Nirvana Day

The end of the cycle of death and rebirth

Nirvana Day, also known as Nehan E or Parinirvana Day in other Buddhist traditions, is recognized as the day the historical Buddha Shakayamuni entered Nirvana at the conclusion of his life as a human being and attained final liberation from all bondage and suffering. Nirvana in Buddhism is the end of the cycle of death and rebirth. It is the state of freedom from all wants and suffering, the extinguishing of all blind passions and the attainment of peace and tranquility.

There are many stories concerning the Buddha’s final moments before passing away. It is said that he ate a last meal of Sukaramaddava, meaning either soft pork or some mushrooms, as offered by a blacksmith named Cunda and became ill after eating. Others theorize that based on the symptoms as described in the Nirvana Sutra, the Buddha succumbed to a condition known as mesenteric infarction, a gangrenous condition of the intestines.

Whatever the cause, it was a very sad occasion for the Buddha’s disciples as Shakayamuni Buddha entered Parinirvana or final enlightenment in between two sala trees. According to the Mahaparanibbana Sutra the Buddha passed away soon after the rainy season retreat, most likely during the autumn or mid-winter. The flowers and leaves of the sala trees where the Buddha was laid is said to have miraculously bloomed off season.

Nirvana Day is a time for Buddhist to reflect on the meaning of Shakayamuni Buddha’s death, the impermanence of all things, and the true ultimate nature of Buddhahood of all sentient beings. Shakayamuni Buddha lived as a human being but through his teachings, upon attainment of enlightenment and becoming Buddha he awakened to the truth in the universe, the causes of suffering and the ways to alleviate or eliminate the suffering of all sentient beings, which he tirelessly taught to all people out of deep compassion for 45 years until his death. It is fitting to remember and honor the founder of Buddhism, Siddhartha Gautama Buddha, on this day of his passing away with much reverence and introspection into our own lives on the meaning of Nirvana Day.
Dharma Message from Rev. Toyokazu Hagio: “Transformation (Henshin)”

Shinran Shonin said: “It is hard for us to abandon this old home of pain, where we have been transmigrating for innumerable Kalpas down to the present, and we feel no longing for the Pure Land of peace, where we have yet to be born.”

During Halloween the children of HMS wore their cute, pretty, and exciting costumes, and we enjoyed their transformation. When I saw them, I realized that we, also, choose to transform ourselves. However, we have to realize that when we change ourselves, sometimes it is good, and sometimes it is bad, depending on the situation!

Remember the American hero Superman? There is also a Japanese hero called the Masked Rider. When they transform to fight for justice, they do a certain action. Clark Kent enters a telephone booth and instantly changes into Superman, and the Masked Rider does a certain pose and then he says “HENSHIN (transform),” and he changes into the Masked Rider. These heroes were transformed by their will, mind, and intent for justice. The Metamorphosis (which means transformation) was written by Franz Kafka of Germany. This story was about a man who woke up one morning and changed into a huge insect without any cause. He struggled with this unreasonable transformation.

The Teaching of Buddha is that all things and circumstances that exist in this world arise due to causes and conditions, which means that if you do a good deed, you receive a good result. If you do a bad thing, you receive a bad result. But these conditions and situations are very complicated and vary within a wide range, so that the results don’t always meet our expectations. But if you live, full of blind passions, such as greed, anger, and ignorance, you must be reincarnated, a transformation in which greed leads to becoming a hungry ghost, anger leads to becoming an Ashura (evil & fearsome spirit, fond of fighting) and ignorance leads to hell. This reincarnation might be explained as the way a chick develops in an egg or a caterpillar develops into a moth or butterfly. These creatures might be said “to be transforming.”

The Essentials of Jodo-Shinshu says that by the power of the Nembutsu at the end of life, we will be born in the Pure Land and attain Buddhahood, returning at once to this delusional world to guide other people to awaken. “We will be born in the Pure Land and attain Buddhahood” means we will transform into Bodhisattvas.

On October 13, 2018, Hawaii Betsuin observed the Temple Building’s 100th Anniversary. We held a Chigo Parade (Traditional children’s parade), in which 26 children and families participated. They arrived at the temple at 7:00 a.m. and changed into their costumes and applied make-up. Then each one had a commemorative picture taken to remember that day.

