

LAST MONTH'S EVENTS

Kahului Hongwanji Seminar – KiMyo MuRyoJu (Return to Immeasurable Life)

“Review, Revisit, Revitalize the Dharma Ohana”

Guest Speaker: Rev. Ronald Kobata, San Francisco Buddhist Church



KEY POINTS

- “Please Take Off Your Shus” Quoting Rev. Kobata: “... encourage listening to the teachings as a process of having our hearts and minds opened by realizing universality of truth of the Dharma, rather than clinging to a particular, exclusive sectarian view. This is not to say that the teachings of Shinran Shonin upon which Jodo Shin-shu school of Buddhism is based promotes an exclusive view, but rather it becomes problematic when we presume to have a monopoly on the truth of the Dharma.”
- Comparison of the teachings of Buddhism with the philosophy of author **Eckhart Tolle** – as discussed in his books, The Power of Now and A New Earth. Rev. Kobata says about Eckhart Tolle – “I appreciate the way in which he introduces Buddhism without calling it Buddhism.”
- Rev. Kobata: “The difference between Shin Buddhism and other religions is that it is a **waking up** instead of adopting of a faith or belief. Buddhism begins with this sense of awakening. The beginning of Buddhism, for me, is 49 days after Siddhartha’s realization, awakening. He then began his ministry in the towns.”
- QUOTE: “The dharma doesn’t change. It’s the same Nembutsu. It’s how you package it – in a palatable way.”
- Kobata: “Buddhism hasn’t had to change the basic dharma. The application of it has altered, which gives us the different denominations.”
- “The beginnings of Buddhism came, not from an event, but from experience with common people.”
- “How would you explain Buddhism in one word? – LIFE – not how I want it to be or expect it to be but life the way it is.”
- “What is the difference between Buddhists and Non-Buddhists? Non-Buddhists think there is a difference.”
- “[as Shin Buddhists] what is our practice? --- **mindfulness**.”
-

State Lay Convention – held at Makawao Hongwanji

HIGHLIGHTS



Three cheers for Lay Convention Chairs – PEGGY KONO and CAROL YAMAMURA of Makawao Hongwanji

- MESSAGES from Bishop Eric Matsumoto and Hawaii Kyodan President Alton Miyamoto.
- BUSINESS Session: Resolution 1-Hawaii Bylaws Change; Resolution 2-Membership Crisis
- KEYNOTE SPEAKER: **Ramsay Taum**, founder/president of Life Enhancement Institute of the Pacific LLC. “Sustainability and Uniting as One”
- WORKSHOPS: 1) “Social Marketing – A Modern Approach to a Pressing Concern **Charles Hirata**, retired police captain of MPD and a member of Wailuku Hongwanji. 2) “Resources along the Continuum of Care: Navigating through a system of care for elders” **Dr. Michael Cheang**, Assistant Professor in Family & Consumer Sciences Dept. at UH-Manoa. 3) “Have you had your RDA (Recommended Daily Allowance) of Dharma Education Today?” **Corliss Yamaki**, retired high school instructor with MA in English.
- FRIENDSHIPS old and new. Sharing of concerns, ideas, hopes.
- FOOD, FOOD, GLORIOUS FOOD !!!

More of Lay Convention on next page.

LAST MONTH



Golf scores tallied on Friday night.



Golf top winner Rowan Matsumoto w/ 'Noosh' Nishihara, George Okamoto



Gordon & Aileen Cockett 'talk story' w/ 'old' Lay Convention/Giseikai friends.



Sylvia Ishikawa (WHM) & Aileen Cockett (LHM) converse w/ Keynote Speaker RAMSAY TAUM.

WORKSHOP LEADERS



CORLISS YAMAKI



CHARLES HIRATA



DR. MICHAEL CHEANG



June Asato (Mililani) goes over Hanafuda rules.



Hanafuda ladies of Kahului Hongwanji.

HANAFUDA GAMES!



Carol Inaba & Jane Agawa - a winning team !



Donald Taketa at his prime ... rib, that is.



Chow time. What a spread !

More of Last Month

BOS-ZUSS



Oahuans Keith Fukuda, Wayne Yoshioka, Norman Hitohata-Goto in informal discussion during break time.



Is Bishop Matsumoto describing a bento or a business item?



Delegates read the docu-lingo of the Resolutions.



Do the 'ayes' or 'nays' have it ?



ITADAKIMASU ! The Lahaina group concentrates on the order of FOOD.



