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harmony

HIGASHI HONGWANJI HAWAII BETSUIN BULLETIN

7
July 2013

HIGASHI HONGWANJI MISSION OF HAWAII

At Higashi Hongwanji, we remain true to our origins as an open Sangha, welcoming anyone who wishes to learn more about the Jodo Shinshu tradition of Buddhism.

A registered 501(c)3 organization

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Editor: Ken Saiki

THE ORIGIN OF OBON

The word *Obon* comes to us from India, where the Sanskrit *Ullambana* means the suffering of hanging upside down. The tradition of Obon can be traced back to Sakyamuni Buddha's time.

Following many years of studying and training, Mogallana, a disciple of Sakyamuni, had the power to see into other worlds of existence. One day he remembers his mother, who had died many years before, and wants to find out her whereabouts. He assumed his mother would be in the world of happiness. He found her, however, in the world of hungry ghosts, which is the world of suffering by hanging upside-down. Mogallana couldn't believe his mother was in a such place, because to him, she was the perfect, compassionate mother.

But she had fallen to the world of hungry ghosts because she would always take care Mogallana first and foremost. Her first priority was her son. Everyone and everything else was secondary. She was self-centered in raising her son and consequently fell into that world of greediness.

Mogallana tried to save his mother from that world. He tried relentlessly but found he could not save her. Finally he asked Sakyamuni Buddha what to do and he replied, "You cannot save her alone, but if you hold a gathering in her memory and make offerings to others with a compassionate heart, then she can be saved."

Mogallana observed his mother's memorial gathering along with other monks after the rainy season retreat. True to Sakyamuni's words, she was saved from the world of hungry ghosts. He was so glad to see his mother released from the suffering and he started to dance with joy. It is said his dance is the origin of the bon dance.

So when we think about the center of our lives as only around our own selves, this world turns to the world of suffering. At that time we are so greedy and self-centered. We have sufferings of hanging upside down.

But we see this world through the dharma. We see we are living in the world of oneness and we realize we share and live our lives together. Then this world turns to the Pure Land, which is the world of harmony and peace. And we can live in this world of harmony and peace even though we have a lot of difficulties and conflicts with others.

All of us wish to have a peaceful and harmonious life with others. Our ancestors had the same wish for themselves. They also wished for us, their descendants, to have such a life and world. During Obon, we remember and express our gratitude to all of our ancestors for making it possible for our being here now.

Obon is the biggest celebration of life during the year. Our beloved ones are giving us a chance to think about our lives again.

So please come to the Obon service to listen to the dharma for a meaningful life for yourself. Please also come to our bon dance to express your joy of living here and now.

Thank you in Gassho,
Rinban Kenjun Kawawata

Beccho. Does anyone remember what that was? If you're as old as I am, you would remember the younger dancers at our bon dance, prancing in somewhat of an organized frenzy to the music coming from atop the *yagura*.

This circle of teen dancers claimed the circle closest to the *yagura*, and like a

Memories of days past...

herd of buffalo, 'danced' in unison to the music of Fukushima Ondo with their *tenugui* in hand. They were obviously releasing energy saved up since the last bon dance. This was by no means an orderly circle, as a person could get seriously hurt if just once person tripped, or if a careless 'normal' dancer wandered into the path of this stampede.

The beccho was stopped because of the danger it posed to everyone. Recently, I observed young dancers creating their own energetic style of the same dance movements, and they were having fun at their level of enjoyment. "What

a refreshing sight," I thought to myself. I wish I were younger and could jump like these young people without everything jiggling behind and in front of me.

I guess in current jargon, you would say these young revelers are making the dances 'their own', putting their own signature to old traditions. I hope this trend continues with everyone's safety in mind, of course.

Bon dance on, young 'uns!



Some younger visitors to our bon dance today display the level of energy reminiscent of teen dancers in days past.

– Faye Kamihara

Little Differences: Japan and Hawaii

Japan: On a typical sunny morning, patchworks of laundry hanging out to dry on east- and south-facing verandas create colorful mosaics that dominate the cityscape.

Hawaii: Laundry visible from the street will get you a stink eye from neighbors or maybe even a warning from your homeowners' association. It's "unsightly!" It "hurts property values!"

Why this great disparity in laundry hanging philosophy and acceptance between people in Japan and those in Hawaii?

One might guess part of the answer lies in the high cost of electricity in resource-poor Japan and families can't afford to run a dryer. But wait, you do know we in Hawaii also pay high rates, the highest in the nation...about the same per kilowatt-hour as consumers in Japan?

