

"Lying down between twin Sala trees, he gave his final dharma talk, ending with this admonishment, 'After I leave this world, make the Dharma your place of refuge. Make of yourself a light...all things in this world are impermanent. Follow the Dharma diligently.' Those were his last words."

Shakyamuni Buddha passed away under the sala tree at the age of 80. Until the last moment of his life, he never stopped spreading the Dharma. The words he left, even 2500 years later, still vividly explain the truth of all life and all human nature to us. In this month of February, let us think again what Buddha leaves for us.



## Dharma Message: “Survival Rate” Rinban, Toyokazu Hagio



When we say “Namu-amida-butsu,” the benefits we gain in the present are boundless; The Karmic evil of our transmigration in birth-and-death disappears, And determinate Karma and untimely death are eliminated.

(#99: Hymns of the Pure Land)

A Happy 2021 New Year! Even with the COVID-19 infection still with us, we still say “Happy New Year!” Now that the vaccine is being made available, our situation still remains that of “a caged bird.” All of the people in the world are approaching an unstable, critical new year. This COVID-19 infection is not only found

in certain small areas but all over the world. The situation feels ominous and unearthly.

Buddhism points out that everything in this world arises and disappears according to conditions. Therefore, there is nothing that is forever unchanging. As it is said, “Everything is impermanent.” All things and incidents are constantly changing and not staying the same. We like to think of the word “impermanence” as having a pessimistic meaning, that things change for the worse, that the young eventually become old, the healthy become sick, dear ones separate and eventually all people die. But impermanence does not necessarily mean that all things get worse. Because of impermanence, things can also take a turn for the better: sad things may turn into happiness, suffering may change to pleasure, loneliness may turn to a warm encounter with friends. There is a saying “there is no night not followed by morning.” Even when you feel that darkness is closing around you from all sides, eventually the light of morning comes. This is possible because things are impermanent.

And also, why are we worrying about COVID-19 spreading? Because of the speed of its spreading and the high number of deaths. However, when I compare the rate of deaths, the highest death rate is pancreatic cancer about 94%, and lowest is prostate cancer 1% and cancer’s average is 40%, influenza is 0.1%, and then this COVID-19 is 2%.

There is a big problem that can’t be disregarded by all human beings. And that is the fact that once we are born, we must die without fail someday. It is

indicated in “White Ashes.” “Whether I go before others, or others go before me; Whether it be today, or it be tomorrow, who is to know? Those who leave before us are countless as the drops of dew.” When I read this the first time, I was deeply impressed but when I read it repeatedly, I don’t accept it as, “Whether I go before others, or others go before me.” Instead, I think, “others go before me, others go before me; I go after others, I go after others.” I interpreted it selfishly and passed my time in idleness.

However, since you are born, death will surely visit means “the mortality of human beings is 100%. All other living things will be extinguished someday. However, only we human beings know about our own death. When humans become aware that someday we have to die, we consider three things: #1: Search for perpetual youth and longevity, and eternal life. #2: If possible, ignore death and turn one’s face away from death and cheat the realities of this life. #3: Search for eternal life after death. Everyone, which position are you living in? Probably most of us might be in the 2nd category, however, no matter how great your desire, your death will surely come. Therefore, it is better to consider and research your future life as eternal, truthful in an absolute world. This world is Buddha’s Pure Land.

The faithful person said “To die” is the rule of this world, “not to die” is the rule of Buddha’s Pure Land. My choice is “to die body” transforms into a “not to die body. Namu Amida Butsu.”



# 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](mailto: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:

Editorial: *Jo desMarets; Dianne Ida, Randy Kawamoto, Rev. Yuika Hasebe, Japanese section editor* Production: *Stacy Bradshaw, Colleen Kunishige*; Circulation: *Stacy Bradshaw*; Contributing reporters from *Hongwanji Mission School, Buddhist Women’s Association, Dharma School & Parents, Project Dana, Wednesday Gang and Gals, Green Team, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Pacific Buddhist Academy, Betsuin Board and Social concerns, and the Kyodan*

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

## President's Message from Dexter Mar

### Realizing Hope

By Dexter Mar



#### Our Vision of What We Want to Be:

**“A welcoming place** where all share the joy of living  
with gratitude and compassion inspired by Buddhist values.”

Hope is like a dream. Unfulfilled hope is like a dream that fades away in the morning light. This month, let's focus on the first of part of the Hawaii Betsuin hope for our future: “A welcoming place”. How might we become our dream?