Lahaina Hongwanji was represented by DELEGATES **Kristin Nohara** and **Tara Otomo**, and OBSERVERS Jane Agawa, Aileen Cockett, Gordon Cockett, Emiko Fujikawa, Carol Inaba, Phyllis Nakamura, 'Noosh' Nishihara, Sharon Nohara, Barbie Otomo, and Ron Togashi.

WHAT THE CAMERA MISSED AT THE LAY CONVENTION

- The cohesiveness and camaraderie of the Makawao Hongwanji members. That upcountry 'gang' is a model example of the "geese flying in formation" that Hawaii Kyodan President Alton Miyamoto discussed.
- The unflappability of Makawao's key figures for the convention. When a few things may not have happened as planned, there was no finger-pointing or any 'disconnect' from the matter at hand. The program went on ... very well indeed.
- Gratitude expressed by the host temple members toward all who assisted in prep work and program implementation.
BRAVO and MAHALO to Makawao Hongwanji.

Last Month, continued ...

'CHAT ROOM' with Bishop Eric Matsumoto and Hawaii Kyodan President Alton Miyamoto

Hosted at Kahului Hongwanji

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Attendance consisted of members from all 5 Maui County Hongwanji temples: Kahului, Lahaina, Lanai, Makawao, Wailuku.
- BISHOP'S ADDRESS: Excerpts
 - Workings of the Dharma need to be **more visible**.
 - We need to be more comfortable in talking about our religion.
 - We need to find more ways to encourage people to say the Nembutsu.
 - ... expand opportunity for people to bond with each other as Buddhists.
 - Important to hear each other's stories.
 - I want to hear, **"I'm proud to be a Buddhist"**
 - Social and current events are important.
 - We need to share with youth how the Dharma helps us in our daily lives.
 - ... community sees the value of Project Dana...
 - ... need to **market ourselves even within our own families**.
- ALTON MIYAMOTO excerpts:
 - The first generation recited the Nembutsu many times a day; the second generation at least once a day; what about the third generation?
 - How do we attract the younger generation so that they get to that **passion** that was expressed by the first generation?
 - **How do we find that "WHY?"** that the young people seek?
 - Our Buddhism is not how someone else should fix something ... we are about **self-examination**.
 - Very traditional thinking is okay ... but not "we always do it this way"
 - ... difficult to get local temple members to speak up about their concerns.
 - GEESE ANALOGY: Geese, in V flight formation, can fly 71% farther than if flying individually. Until we get into that mind-set, we 'll still be at square one.
 - ... ask each local temple to encourage member(s) who are not strapped with too many temple-related duties – who can serve on Strategic Planning committees.
- PACIFIC BUDDHIST ACADEMY VIDEO
 - **"Be the change you want to see in the world" – Gandhi**
 - PBA needs to add more buildings to accommodate 120 students (present enrollment is 64). Increasing number of students is part of plan to be financially independent.
 - PBA is non-profit, without assets, is therefore unable to borrow from the bank.
 - Honzan (mother temple in Kyoto) gave us the first 1.5 million dollars to build PBA. Honzan was planning to assist again financially after the 750th Shinran Shonin memorial – but the earthquake/tsunami disaster intervened.
 - **Benefit of PBA is not only education but PROPAGATION.** PBA is part of a bigger education.

AUTUMN HIGAN SERVICE

Guest Speaker: **Rev. Bruce Nakamura**, Hilo Betsuin

- "Don't wait until tomorrow to be joyful, to be grateful. Do it now."
- "Nobody else is going to be happy for me."
- "The need to educate the spirit, the heart of a person is [basic to Buddhism]."
- "Always ask yourself **why** you recite the Nembutsu."



Rev. Nakamura & Violet Nishijima re-meet.

more of September events . . .

PEACE DAY COMMEMORATION



HIGHLIGHTS

- Announcements of Peace Day event at Lahaina Hongwanji – in the Maui News and Lahaina News
- Peace Day banner and flags representing human justice and World Peace.
- Symbolic pinwheels made by Dharma School children and by the Sangha.
- Chicken Hekka dinner followed by showing of the animated film, “Grave of the Fireflies”
- Ringing of the temple bell by attendees – in dedication to World Peace
- Inspirational, peace-related messages from Rev. Ai Hironaka, Emcee Sylvia Neizman, and Kyodan President ‘Noosh’ Nishihara

STORYLINE OF THE FILM

[Quoted from Internet website]

“Setsuko and Seita are brother and sister living in wartime Japan. After their mother is killed in an air raid they find a temporary home with relatives. Having quarreled with their aunt they leave the city and make their home in an abandoned shelter. While their soldier father’s destiny is unknown, the two must depend on each other to somehow keep a roof over their heads and food in their stomachs. When everything is in short supply, they gradually succumb to hunger and their only entertainment is the light of the fireflies.”