Or is it the fact that the Japanese are incorrigible yen-pinchers. If frugality were an Olympic event, Japan would take home all the medals. They hate to waste anything. *Mottainai*, you'll always hear. Fact is, the average Japanese household consumes 40% less electricity than American households.

Well, it could be that the industrious Japanese relish hard

work. Hanging laundry is hard work, you know, requiring bending, lifting and stretching, then repeat the cycle again and again. For most of us, tossing clothes in a dryer and turning a switch is the way to go. If you want to do bending, lifting and stretching, get yourself a gym membership.

Another thought: perhaps it's because weather reports in Japan are uncannily accurate and morning forecasts targeted to housewives help determine whether it's a good day to do laundry or not. Some forecasts even feature helpful shirt icons to predict how the combination of the day's sun, wind, temperature, humidity and probability of rain might affect your laundry decision. A rating of "five shirts" assures you that your pair of jeans will dry in no time.

Finally, Japanese people, whether by nature or due to their upbringing, seem to be more in harmony with Mother Nature and in showing gratitude for her precious bounty.

Perhaps folks in our sun-blessed Hawaii Nei may want to take a cue from our more eco-conscious kin across the Pacific. Shouldn't we all take a more active role in ensuring that limited natural resources are here for future generations to enjoy?

– Ken Saiki



Natural sunshine is the preferred clothes-drying method in Japan.

2013 Gojikai Dues Are Due

It's again Friendly Reminder time for Gojikai dues for 2013. Families who have not already sent in their Gojikai dues for this year, please do so soon, but no later than October 31. If you would like to know when your last dues were paid, and for which year, please call Rev. Makoto Honda at the Betsuin office at 531-9088.

Who should be paying Gojikai dues? All families who are members pay annual dues to the temple. Families who have niches in the columbarium also pay annual dues to the temple, since the columbarium is for use by temple members.

The annual assessment is used for maintenance of the nokotsudo and temple. Your Board of Directors meets monthly and is committed to insure that these funds are spent wisely for the welfare of the general membership and that temple policies and operations meet or exceed all legal requirements.

Members are welcome to attend Board of Directors meetings by calling the temple for meeting schedules, as meeting dates or times may change.

July's Movie Night Features Award-Winning "The Funeral"

The complex rituals of the three-day Japanese Buddhist funeral after the unexpected death of their father is too much to handle for the younger generation.

Debut drama/comedy by acclaimed director Juzo Itami, which won the 1985 Japanese Academy Awards for Best Film, Best Actor, Best Director, Best Screenplay and Best Supporting Actress. Stars Tsutomu Yamazaki, Nobuko Miyamoto & Kin Sugai. 124 minutes. Japanese audio with English subtitles.

Showtime is 6:30 pm on July 30. Admission is FREE. Ample seating in the Fukuhara Conference Room.

お葬式 (おそうじき)

1984年公開の日本映画。伊丹十三の初監督作品。日本アカデミー賞を始めとする各映画賞を総なめにした、伊丹にとって記念すべき作品である。大ヒットを記録した。

出演者：井上侑助：山崎努 雨宮千鶴子：宮本信子 雨宮きく江：菅井きん
上映時間：124分 入場無料
7月30日 (火) 午後6:30時

Obon Service Honors Forgotten Immigrants

Bishops of Higashi and Honpa Hongwanji will co-officiate a special Imin Yosebaka bon service at Makiki cemetery at 9 am Saturday, July 20.

The service is held to pay tribute to Japanese pioneers with no known descendants who are buried in a *yosebaka*, or common grave, at the cemetery. Unlike our ancestors who have us to remember them at obon,



A memorial tower marks the gravesite of 289 muenbotoke, or people who died without anyone to tend to their graves.

these forgotten immigrants had no one to tend to their graves.

The United Japanese Society of Hawaii, with the support of the Hawaii Buddhist Council, holds this service annually during the bon season. Ministers from dozens of

other Buddhist sects are also expected to participate.

Masago Asai of Palolo Hongwanji and her daughter, Mika, will perform a hula to commemorate the event. The Honpa Hongwanji choir will also sing gathas before and after the sutra chanting.

The public is invited to participate in honoring the immigrants. The cemetery is located at the corner of Pensacola St. and Wilder Ave.

Got Ukulele? Let's Make Music Together!

We're looking for folks to join our ukulele group to learn, practice and create music together.