Three possible areas were offered in the January 2021 GOJI to create a welcoming place:

- **Covid safety:** keeping the Betsuin campus “Covid-free”
  - **Outreach:** continuing “virtual” access, and expanding in-person services
  - **Facilities:** starting construction on renovations and beginning the individual campaign.
  -
1. Continue keeping the Betsuin “bubble” safe while re-opening cautiously. Let's show restraint in gathering before everyone has their shots. Until then be an example to others by masking, distancing, washing, and vaccinating.
  2. Maintain your connection to the Betsuin by learning to use your smartphone, computer pad, and/or computer for joining services, events, and classes. Use the Betsuin YouTube channel. When in-person gatherings occur, patiently follow public safety measures with understanding and gratitude.
  3. Look ahead as this time is used to build for the future by supporting the Second Century Capital Campaign to renovate our facilities into a “Community Conference Center” and upgraded Sanctuary.

Next month: What can be done to **“All share the joy of living”**.



## BWA News and Events Fujiko Motobu

### BWA Calendar

Feb. 7-Mar. 7: Dana Day Collection  
 Mar. 3: Virtual Marketplace (open to BWA members)  
 Apr. 4-10: Virtual Marketplace (public opening)

Charlene Kihara has written a very interesting essay for her IBS class that she is sharing with you.

### DOLLMAKING AS A TESTAMENT OF FAITH

Myokonin means one who lives their life dedicated to Amida Nyorai. Myokonin are not monks or scholars but are lay followers. The Myokonin have a great understanding of Amida and demonstrate Amida's compassion by unselfishly giving of themselves to better society.

A modern Myokonin is Hisako Nakamura (1897-1968), Takayama Higashi Hongwanji, who was an advocate for the disabled and a poet. She lectured all over Japan for women's groups and groups for the disabled. The Japanese Minister of Health awarded her a medal. Hisako Nakamura inspired people, that whoever and whatever circumstance you live in, you can overcome any obstacle and rise to greatness. She told people her inspiring story and was always grateful for her life.

Hisako was the daughter of a tatami maker. Her family was destitute. When she was three years old, she suffered from frostbite. Her limbs had to be amputated after her appendages became infected due to gangrene. Her father died a few years later, and her mother remarried.

To live, Hisako taught herself to eat

with chopsticks by wrapping gauze around her arm stumps. She taught herself to sew with needle and thread, holding the needle in her mouth. She was able to sew her own underwear and kimonos. Sewing gave Hisako a creative outlet, and she taught herself to make dolls. Hisako made her dolls by measuring the cloth for her doll and cutting fabric for the doll's clothes, all while using her mouth, threading the needle, and holding the needle for sewing.

Her mother was strict with Hisako (kibishi), so that Hisako grew up to be resilient and brave. Throughout her life, she was the victim of (ijime) teasing and bullying. Her siblings would laugh at Hisako when she was eating, saying that she was like a cat, using her mouth to eat. Her mother treated her the same as the other children in the household, making her do chores like sweeping and cleaning her room, lighting the fire for cooking, washing clothes, and washing the dishes. Hisako repeatedly tried until she could finally learn how to do the household chores as if she was an able bodied person.

At that time, no school would allow a person without limbs to attend school, so Hisako taught herself to read and write by reading her brother and sister's textbooks. She would use her mouth to hold the brush to write the characters. The



other children in her village would always be staring at her and teasing her.

When she was nine years old, her mother carried Hisako on her back to the river and was going to kill them both. Hisako cried and cried, begging her mother that she wanted to live. Her mother, hearing Hisako's cry, could not kill Hisako or herself.

When Hisako was 20, her family sold her to a circus hoping that Hisako could make a living in the freak show. She was a circus performer for about 20 years. The circus displayed Hisako with her dolls and calligraphy as a living exhibit. She was always on display and it was as if she was in a reality show. The circus called her "Daruma Musume" (Daruma girl) after the daruma figure of childhood stories that are part of Japanese folklore. What was the name for a cute beloved icon became for Hisako instead an epithet of pain, being trapped in a body that had no limbs and the helplessness of her situation. However, Hisako endured this life in the circus and even traveled with the circus to China.