UPCOMING EVENTS



MONTHLY MEMORIAL SERVICE

October 2, 2011 at 9:30 am

Rev. Ai Hironaka



Joint – Maui Temples Service
October 9th / 9:00 am / Wailuku HM

Conducted by Pacific Buddhist Academy

Refreshments / Games / Activity

SIGN-UP LIST ON TEMPLE MESSAGE BOARD AND
IN THE SOCIAL HALL.

COMING UP IN NOVEMBER:

- Hospital Visitation – date to be announced.
- MUBWA Fall Assembly – Nov. 12th , 9:00 am
- NEMBUTSU SEMINAR at Lahaina Hongwanji Nov. 19th, 20th with Guest Speaker Rev. Tetsuo Unno

Connections / Links

Hongwanji International Center Kyoto, Japan

Monthly Dharma Thought



[Excerpt from Saichi's Memorial Poems]

Saichi ya, Namu Amida Butsu ni
kokoro torarete
goon yorokobu
goonki wo.

Poem was composed during the weeklong Memorial service of April 10 to 16, 1914, conducted at Saichi's local temple, Anrakuji, in Shimane Prefecture.

Oh, poor Saichi,
his heart's been stolen by
Namu Amida Butsu.
How he celebrates
this act of kindness
during the Memorial service!

Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii *Headquarters Update – August 8, 2011*

RETIREMENT CEREMONY, HONZAN

- 23rd Retirement Ceremony for Resident Ministers in Japan and from Overseas.
- Held at Amida Hall, Honzan – June 24, 2011.
- 251 attendees, including ministers / families.
- Rev. Thomas Okano (immediate past Bishop of Honpa Hongwanji) & Mrs. Michiko Okano attended the ceremony. Rev. Okano served Hawaii Kyodan for 44 years.

PBA CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

- Check for \$1,200,000.00 was presented from Hawaii Kyodan to PBA at the academy's Capital Campaign Kick-off Ceremony.
- Donation is part of the Shinran Shonin 750th Memorial and Hawaii Kyodan's 120th Anniversary Celebration Projects.
- This donation from members & friends of Hawaii Kyodan will be used to construct a new school building that will allow PBA to double enrollment and move closer to operating a self-sustaining educational program.

PRE-TOKUDO TRAINING STATE LEVEL SESSION HELD AT BUDDHIST STUDY CENTER

- Held July 22-24 at BSC.
- "Tokudo" is the ordination; primary requirement for the Kyoshi Program to become a full fledged minister of Hawaii Kyodan.
- Three Tokudo candidates: Blayne Higa (Moiliili); Kathi Takakuwa (Moiliili); Dexter Mar (Observer, Hawaii Betsuin); Kaethe Kauffman (Hawaii Betsuin)
- Candidates will continue local training until they receive Tokudo at Honzan next year.

JAPAN DISASTER RELIEF EFFORT UPDATE

- As of July 31, 2011, **\$201,718.38** has been collected for the Hawaii Kyodan Japan Disaster Fund.
- Student efforts: Janelle Kau, a Hongwanji Mission School summer school student, donated \$80.00, proceeds from her read-a-thon. Brye Kobayashi raised \$360.00 by designing / printing t-shirts with the "Ganbare" message and selling them to fellow students / staff at his school on the Big Island.
- As of July 24, 2011, Honzan in Kyoto has received approximately 9.5 million dollars in donations, about 1.25 million coming from overseas districts.

METTA [Buddhist Study Center publication]

[Excerpt from Kaethe Kauffman's report on Dr. David Matsumoto's BSC Summer Session teachings.]

- "Dr. Matsumoto emphasized that the content of awakening meant slowly coming into wisdom, becoming more & more able to see one's ego and faults, our usual state of human duality: loss/gain, right/wrong, happy/sad."
- "Awakening to shinjin, deep faith and wisdom means that one becomes able to see the ego and accept our faults."
- "Ironically when we honestly see and deeply feel our bond to our ego, then Amida's vow leads us to enlightenment, the essential unity inherent in Namu Amida Butsu."
- "Since we live in a time of Mappo, or the decay of Buddhism (which Shinran deeply believed), we must rely on the teachings to guide and to accept our bonbu nature and see ourselves as we really are."