Since these children had never experienced a Chigo Parade, some of the children felt nervous. Other children were tired and fussy. Therefore, parents and grandparents were concerned. One child, in particular, was having difficulty. During the preparation time and at the start of the parade, he ran around without any clothes. I asked his grandmother “Why didn’t he like to wear his costume?” She said unhappily, “My grandson is very sensitive to heat. Even at home he doesn’t want to wear a T-shirt. Today, I wanted my granddaughter to wear a nice Chigo costume, take a picture and participate in the parade. I wished that someday he would look at the picture and then become a divine Buddha’s child.”

I then realized that the relationship between grandmother and grandchild was like the relationship between Buddha and myself. Amida Buddha promised, “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 perfect enlightenment.” This means that Amida Buddha already accomplished the cause for us to be born into the Pure Land and to become Buddhas: “When sentient beings upon hearing the Buddha’s name, realize an entrusting heart in joy with even a single
BWA News and Events

Message From the New BWA President, Dianne Ida

In 2006, Barbara Brennan asked me to help with one of the workshops for the BWA World Convention. I remembered that my mom, Dorothy Murakami, who passed away in 2005, helped with a previous World Convention, so I said OK. I was not a BWA member at that time, but shortly after that I decided to join. I was not really active at the beginning. I think I just started off with asaji refreshments and emceeing.

Hawaii Betsuin has been part of my life since elementary school when I was a student of Fort Sunday School. I was in the Children’s Choir, Junior YBA, and played the organ. My dad, Mark Murakami, held temple and kyodan offices, including President.

During my college years, I didn’t attend very often, but I returned when I had my first child.

Then came the busy years with the children - Sunbeams, Teens in Motion, Junior YBA, and Girl Scouts. All of the experiences had a big impact on my life because of the incredible friendships that I made.

Meanwhile, my Mom was active with the Upasika, Fujinkai, and Sudhana groups.

With my parents being my role models, I reflect on what they did and what they valued. I am from Arigatai, Ganbare, Oyakoko, Okagesama de, Kansha, Shikataga nai, Dekiru dake.

Now, through many causes and conditions, I have the privilege of being president of an incredible organization, the BWA. I would describe the members as Brave, Willing, Awesome. I humbly ask for everyone’s support. If you’re not a member, we welcome you to join us, and let’s have fun, learn, help, experience new things – together.

With a grateful gassho . . .

BWA News

HOSHA: The first Saturday of each month is Hosha Day, cleaning up of the Hondo. BWA ladies have always helped the ministers’ wives in cleaning up the Hondo, including the altar area. Due to the shortage of ministers’ wives these days, BWA ladies are in great demand to help in the maintenance. If you are free on the first Saturday mornings from about 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. please volunteer. Every bit of manpower will be appreciated, and volunteering is good for you. Not everyone is permitted in the altar area, therefore, if you get selected to clean that area, you are a special person.

DANA DAY: February 3 through March 3 will be the time when BWA will be asking for donations. Last year was a surprisingly great year where you all donated to capacity of over five thousand dollars. The selection in give away was made to the Kahauiki Village, for homeless families, with the concept of living in the plantation community, whose idea was borne by Duane Kurisu, who was raised in Honomu plantation on the Big Island. Kahauiki Village will continue to receive donations for two more years, a total of three years. This year, a new group will be selected after the Dana Day event is completed. The third year recipient has been children with poor vision and could not afford glasses. They were issued glasses issued by the doctors and they were extremely appreciative, for they could see well with glasses. Donations are issued to the organizations for three consecutive years. The donation made to this project is a worthy cause, so please do not hesitate to make your donation annually.

BETSUIN NEW YEAR’S PARTY: This gathering is scheduled for Sunday, February 10, beginning at 11:00 am, after the ten o’clock service. Lunch will be served, so please make all effort to attend the service and the party. Let’s make year 2019 a joyous and happy one for all of us, so we can begin by partying on February 10th.

MINI MARKET: Mini market will be held on February 17th. Our BWA ladies have always made this event a successful one with a lot of donations and help in purchasing all the items which are on sale. We are forever grateful to all of you who participate in this event. Let’s keep our spirits up.