Hisako married twice and had two daughters. In 1937, Hideo Takahashi,  
 continued on page 5

## BWA News and Events continued from page 4

who was the head of "Japanese Lighthouse" an advocacy group for the disabled in Japan, invited her to meet Helen Keller, the world renowned advocate and author, who was coming to Japan to lecture. Helen Keller, upon meeting, told Hisako, "You are a miracle of this world, you are greatly superior to me." Helen Keller embraced Hisako who stood before her

on artificial legs and accepted the doll that Hisako had lovingly sewn. Hisako Nakamura was grateful to the words of Helen Keller and felt for the first time in her life that someone had acknowledged her life. She wrote, "...it was grace that brought her (me) to today, the grace of her (my) parents, society and all people. There had been

the person who sold her (me) to show to the people, but if that man had not been around, I could not have lived till today. So if I look at it all today, in every direction, I am thankful. I live embraced in the sleeves of the Buddha." THE END.



( Photo of Hisako and doll she made for Helen Keller)

## BWA General Membership Meeting: New Members Are Welcomed and Installation of Officers



(Rev. Hagio welcomed new BWA members)

appeared via Zoom for the installation. A more detailed article about the installation held on January 16th and general membership meeting held on January 24th will be in the March 2021 Goji.

On Jan. 16th the Betsun BWA had a hybrid (in-person and Zoom) installation of officers in the Annex Hondo. In compliance with the Betsuin's pandemic guidelines of ten or fewer people, six incoming BWA officers and the BWA advisor met in the annex, maintaining social distance, while the remaining incoming directors and auditors

Newly Installed BWA Officers: In person and via Zoom



HUMOR IS ESSENTIAL TO GOOD, HEALTHY LIVING:

Due to the coronavirus epidemic we all need to be very cautious in our daily lives. Here are some guidelines for you to follow.

Don't touch MEN and always listen to WOMEN.

Don't touch **M E N**

**M** your MOUTH,  
**E** your EYES, and  
**N** NOSE.

Listen to **W O M E N**

**W** WASH your hands,  
**O** OBEY and keep your distance,  
**M** MAKE sure to wear a MASK,  
**E** EXERCISE and EAT right food, and  
**N** NO traveling, roaming about; stay home!



## ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The Betsuin is now scheduling in person funerals and memorial services with a limit of 9 attendees or hybrid services via Zoom with 9 in person attendees.

**Other options are available.**

Please call the office at 536-7044 for more information.



### Mini Market Going Virtual

**Mar. 3:** Virtual Marketplace  
(open to BWA members)

**Apr. 4-10:** Virtual Marketplace  
(public opening)

Details Coming Soon!

### 2021 SPRING VIRTUAL NEMBUTSU SEMINAR

Sponsored by the Honolulu & Oahu Hongwanji Councils and the Office of Buddhist Education

## Buddhism & Everyday Life

Seeing Buddhism in our everyday life by looking at examples from Shin Buddhists whose everyday life experience was their greatest teacher, but based on their deep listening and foundation of the Dharma.

**Sat. March 27**

**9-11 am (HST)**

**Featuring Bishop Marvin Harada (BCA)**

CLICK LINK FOR BIO > [http://bit.ly/2021NS\\_bio](http://bit.ly/2021NS_bio) <

#### agenda

9:00 am: Welcome/Opening  
9:05-10:05am: Bishop Harada  
10:05 am: Break  
10:10 am: Q&A  
10:55 am: Closing/Mahalo



#### registration is FREE

DEADLINE: Saturday, March 20

Click link to register  
> [http://bit.ly/2021NS\\_registration](http://bit.ly/2021NS_registration) <

Please note that the seminar will be recorded and uploaded, if you do not wish to be shown, please keep your video off during the seminar.

#### donations

We welcome your donations, which will be earmarked to provide a copy of Bishop Harada's book, "Discovering Buddhism in Everyday Life" to all Honolulu/Oahu Hongwanji temples.

CLICK LINK TO DONATE & MORE INFO > [http://bit.ly/NS2021\\_donations](http://bit.ly/NS2021_donations) <

Questions? Please contact Mililani Hongwanji office (808) 625-0925

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!

### COVID QUILTS

Join with members of your organization to make a  
QUILT

in honor of those who served, suffered,  
and survived during the pandemic.

Members contribute individual squares that they decorate  
commemorating unsung heroes, hope for the future,  
whatever ideas they want to express.

The total size of each quilt will be app. 80" x 80" with  
sixteen 20" x 20" or twenty-five 15" x 15" squares.

Members of the organization will collect the squares  
and sew them together as a quilt.

Quilts will be exhibited this summer  
in public places approved by the organization.