Most of us are rank amateurs, so don't worry if you've never touched a uke before. We do have some accomplished musicians, however, to teach and lead us, so please join us to learn and practice a new skill.

Our goal is to eventually build a repertoire of Hawaiian, Japanese and other familiar melodies we can play at various informal events, or just to have a good time. Some of us were brave enough to get up on stage at the World Dobo Convention in Kyoto in May and perform before the several hundred attendees. It's all for fun!

We're kind of like the "oyaji band" on the "Making It Through" show on KIKU-TV. Who knows...one day we may be invited to play at services, or even at a temple wedding!

We'll meet for practice beginning in August on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at 3 pm at the Betsuin's Fukuhara Conference Room in the main temple building. So start looking for that uke that's gathering dust on a closet shelf at home and bring it along with you.

Players of other instruments are also welcome to join us for practice, though you'll have to learn to play the instrument on your own.

HIGASHI HONGWANJI HAWAII DISTRICT NEWS

In May we participated in the 11th World Dobo Convention in Kyoto. In this and subsequent issues, we share some of the experiences of participants from the Higashi Hongwanji Hawaii District.

At first, the temporary structures erected for extensive repair work to the main temple buildings gave me a feeling of depression and despair. Where were the quaint but historic temple buildings I saw years ago during my first Ho-on-ko service in Kyoto?

However, once inside the Founder's Hall I felt at home, meeting old friends and new. It was nice to see Abbot Choken Otani at the temple headquarters. I remember meeting him at our Kaneohe Temple years ago. It was like meeting old friends; you know, the feeling of, "I know you."

We attended the Dobo services held at a smaller scale that were more intimate compared to the large Ho-on-ko service I attended previously. The chanting of the Shoshin-ge in unison by hundreds of attendees that resonated magnificently throughout the hall gave me goose bumps.

The theme of the convention referred back to the devastation caused by the Tohoku tsunami and nuclear disaster 2 years ago. The keynote speaker, Rev. Yutai Ikeda, gave a lengthy oration on "Liberation Through the Nembutsu." He reiterated the need to lead a simple life in order to save the environment that seems to be deteriorating in our quest of living the good life. I don't know where I fit into this scheme of things but I felt the need to do something about living a simple life.

The Convention planners also planned a fundraising bazaar to aid the Tohoku victims. We were asked to prepare something to sell for one coin (500 yen). I liked the idea and I wanted to be part of this effort. Before the trip I immediately looked for edible foods unique to Hawaii like Spam, vienna sausages, papaya/pineapple jams and snacks. In turn I was pleased to find a dream catcher from Arizona where my grandniece attended pilot training school. What a win-win event this bazaar became!



Calligrapher Mori stylized "Aloha Amigo" for Eleanor

Also at the bazaar, Hidekazu Mori, a calligrapher and interior designer, made me evaluate my priorities in life. What was most important to me to have this renowned artist create a calligraphy display for my home? As I stood in line, I came up with the names of my children and the utterance of

Aloha, Amigo" by my young grandson who made the inter-relationships and the melding of cultures, a natural occurrence.

The banquet was a huge success because we interacted in fun ways with other members from other countries through audience participation. Our Hawaii group proudly danced the Hukilau Hula and sang several Hawaiian songs.



Following the hula movements of "At the Hukilau" turned out to be a novel and fun way of getting to know each other better.

Who would think that the Bishop Koi Sato'o (Chief Administrator of the Honzan), the Overseas District Abbot Choyu Otani and his wife, Bishop Noriaki Ito, Bishop Kenjun Kawabata, Reverend Takashi and others would be up on the stage dancing the hula to At the Hukilau with exuberance and having a good time! I wish you could see their happy, smiling faces. Needless to say, we thank Faye Shigemura of the Hawaii Betsuin with her brilliance in coordinating our Hawaii entertainment segment.

I felt so much love and happiness to meet up with the many familiar faces that left Hawaii to work in Japan. Rev. Suzuki, Rev. Ogasawara, former bishop of Hawaii district Rev. Makoto Mine, Rev. Takeo Maeda, Rev. Shoken Takekoshi, Rev. Makoto Honda, Rev. Takashi and Rev. Masuda and his family warmly greeted us.

Finally, among the 25 of us from Hawaii who attended the 11th Dobo Convention in Kyoto there was much camaraderie. We helped each other in numerous ways, learning from each other. We made many new friends who knew how to have a good time. A million thanks go to the Hawaii District committee organizers for this adventure. I'm glad I went, and please sign me up for the 2016 Dobo Convention in Los Angeles.