An Open Letter to Makawao Hongwanji

The sangha at Lahaina Hongwanji want to express its congratulations to you on a job well done. We also want to express our gratitude to you for planning and staging a very thoughtful program. As far as we are concerned, the 48th Annual Lay Association Convention was an enormous success; perhaps the best ever, thanks to your super efforts.

Substantively we all came away from the workshops feeling we had learned something from the sessions. I personally would never have understood how the younger generation responds to the communication modes available. Elder care was another hot button issue. Many of us face each day with enormous responsibilities as caregivers. Dr. Michael Cheang left us with some good ideas and reassurance that we, as caregivers are not alone. Corliss led her workshop just like you'd expect an experienced teacher would. Lots of group activity and interaction. Oh yeah, Chuck Hirata probably had the toughest venue for a workshop. The temple is not usually conducive to interaction between a workshop leader and the audience. We are normally more accustomed to the clergy speaking from the podium while we listen silently and reflectively. Not too unlike Bishop Matsumoto's presentation at Kahului Hongwanji the week after the Lay Convention. Hirata brought it off very well despite the more formalized setting.

And you guys found a wonderful keynote speaker. Very informative topic and a dynamic presentation. I wonder how many of us ever considered the points that Ramsay Taum raised?

The very thoughtful way you planned the workshops and keynote presentation led the Lahaina Hongwanji participants to come away thinking, "Wow, the topics could not have been more central to our own thinking about the challenges our temples face." If you had used the current Hawaii Kyodan Strategic Plan as a guide, you could not have done a better job putting the convention together.

LHM understands that there may have been a group of participants from other districts who overstayed the convention because you had agreed to feed them. Is this true? If so, we would have loved overstaying too. Your kitchen staff went well beyond the call. You raised the bar and put some extra weight on the participants.

Great job, all the way around. Your success may have been a factor in the defeat of the resolution to consider dissolving the State Lay Association.

On to Kauai next year !!

Richard 'Noosh' Nishihara
President



Maui Hongwanji Council

NEMBUTSU SEMINAR

Guest Lecturer: REV. TETSUO UNNO

- Studied at UC Berkeley, Ryukoku University, Tokyo University, UCLA
- Ministered at BCA's Seattle and Senshin (L.A.) Buddhist Churches
- Taught Religious Studies at Cal State Northridge, Cal State Long Beach
- Popular lecturer at U.S. colleges and temples



**Save the
Dates!!**

Deadline: November 9, 2011

Remit to: Lahaina Hongwanji Mission

- **November 19, 2011**

10:00am-4:00pm

4 lectures, lunch

- **November 20, 2011**

- 11:00am-1:30pm

Finale, lunch

- **Lahaina Hongwanji
Mission**

551 Wainee Street

Contact: LHM Office (808) 661-0640

'Noosh' Nishihara (808) 870-6478

**Registration: \$15
(\$10 students)**

October Dharma Message from Rev. Ai Hironaka, Resident Minister

Last Sunday [Aug. 28th], a beautiful service was held by Dharma School students and teachers. To see little kids at temple, it means to see our future of Lahaina Hongwanji. They did a good job and made us smile and be happy. But, today's service, you have to see my ugly face again, so please be patient to look at my face awhile.

I was talking about Middle Way last time, with my experience of watering our temple lawn. Through this experience, I could have one more interesting story that I want to share with you today.

As you know, here at Lahaina we do not have many rainy days. It means I should think about amount of water I use, in consideration of the people in this community. To prevent the evaporation of water, some people may give water at night time. I was told this by Mr. Neal Fujiwara, who worked in the water department of Maui County. So I just try to follow what he suggested about how and when I should water the lawn and try not to waste the water.

One day, I was watering the lawn at daytime. Before I started, I saw some cars in our parking lot. I like cars, so I know who owns the car, especially members' cars. I understand that Mrs. Denise owned a Ferrari, Mrs. Cam Neizman owned the Porsche 911 Turbo. It was on Saturday, so it was not a preschool parent's car. These were not familiar to me, so it must not be a member's car and not a neighbor's car. As a resident minister, I was wondering whose cars they were, and as boss of my family I thought ... I hope nothing bad would happen. Anyway, as a resident minister and man of my family, I cannot help to stop and always keep watching the temple grounds, checking on who is here now. So, maybe Waiola Church has funeral service or some big event. I thought that because I saw a car parking by the road. But, I still feel uncomfortable with unknown car parking at temple ground. Probably I am too sensitive and I have an uncompassionate heart. Yes, I agree. But if you live inside of temple property even a year with your family, you will understand what kind of feeling I had.