For information and to join this project,  
please contact Lorna Takehara Strand  
[lorna.strand@gmail.com](mailto:lorna.strand@gmail.com) 415 823-0909

# Betsuin Dharma School News Debbie Kubota

## Virtual Betsuin Dharma School Services and Activities - Sundays at 9:00 a.m.

After a break for the holiday season, we started our virtual Betsuin Dharma School service and activities again on Sunday, January 10. It has been great to have our Betsuin ministers and families, Kyodan ministers and Jikoen families joining us on a regular basis for our services. Recently, we have been happy to have some Betsuin Board members join us. We hope everyone continues to participate when they can.

For our January 10 service, we had over 50 participants. Many thanks to our emcee, Kainoa Brennan, for doing such a great job, and to his brother, Kenji, for sharing a wonderful aspiration. Rinban Hagio led us in the Vandana Ti-Sarana, Reverend Furusawa chanted the sutra Gassho to Amida, and Reverend Kalu shared the Dharma Message focusing on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in honor of his birthday next week. He featured four of Dr. King's quotes in his message:

*"The time is always right to do what is right... Life's most persistent & urgent question is...what are you doing for others?"*

*"Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase. If I cannot do great things, I can do small things in a great way."*

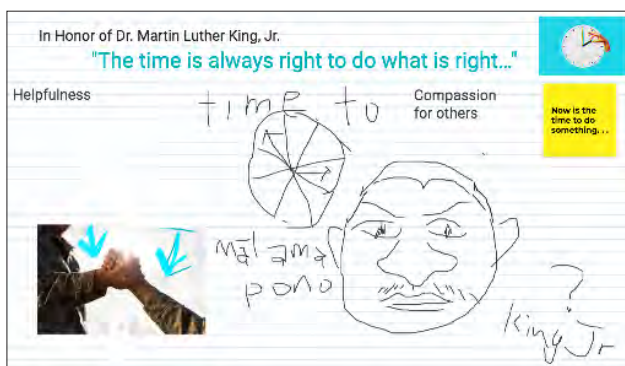


Our Dharma School activity promoted the BWA's project to remember the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Using the Zoom breakout rooms and GoogJam Boards, we created four posters depicting the above quotes. Here are two of our poster creations.

(2021 Hongwanji Slogan) featuring the book by Jayneen Sanders, "You, Me and Empathy," January 31 - book reading by Jovie Yoshioka and related activity.

February brings more fun activities featuring relationships/friendships and getting to know our Betsuin/Kyodan ministers, Valentine's Day, the theme of "respect" (2021 Hongwanji slogan) and a joint service with Mililani Hongwanji.

No matter what your age, our virtual services are open to all generations from across our islands and the Mainland. Please contact our Betsuin office if you are interested.



For the remainder of January, our service themes and activities are as follows: January 17 - Hoonko and Shinran-O (Bingo game with facts about Shinran); January 24 - Focus on Empathy

Hope to "see" you online with us soon!



**Radio Programs  
FEBRUARY 2021  
KZOO 1210 AM**

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

06 Rev. Shinji Kawagoe  
13 Rev. Ryoso Toshima  
20 Rimban Toyokazu Hagio  
27 Rev. Yuika Hasebe

**NOTICE:**

The Betsuin is now scheduling in person funerals and memorial services with a limit of 9 attendees or hybrid services via Zoom with 9 in person attendees. Other options are available. Please call the office at 536-7044 for more information.

On site  
Sunday services  
continue to be  
**CANCELLED**

Go to the website  
[hawaiibetsuin.org](http://hawaiibetsuin.org)



for a link

**In Memoriam**



**NOVEMBER 2020**

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

03/08/2020 WAKAHIRO, Flora Kawamoto (82)  
05/12/2020 OMORI, Geraldine Ayako (92)  
11/28/2020 SHIMIZU, Seiichi (90)

02 FUJIHARA, Eileen Kuniye (91)  
03 YONAHARA, Glenn Akira (57)  
06 KAMEMOTO, Garrett Hiroshi (54)  
07 KOBATA, Hideo (65)  
10 KIYUNA, Gordon Sadao (83)  
13 HIGA, Larry Shigeyoshi (66)  
16 KOBAYASHI, Hiroshi James (73)  
18 KAMEI, Grace Kazuko (85)  
24 INATSUKA, Yoshiko (92)  
26 NITTA, Haruyo (94)  
30 SUNADA, Irene Tsuyako (98)

**Nursing Home Services  
FEBRUARY 2021**

**Nursing Home Services  
are cancelled until  
further notice**

**2021 Memorial Service Schedule**

2021 is the memorial year for those who passed away in:

2020: 1st year	2009: 13th year	1989: 33th year
2019: 3rd year	2005: 17th year	1972: 50th year
2015: 7th year	1997: 25th year	1922: 100th year



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 Shonin