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SUGGESTIONS WELCOME: In order for all the members to enjoy participating in the BWA, any suggestion will always be welcome. We are open to any new ideas on how to make our BWA organization more interesting, enjoyable and impressive. If you have any ideas please share them with any of the officers, and they in turn will mull over them and activate them in whatever way possible.

VOLUNTEERING: DO IT. There are many things that you can help by volunteering at the temple. One type is to help the ministers by accompanying the reverend to visit the nursing homes, just once a month. The minister will conduct the service and all that you will do is to go along with the incense box for the patients to offer them. After that, you can enjoy the entertainment part in participating with the singing, usually Japanese songs. The ministers are all well versed in singing, so as aides, it is easy to follow along. You can sing along.

Volunteering at the temple is also beneficial. You can answer the telephone, greet visitors and make them feel at home and comfortable, and run errands for the office staff. With a gentle, smiling face and speaking to them will make the visitors feel comfortable, and some will certainly return to attend our services if they are impressed by the first greeter.

Join the Wednesday Gang of ladies. They are generally busy sewing, so if you like to do handwork, see those Wednesday ladies and join them. You will enjoy meeting once a week with your friends.

Volunteering is good for seniors. It is one way to fight off dementia since you will be using your brain and socializing with others. Being alone is definitely not a healthy way of life, and many of the seniors have lost their spouses so they are alone a lot; therefore, they need to make effort to be with others and do volunteer work. Fight off your shyness and please come out into the open. We need your help. Women are great in socializing so help the men converse and enjoy one another. Women have a lot to chat about so they are never dull company.

DRUGS WHICH ARE HARMFUL: The worst drug is heroin, then comes cocaine. Third is nicotine, so those of you who smoke should rethink and perhaps consider quitting your bad habit of smoking. And, the last is alcohol. Perhaps one little drink of sake is okay, but you can’t drink too much beer nor any other hard liquor. You should quit visiting the bar. Keep healthy, and practice meditation instead.

HUMOR: OLD IS WHEN………Your friends compliment you on your new alligator shoes and you’re barefooted. OLD IS WHEN………You are cautioned to slow down by the doctor instead of by the police. OLD IS WHEN……...“Getting Lucky” means you find your car in the parking lot. OLD IS WHEN………An “all nighter” means not getting up to use the bathroom. Are you old?

BWA FEBRUARY EVENTS

Sun. Feb. 3  DANA DAY collection begins
(2018 was a tremendous success.)
Thurs. Feb. 7: Federation BWA is having tea in the dining room at 4:00 pm.
Sat. Feb 16  BWA executive board meeting @10 am in the dining room.
Sun. Feb. 17  BWA Mini Market: DONATIONS AND HELP NEEDED.
Sat. Feb. 23  Honolulu United BWA rep meeting (8 AM -11 AM) at Jikoen

DHARMA MESSAGE CONT. FROM PAGE 2

of Buddha, direct their merits with sincere mind, and aspire to be born in that land, they then all attain birth in that land and dwell in the stage of non-retrogression.” This means that Amida Buddha already created the cause for us to be born into the Pure Land. This is like wearing a costume for Chigo. However, we are attached to our lives, where we are living freely without any reflection. In other words, “we feel no longing for the Pure Land of peace, where we have yet to be born.” Therefore, once again let us listen to the original meaning of the Nembutsu and open our hearts to its will, mind, and intention. In Gassho
Remember the Hawaii Betsuin Centennial Ride? On September 30, 2018, temple board members Arthur Nakagawa and David Atcheson and Arthur’s son Daniel rode in Hawaii Bicycling League’s annual century ride. They did so to honor the 100th anniversary of the temple’s grand building on Pali Highway, dedicated in 1918.

An October 2018 news item at hawaiibetsuin.org reported on the ride, the fundraising results, and expressed mahalo to all who contributed. But we wanted to reach the Goji readership too with the final, updated results:

The Hawaii Betsuin Centennial ride raised a total of $7,910 from 49 donors, with 100% of pledges fulfilled!

Mahalo to all who participated in this tangible expression of gratitude for our beautiful temple, those who built it, and those who have maintained it over the years. May we continue to maintain and enhance Hawaii Betsuin as a place to share the living teachings of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism for generations to come.