About fifteen minutes after I began to water the lawn, a man with sunglasses came inside our temple ground and tried to talk to me. He said, "Hi, how are you doing?" I responded, "I'm fine, thank you," with a smile. The man said, "You guys have a very green and beautiful yard!" I responded, "Oh, thank you very much!", as I kept watering the lawn. It was common conversation here in Lahaina. But, he continued to talk to me and our conversation became as follows:

The man: "If you give water now, the sun is so strong and hot. That's why the water evaporates so fast. Not good."

Ai: "Oh, I know, I know," with my apologetic face.

The man: "You know what, the county office of Maui recommends that we water night time."

Ai: "I know what you are trying to say."

The man: "I think it is wasting the water. Lahaina does not have much water. Give water at night time. This is the right thing."

Ai: "Ok, ok, I know. Sorry, but our Bon Dance is coming soon, so we are trying to give water more often now. Only this time, otherwise we give water only once a week or twice a week. Please bear with me."

The man: "Yes, but ... Are you a Reverend over here?"

Ai: "Yes, I am. I was assigned here end of last year."

I guess the man was upset with me, because I did not stop watering. I was actually upset with him too. I thought, "How come I have to hear such a story from him, something I know already. That's why I said 'sorry'. My Bonno makes me so upset. After that, he turned around and walked to the parking lot instead of the gate. I thought that is the wrong way to get out from our temple ground. And he turned around to face me and said as follows:

The man: "Oh, by the way, there was a funeral service at Waiola Church. You know, the parking lot was full and if I park on the street, I have to park way down there and must walk a long way. So I parked here."

Ai: "" (So ...)

He went on and walked to his car, which was one of the cars parked in our parking lot without getting any permission from us. I understand the relationship between Waiola Church and Lahaina Hongwanji. I have no problem with giving our space for parking to them. Sometimes we need Waiola Church's parking space too. But, I thought in my mind this way, "When you are trying to say something in the right way to others, you must be in the right and correct position. Your argument is not convincing." Then, it happened when he tried to open the door. He could not find his car key. I should help him at that time, but I felt, "There you are!" He had to go back to the church to find his car key. I did not see him after I finished watering the lawn. I guess he could find his key.

As Shinshu followers, we always try to condescend to others or try to have a humble attitude. But, when the moment of anger, jealousy, or envy comes, it is not easy to follow that. Especially when we get upset, thinking "I am good, you are wrong". But this is the cause of suffering in our daily lives. As a Buddhist, although it is not easy – it is impossible as a human being with Bonno or evil passion, because we try to avoid suffering.

Sakyamuni Buddha teaches us that,

The characteristic of bad people is that they do not know their wrong-doing, do not try to stop wrong-doing, and do not like to be told of their wrong-doing. The characteristic of good people is that they know both good and bad, are able to stop wrong-doing if they realize something is wrong, and are grateful to people who point out their wrong-doing. (Anguttara Nikaya)

One who can respond with gratitude to the true kindness of others is a wonderful person and good for our community. Rennyō Shōnin, the eighth abbot of Hongwanji said,

It is easy to find fault with others. But we hardly ever notice our own faults. When we do see our own faults, it is only because they are so bad that even we cannot fail to notice them and this forces us to examine our own minds. But certainly we must also trust what other people say. (Goichidai Kiki-gaki)

It is very important for people not to forget to be grateful to others in every occasion. Above all, we should be most thankful to people who point out our own faults. Because this is the first step to be humble, gentle person. This is suggested in the Ryōge-mon or the Creed.

Beginning the Ryōge-mon or Creed, it is said,

We rely upon Amida Buddha with our whole heart for the Enlightenment in the life to come, abstaining from all sundry practices and teachings, and giving up the trust in our imperfect self.

The last part of the sentence I shared, "giving up the trust in our imperfect self" is one of the hints to be happy in our daily life. We are living in interdependence of human relationships. Some people are good for you, some people are bad for you. These thoughts of good and bad always come from my Bonno thinking, turning around and judging my own imperfect self. If we are all able to realize our imperfect self, we can be humble and gentle to each other.

Shinran Shōnin wrote in Shōzomatsu Wasan,

Although I take refuge in the true Pure Land way,
It is hard to have a true and sincere mind.
this self is false and insincere;
I completely lack a pure mind.

He could not find any sincere and pure mind himself in his deep reflection. It means he was able to find his imperfect self. So he just entrusted Amida's great wisdom and compassion and was able to get through life suffering in peace.



Rev. Ai shares his space with daughter Koko-chan. She made this drawing of Amida Buddha while visiting at Kahului Hongwanji's Dharma School