Love and Mahalo,
Eleanor Tokunaga

HIGASHI HONGWANJI HAWAII DISTRICT DOBO JOINT RETREAT

Speaker: Dr. Michihiro Ama

Commentary by Jonathan Tani

As an attendee of the Dobo Joint Retreat, I offer my impressions of the Friday and Saturday lectures, June 7 & 8. Be forewarned: as a listener of Akegarasu-sensei, I do not take notes at lectures, and remember only those ideas which resonate at that time.

Tana Daisho's Internment Camp Diary

The first lecture on Friday night was the translated manuscript of a minister and his wife during internment of Japanese and Japanese-Americans during World War II. This was a scholarly presentation: a valuable day-to-day record of experiences and thoughts of a couple who were actually there, rather than as a recollection and compilation of interviews later. The difference here is what the experience meant to a Buddhist minister in his committed view and its effect on his beliefs.

How Are We Affected by Shoshinge?

The second lecture, held the next day, was enjoyable and open to free discussion for large part of the day.

The major topic was: How does Shoshinge affect you in daily life? Well, everyone felt it had very little, or no, effect at all. This brought a quietness mixed with giggles.

However, later during the lecture we went from sentence to sentence in early passages to imagine what each idea meant at different levels.

An anomaly of Buddhist discussion is its abstractness. As a debate or discussion, Buddhism fits nicely into philosophy with a bent toward science and skepticism. Yet, its practical application in superficial day-to-day living is largely withheld until a seeker has a grasp on its deeper principles of formless-form, emptiness, and reliance on nothing; as examples.

Meanwhile, here are some of the topics covered that I recall:

1. Parable of the burning house
2. Shinjin glimpses. Know anyone who has experienced shinjin?
3. After the death of the historical Sakyamuni Buddha, Mahayana's new direction plus addition of sutra
4. Mahayana two schools, Madhyamaka and Yogachara: the difference
5. Theravadin Arhat compared to Mahayana bodhisattva: the difference
6. When to say Nembutsu
7. What is Oneness?
8. Is a total experienced mind-body response to an idea Truth?

Topics not usually covered in lectures

For instance, psychologists say that the leading causes of suicide in young people are a lack of coping skills and the feeling that they are in the way of other people's lives. In other words, coping skills are real.

Here are some non-abstract ideas to think about, from a Buddhist perspective:

How should I look upon my illness?

How should I look upon my financial problems?

I know I'm going to die. How come I'm not even slightly concerned?

My girlfriend is the most beautiful woman in the world. Is this true?

My spouse left me for another. How do I look upon this?

My spouse died. What shall I do? I lost my reputation. How can I live?

I am following all the rules and am a good citizen. Is this all there is to life?

What and how should I think when people insult me?

My children don't obey me. What's wrong?

Why do I get angry so quickly? I'm happy all the time. Am I deluded?

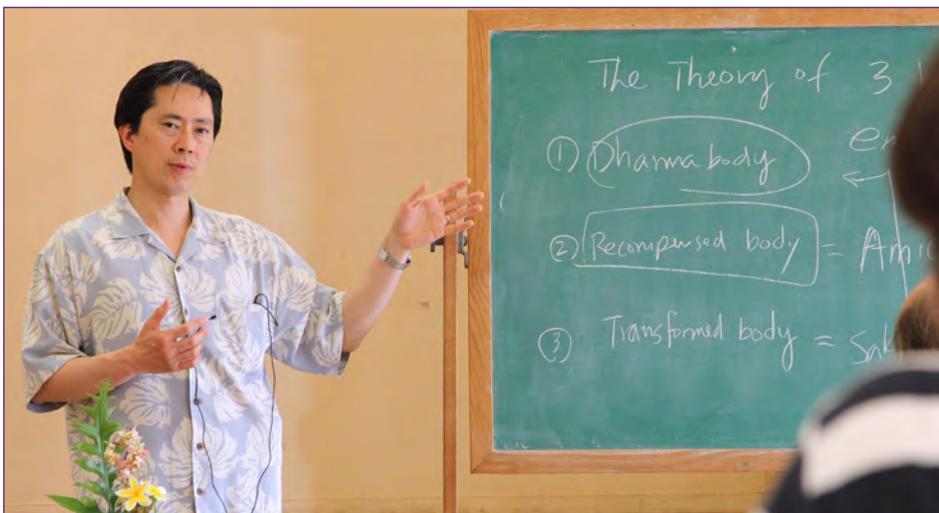
Why do I have regrets? Why do I worry?