- David Atcheson
President’s Message from Dexter Mar

Our Vision for Betsuin’s 2nd Century

On December 16, 2018, the Board of Directors developed the following vision statement to complement our Mission Statement, created in 2012

**Betsuin Vision Statement (2018)**

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

A vision statement describes an organization’s aspiration for the future, while a mission statement defines what we do today. (see Betsuin and HQ Mission Statements below) So why is this important?

For many years, the Betsuin has continued, “doing business as usual” (our mission statement) without a vision statement to inspire our future. As we embark on our 3-year $3 Million Capital Campaign, we now have this beacon to guide us.

Each word holds much meaning:

“A welcoming place”............. recognizes our desire to become an open, friendly, hospitable refuge and community gathering venue

“where all share”............... inclusive of all races, ages, genders, disabled & families

“the joy of living”................. focus on living each day fully (not just funerals and memorials)

“with gratitude & compassion”.......... emphasis on appreciation and helping others

“inspired by Buddhist values”.......... Buddhist values as expressed in the Golden Chain of Love

These words together, remind us to continually strive to achieve our vision. While our Capital Campaign will give us the opportunity to improve our facilities, it’s our personal commitment to the Betsuin and sharing Buddhist values that are essential to become what we envision.

Using our new Betsuin Vision, the Fundraising Board Committee has selected 3 major facilities projects for the Capital Campaign:

1. **Community Conference Center** – Renovation of the Lounge, Annex Temple, Social Hall and five restrooms. The variety of spaces will enable Betsuin to welcome visitors for nonprofit, corporate and government meetings; as well as better serve current members and affiliate organizations.

2. **Main Hondo** - Upgrades to lighting, audio, visual systems, wallpaper, seating. We must strive to make our main temple a place to inspire the wisdom and compassion of Buddhist values.

3. **Annex Social Hall/HMS Creative Arts Center** – Handicap access from the front parking lot supports access to facilities by those with disabilities

The next steps are design and cost estimation by the Betsuin Facility Committee. More specific renovation details will be available next month.

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**Betsuin Mission Statement (2012)**

The mission of Hawaii Betsuin is to enrich people with a life of gratitude, harmony, and peace by sharing the Buddhist teachings.

- We share Amida Buddha’s Teachings of wisdom and compassion as taught by Shinran Shonin through religious services, classes, and programs.
- We create a safe, welcoming, and aesthetically supportive environment to nurture religious development.
- We care for people by tending to their spiritual, physical, and emotional needs.
- We provide education guided by Buddhist values.

**HHMH Mission Statement**

Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii shares the living teachings of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism so that all beings may enjoy lives of harmony, peace, and gratitude.
Dharma School News

Sunday, January 13 - Dharma Message by Reverend Shingo Furusawa

"Live in the present...Treasure the present moment." That was the theme of the Dharma Message shared by Reverend Shingo Furusawa for our Dharma School Family Service. He called all of our Dharma School students up to the front of the temple so they could see his wonderful drawings that accompanied his story.

Young and old were delighted by his story of a caterpillar, “Cater-chan” who always dreamed about being a beautiful butterfly. Cater-Chan was so focused on the future, that he didn’t pay attention to what was happening in the present—he ate and ate and ate many, many leaves, and he didn’t clean up his house or yard, which was filled with weeds. When it came time for him to make his cocoon, it was bigger than all the rest, so his big body could fit inside. When he emerged as a butterfly, his body was so big but his wings were so small that he couldn’t even fly. Sadly, Cater-chan’s wish to become a beautiful butterfly was not achieved because he was only focused on the future and didn’t pay attention to the present.

What a fun way to share a meaningful message. Mahalo nui loa, Reverend Shingo!

UPCOMING DHARMA SCHOOL EVENTS FOR 2019

Sunday, February 24 - Joint Honolulu and Oahu District Dharma Schools Activity—Service at Ewa Hongwanji, lunch and Hawaiian Railway Society Train Ride from Ewa to Kahe Point and back.

Sunday, May 5 - Intergenerational Picnic at Magic Island - All Honolulu Temple Sanghas are invited to join us!
The great practice is to say the Name of the Tathagata of unhindered 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