Why do people see me differently from how I see myself?

Additional Commentary by Rev. Frank Childs

I found our retreat with Ama-sensei most important. Why? Because he articulated the importance of Shinran Shonin and Shin Buddhism in Mahayana tradition. He brought to our attention the concept of Sunyata, or emptiness.

Just what is emptiness? I do not know...but because of Ama-sensei, I can open myself to at least trying to understand. For this I am thankful!



Listening to Dr. Ama's excellent presentation was like beng back to school again. Dr. Ama is an assistant professor of Japanese at the University of Alaska. Photo by Jim Dote



In the Spotlight

KENNETH SAIKI

For the past few months we've been introducing you to our newly elected—as of February 2013—officers and directors. The final introduction is new board member Ken Saiki.

Ken is a product of Hawaii's public school system, graduating from Roosevelt high school before attending Purdue University in Indiana.

A self-proclaimed "professional retiree," Ken has retired three times, first from the U.S. Navy as a Captain, with a combined 26 years of service on active duty in Vietnam and Japan, and as a reservist assigned to fleet headquarters commands at Pearl Harbor. In 1996 he also retired from his day job as marketing vice president at Bank of America.

With more spare time on his hands, he took leadership roles at various non-profit organizations, mostly geared to furthering Japanese-American causes and activities.

His volunteer efforts, especially in helping enhance better U.S.-Japan relations in the aftermath of the tragic sinking of the Ehime Maru, led to an imperial decoration, The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette, by the government of Japan in 2007.

Meanwhile, his "hobby" of working part-time on marketing projects led him back, albeit reluctantly, into a regular full-time position at Central Pacific Bank, managing its direct marketing and promotional activities, until his third and final retirement last year.

Affiliation with Higashi Hongwanji came about almost by accident, and as a result of his mother's death in 2005. Inheriting a termite-eaten family altar, he wasn't sure what to do with it, having been raised in, and considering

himself of a different faith all his life. He consulted Rev. Narumichi Watanabe, then resident minister at the Betsuin, who not only helped with the *butsudan* but impressed Ken with his views on life and death that actually made sense.

Eager to learn more about Buddhism, Ken would occasionally attend Sunday services. Not being what you could call scholarly, Ken prefers things very simple and easy to understand. As the messages slowly sank in, they became compelling enough to turn "when can" attendance into a weekly habit and finally, to Ken joining the temple as a member.

So now you'll find him serving on various Betsuin ad hoc committees, sometimes doing emcee duties at Sunday services or sharing his Japanese DVD collection at temple movie nights.

He's trying to change his current couch-potato lifestyle, but for now



Ken (right) with Abbot Choken Otani and Mrs. Otani at USS Utah memorial at Pearl Harbor during their 2008 Hawaii visit.

enjoys watching *Onihei Hankacho* and other period dramas on NGN.

Ken's wife, Kumiko, helps with temple flower arrangements, as needed. Between the two of them, they have four children, all of them living either on the mainland or in Japan, and five grandchildren.

By the way, have you noticed Ken's long earlobes, too?

SHOTSUKI OBSERVANCE FOR JULY

Our July 7 shotsuki service is our monthly remembrance of our temple family members who passed away in July of a past year. At this month's shotsuki service we honor and pay respects to:

Lauren Chun	Doris Midori Maruoka	Myra Hachiko Reyes
Elaine Flynn	Michiko Masunaga	Ohilo Sakamoto
Mitsugu Fujimoto	Ushi Matayoshi	Richard Kazuo Shimazu
Sumiko Hamada	Harriet Haruko Matsuda	Kenneth Shiro Shioi
Fred Yoshio Haruno	Harriet Shimonon Matsuda	Yoshio Shishido
Evelyne Fusako Higa	Michael Toshio Matsuda	Kiyoko Shojinaga
Genkichi Hirashima	Hinayo Miyazaki	Donald Itsuo Sugai
Thelma Miyoshi Hirata	Violet Fujie Matsumoto	Daniel Hajime Tagami
Masae Iizaki	Jean H. Matsumoto	Jerry Noboru Takeuchi
David Kasato Imura	Walter Noboru Matsuzaki	Masao Takeuchi
Florence F. Imura	Kazunori Miyamoto	Chiyeiko Tanaka
Ted Tetsuo Ishii	Janice Naomi Miyashiro	Kama Tengan
Daniel Carl Ishimoto	Mitsuko Miyazaki	Miyoko Tsuji
Dorothy Emiko Kaito	Jack Nobuo Murakami	Thomas Tadao Tsukamoto
Yasushige Kaneshiro	Violet Tomie Murakami	Robert Senkyo Unten
Kiyoko Kanzaki	George Satoru Nagahisa	Thomas Seitsu Uyehara
Ivy Lynn Harumi Kawasaki	Nobuko Nakamoto	Minoru Uyemura
Audrey Miyoko Kimura	Torao Nakano	James H. Yamaguchi
Kazuo Kinoshita	George Moriso Oasa	Lawrence M. Yamamoto
Kazuo Kiyonaga	Jane Ruriko Ogata	Stella Toyoko Yonehiro
Ralph Fumio Koga	Shigeo Okazaki	Michael Mitsuo Yoshida
Katsu Kudo Maekawa	Tomiye Okazaki	Megumi Yoshimoto

While shotsuki services are observed every year, special *nenki hoyo* memorial services are held during certain auspicious years. These years include the 1st anniversary, followed by memorial services for the 3rd, 7th, 13th, 17th, 25th, 33rd and 50th years, held during the year prior to the actual anniversary date. Please consult a minister for more information.



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In this issue of WA...

- **The Origin of Obon** p. 1
- **Memories of days past...** p. 2
- **Little Differences: Japan & Hawaii** p. 2
- **Let's Bon Dance, Chapter 2** p. 3
- **News on the Betsuin Wireless** p. 4
- **Hawaii District News** p. 5
- **District Joint Retreat report** p. 6
- **In the Spotlight: Ken Saiki** p. 7
- **Shotsuki observance for July** p. 7
- **Temple activities calendar** p. 8

TEMPLE ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

JULY 2013

7/6	Sat	6:30 pm	Kaneohe Higashi Hongwanji bon dance (Obon service at 6:00 pm)
7/7	Sun	10 am	Shotsuki service
7/11	Thu	7 pm	ABCs of Buddhism study class led by Rinban Kawawata
7/13	Sat	10 am	What on Earth is Namuamidabutsu? Study class led by Rev. Frank Childs
7/14	Sun	10 am	Obon/Hatsubon service
7/14	Sun	12 pm	Basic Buddhism study class 現代語で仏教を聞こう led by Rinban Kawawata in Japanese
7/21	Sun	10 am	Sunday service
7/21	Sun	12 pm	Betsuin board meeting/yagura setup Fukuhara Conference Room
7/23	Tue	6 pm	Bon dance practice at Betsuin
7/23	Tue	7 pm	O-ko: Informal dharma discussion Kaneohe Higashi Hongwanji
7/26	Fri	7 pm	Bon dance (Manto-e service at 6:30 pm)
7/27	Sat	7 pm	Bon dance (Manto-e service at 6:30 pm)
7/28	Sun	10 am	Bon dance cleanup (No service)
7/30	Tue	6:30 pm	Movie night: The Funeral (お葬式) Japanese audio/English subtitles

AUGUST 2013

8/2	Fri	7:30 pm	Palolo Hongwanji bon dance (7 pm service)
8/3	Sat	7:30 pm	Palolo Hongwanji bon dance (7 pm service)
8/4	Sun	10 am	Shotsuki service
8/4	Sun	12 pm	Basic Buddhism study class 現代語で仏教を聞こう led by Rinban Kawawata in Japanese
8/10	Sat	10 am	What on Earth is Namuamidabutsu? Study class led by Rev. Frank Childs
8/11	Sun	10 am	Sunday service
8/13	Tue	3 pm	Ukulele class/band practice Fukuhara Conference Room
8/18	Sun	10 am	Sunday service
8/18	Sun	12 pm	Betsuin board meeting Fukuhara Conference Room
8/20	Tue	7 pm	O-ko: Informal dharma discussion Kaneohe Higashi Hongwanji
8/25	Sun	9-2 pm	Chicken & sushi sale (no Sunday service)
8/27	Tue	3 pm	Ukulele class/band practice
8/27	Tue	6:30 pm	Movie night: Tora-san, His Tender Love Japanese audio/English subtitles

Everyone is welcome to join in on our sutra chanting at 7 am daily (except Sundays) in the Betsuin Main Hall.